

**Notes of Rural Partnership Forum Meeting
Wednesday 27th February 2013
Bickenhill Church Hall, Bickenhill**

Attendees:

Stephen Munday, Director of Public Health (Chairman)
Janice Adams, Hockley Heath Residents Association
Councillor Bell, Meriden Ward Councillor
Councillor Brown, Blythe Ward Councillor
Andrew Burrow, Berkswell Parish Council
Chris Burrows, Cheswick Green Parish Council
Sue Byrne, Hockley Heath Residents Association
Len Cresswell, Cheswick Green Parish Council
Jenny Fearn, Tidbury Green Parish Council
Kath Hemmings, Rural Neighbourhood Manager, Solihull MBC
PC Nichol Hodgkinson, Knowle Neighbourhood Team, WM Police
Martin Lambert, Dorridge & District Residents Association
Dr Gill Lewis, Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council
Councillor Rayson, Hockley Heath Parish Council
Linda Poulson, Bickenhill Parish Council
Councillor Potts, Knowle Ward Councillor
Steve Tidy, Hornets Football Club
PC Gary Waldron, Knowle Neighbourhood Team, WM Police

Presenters / Officers in attendance:

Hannah Colson, Solihull Partnership (notes)
Nick Garnett, Leisure & Arts Services Manager, Solihull MBC (Item 5)
Andrew Harding, Centro (Item 4)
Steven Hayes, Centro (Item 4)
Melanie Lockey, Solihull Partnership
Dave Pinwell, SUSTAIn & Solihull Partnership Governing Board Member (Item 6)
Emma Sibbing, Horticultural Officer, Solihull MBC (Item 5)
Dave Turton, Neighbourhood Activity Manager, Solihull MBC (Item 6)

Apologies:

Councillor Courts, Dorridge & Hockley Heath Ward Councillor
Councillor Diccico, Meriden Ward Councillor
Councillor Holl-Allen, Knowle Ward Councillor
Councillor Martin, Bickenhill Ward Councillor
Councillor Rebeiro, Knowle Ward Councillor
Bridget Sproston, Knowle Society
John Shayler, SSAFA & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Derek Tilford, SSAFA
Keith Tindall, Balsall Common Village Residents Association

1. Welcome and Introductions

Stephen Munday opened the meeting by welcoming everyone followed by introductions around the room.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th October

The notes of the meeting held at Balsall Common Village Hall on the 18th October were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Forum members were also asked if they had any objections to photos being taken at today's meeting for publishing purposes they were to let Dave Pinwell know (davep@solihull-sustain.org.uk or 0121 711 3148).

Matters arising and action updates:

Stephen ran through the actions on page 6 of the notes from the last meeting, to ensure they had all been picked up.

- o Action 1 ~ Sarah is yet to write a short report; however the date of today's meeting was advertised to all Parish Council's within the rural areas.
- o Action 2 ~ Hannah to chase Donovan at HS2 to contact Councillor Potts.
- o Actions 3 and 4 ~ are on-going. Any information regarding HS2 which comes through to the partnership, Hannah will circulate to the distribution list
- o Actions 5 – 7 ~ have all been completed prior to today's meeting
- o Action 8 ~ will be picked up in the meeting during Item 4
- o Action 9 ~ on-going. Len Cresswell also offered to promote the Waterways Partnership to other partnership forums if they are interested.
- o Action 10 ~ Kath Hemmings and Len Cresswell are in contact regularly regarding the Environmental Champions.

3. Questions asked by Members of the Public

Stephen advised forum members that Hannah had sent out a request via email with the agenda and papers for this meeting, asking forum members to speak with local residents / group members and to notify Hannah by 25th February of any questions that people would like asked at this meeting.

Stephen noted that two questions had come forward following this request; one regarding an update on 'Broadband Connectivity in rural areas'; and the second on 'SMBC's approach to supporting voluntary sports groups for young people in rural areas who do not have access to SMBC sport facilities'. It was agreed the second question would be picked up during Item 5 of the agenda.

Melanie Lockey read out an update on Broadband in rural areas which had been sent from a colleague in Economic Development and Regeneration at Solihull MBC. Melanie agreed to circulate the update to forum members via email.

4. Rural Public Transport

Steve Hayes provided forum members with a brief overview of the bus services under review as part of the consultation, how the consultation had gone in terms of response levels, headline results from the feedback; and timescales for getting the revised services in place. Steve also explained that the Taxibus and National Express routes that operate within this area are not anticipated to change as part of this review, all proposals are draft and also subject to any commercial services being registered that are outside of Centro's control.

Andrew Harding then circulated to forum members maps of the proposed draft network, and a summary document which highlights the draft changes for each service. It was noted the proposals have been developed following feedback from the public consultation carried out

before Christmas, and Centro have tried to incorporate as many requests as possible but it has not been possible to achieve everything. Andrew provided the group with a short description of the proposed changes to each of the bus services. Followed by the presentation was a brief opportunity for forum members to ask Andrew and Steve any questions regarding the proposed network.

Steve emphasised that the proposals were still draft at this stage and asked for Parish Councils, Resident Associations, Elected Members and other community leaders to review the proposals and comment on behalf of their wider communities, and assess whether in general local needs have been met or whether anything key is missing. It was requested for any comments or detailed queries on proposed routes to be directed to Andrew Harding or Steve Hayes (andrewharding@centro.org.uk or stevehayes@centro.org.uk) by no later than Thursday 28th March. The proposed routes are due to be in place by June 2013 and are expected to be 5 year contracts. Forum members thanked Steve and Andrew for the presentation.

5. Improving Facilities for young people in rural areas

Nick Garnett gave a short presentation on what Solihull Council along with partners are doing to improve sport and recreation facilities for young people. It was noted that:

- o The public sector (Council or schools) and the voluntary sector have the biggest influence in sport and recreation provision, supplemented by the private sector.
- o There are a variety of locations across Solihull which host a number of sports clubs, e.g. Arden School hosts basketball, trampolining, badminton etc
- o Solihull Council are currently completing an indoor facility and playing pitch strategy to review existing supply and demand in order to project what facilities might be needed in the future
- o The key actions are: to protect existing stock through planning policy, improve quality of identified pitches, address pitch deficiencies (particularly rugby and cricket), increase community use of school sports facilities, consider use of artificial cricket wickets, re-allocate some use to other venues; and look at provision of community halls and health & fitness provision.

Following the presentation the group asked Nick a series of questions including:

- Steve Tidy, asked how much influence Nick's team have with planning decisions regarding sport facilities? *Nick replied to say he has good links with the planning and policy team at the Council and he would be happy to provide assistance and help to any sports clubs in the Borough who require it.*
- Andrew Burrows stated that particularly for the rural areas of Solihull, they would like Solihull Council to assist groups with self help. Andrew explained to forum members that Balsall & Berkswell Hornets Football Club is well used by members of the local community for sport and recreation and in particular young people in the area. However the club are having problems with drainage, and also they would like help with negotiating with the Council to get a longer lease. *Stephen Munday asked Nick Garnett to follow this up outside of the meeting, particularly around the lease concern, as it was a specific issue. However, he did note to the group that there is a more general issue around how Solihull Council can provide assistance to local sports groups who are trying to develop closer links with their local communities.*
- Councillor Rayson asked if Nick Garnett would be willing to come along to a Hockley Heath Parish Council meeting to talk about sport and recreation facilities and whether more can be done in Hockley Heath.
- Martin Lambert, noted to the group that the Football Association launched a new three year plan yesterday (26th February) to improve grassroots football facilities in England.

Nick also advised forum members, he is currently working on the proposed action plan on improving sport and recreation facilities within the Borough, before sign off by Cabinet in June, and so if forum members have any comments or suggestions, can they feed them into Hannah Colson, who will forward them on to Nick. The group also asked for a report back at the next meeting in July on what Solihull Council can do to provide support to local rural communities regarding sport and recreation facilities.

Emma Sibbing, Horticultural Officer from Solihull Council talked to forum members about the outdoor facilities available in the parks and open spaces in the rural areas in Solihull. There are 8 parks, 2 with skate parks and 3 with multi-use facilities; 6 of the sites also have equipment for 8-13 year olds.

Emma explained that each year the Council do an annual survey with both park users and non-park users to find out about whether there is anything more they can do to improve the parks; they also work closely with community groups. Emma noted to the group that the Council are looking to refresh the Play Area and Green Spaces Strategy, so forum members can contact parksmanagement@solihull.gov.uk if they would like to put forward any ideas.

Len Cresswell asked if the Council's team are able to help local communities with small projects with open spaces, as they could do with some help in Cheswick Green. Dave Turton and Kath Hemmings both replied to say this could be linked into the Environmental Champions programme.

Councillor Bell noted that there is still a high demand for Allotments within Solihull, but due to lack of land space it is difficult to create more. Melanie advised forum members that she had heard recently of a social enterprise that creates growing space out of disused areas. Melanie agreed to forward details of this to forum members.

Forum members thanked Nick and Emma for attending the meeting.

6. Volunteering as a route into Employment

Dave Pinwell advised forum members of the high unemployment rate in Solihull and in particular the high levels of youth unemployment in the Borough. A case study was circulated to forum members of a recent graduate who was struggling to obtain employment; however after doing some volunteering work he was not only able to secure his first interview but he also got the job.

Dave Pinwell noted that volunteering provides (particularly young people looking for work), skills and a work ethic which can be taken forward with them into paid work. Dave asked forum members to promote volunteering as a route into employment with young people in their areas; and asked for members to advertise SUSTAIN's contact number: 0121 711 3148 with anyone who they think would be interested.

Dave Pinwell also noted that SUSTAIN are able to help with signposting volunteers to the community and environmental champions programme which the Council run; and other long established volunteering opportunities. They also help to support ex-offenders and mothers who have taken a long career break to get back into employment through volunteering.

Dave Pinwell noted that Greater Birmingham and Solihull are currently awaiting to hear if they have received some funding from the Big Lottery to help with youth unemployment; if successful

the investment aims to work with employers, young people and local charities to develop the entrepreneurial talents of young people so that they positively contribute to their local economy and community.

Dave Turton echoed Dave Pinwell's comments about the opportunities available for people from doing volunteering. Dave Turton advised forum members he is involved with the Environmental Champions and Neighbourhood Sports Programme at the Council which also offer great volunteering opportunities, within sport and environmental areas. Dave Turton also circulated a case study to forum members, which provides an example of a local young person who has gained employment in sport through volunteering with the Neighbourhood Sports Programme in Solihull. If forum members would like to find out more about the Environmental Champions, please email: environmentchampions@solihull.gov.uk or for the Neighbourhood Sports Programme: dturton@solihull.gov.uk.

7. Identify Items for Discussion Next Time

The proposed date for the next rural forum is Tuesday 16th July, 6:30-8:30pm, venue to be confirmed. Councillor Brown suggested using Dickens Heath Library as the venue; Hannah agreed to follow this up. Forum members suggested items for discussion at the next meeting and subsequent meetings:

- Follow up on the Leisure item from this meeting
- Follow up on how the new bus network is going
- Presentation on the Welfare Benefit changes and the impact on residents
- Update on Health Changes from Stephen Munday, including information on Healthwatch

8. Any Other Business:

Dave Pinwell circulated to forum members a leaflet advertising Birmingham and Solihull Together.com. It is part of a national campaign, which works by using the collective bargaining power of everyone who signs up to negotiate a better price from the energy suppliers.

The switching window is open until Sunday 17th March and if people are interested in finding out more they can visit: www.birminghamandsolihulltogether.com or 0800 917 5772 or 0121 222 8051. Dave asked for forum members to help spread the word.

Stephen asked the Police representatives if they would like to share any information with forum members. PC Nichol Hodgkinson noted that the main priorities for the police in Knowle and the surrounding areas is Bike Thefts and ASB. Len Cresswell asked for the need for stability within the Police Neighbourhood Teams as there has been a constant change of Neighbourhood Sergeant.

Melanie encouraged people to raise awareness amongst local residents, of the 'Solihull Apprenticeship Show' which is taking place on Wednesday 13th March, 3:30-7:30pm, at the Renewal Centre on Lode Lane. The event is aimed at 14-24 year olds and their parents to find out more about apprenticeship opportunities.

Melanie also promoted the Annual Partnership Assembly event on Wednesday 1st May, to forum members and reminded them to complete the online booking form (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/partnershipassembly2013>) if they haven't already done so, if they would like to attend the event. Melanie advised forum members that Louise Casey CB, the Government's Lead for Troubled Families will be the keynote speaker at the event.

Kath Hemmings raised everyone's awareness of the new 'Solihull Neighbourhoods in Bloom', which is a new, fun and friendly competition, open to everyone. It aims to get Solihull people taking part together. As well as looking for the best entries we will also be giving a range of awards such as: most original; best themed; and community area. For more information please visit the dedicated webpage: <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/solihullinbloom/default.htm>.

Actions	By Whom
1. Hannah to chase Donovan at HS2 to contact Councillor Potts.	Hannah Colson
2. Broadband update to be circulated to forum members	Hannah Colson.
3. Comments / Feedback on the draft bus proposals to be fed back to Andrew Harding andrewharding@centro.org.uk or Steve Hayes stevehayes@centro.org.uk by Thursday 28 th March.	All forum members
4. Nick Garnett to follow up on the football pitch proposal for Balsall & Berkswell to see whether SMBC can provide assistance, particularly re the lease issue.	Nick Garnett
5. Nick Garnett to feedback at the next meeting, on how Solihull Council can support local rural sports clubs / community groups.	Nick Garnett
6. Nick Garnett to attend a Hockley Heath Residents Association meeting to talk about sport and recreation facilities.	Nick Garnett / Councillor Rayson
7. Comments on the proposed action plans on improving sport and recreation facilities within the Borough to be emailed to Hannah Colson.	All forum members
8. Forum members to contact parksmanagement@solihull.gov.uk if they have any ideas they would like to put forward on local parks and open spaces.	All forum members
9. Melanie to circulate details of the Social Enterprise on growing space to forum members.	Melanie Lockey
10. Forum members to encourage young people they know to contact SUSTAiN to find out about volunteering opportunities on 0121 711 3148.	All forum members
11. Forum members to contact environmentchampions@solihull.gov.uk or dturton@solihull.gov.uk for information on Environmental Champions and Neighbourhood Sports Programmes.	All forum members
12. Forum members to raise awareness of Birmingham and Solihull Together energy switching campaign.	All forum members
13. Forum members to raise awareness of the Apprenticeship show on 13 th March.	All forum members
14. Forum members to sign up to the Annual Partnership Assembly on 1 st May.	All forum members

Review of Bus Services in South Solihull

Steve Hayes and Andrew Harding

Solihull Rural Partnership Forum
Wednesday 27th February 2013

- Since privatisation in 1986, the majority of bus services in UK have been operated commercially.
- Most services in this area now contracted to operate with public subsidy from Centro; not enough passengers for operators to run otherwise.
- Contracts for existing services expire Summer 2013.
- Opportunity to review current network, what is good, what isn't so good.
- **Not a cost-cutting exercise!!**
- ... but any changes need to give good value for money.

- **S2a/c** - Balsall Common via Knowle and Dorridge
- **S3** - Hockley Heath via Knowle and Dorridge
- **S4** - Cheswick Green via Shirley
- **S7** - Wythall via Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath
- **82** - Coventry via Meriden and Hampton in Arden
- Heart of England Taxibus

+ other possible opportunities

- Online and paper copies in local centres
- Advertised via local media, parish magazines and on buses
- 655 responses in total – considered a good response for this kind of exercise
- Also assessment of existing passenger numbers and flows
- Analysis of other comments received over recent years



Results vary from place to place but headlines:

- Solihull ‘most important’ destination for most
- Frequency preferred over journey time
- Slight preference for more daytime/weekday buses than evening and Sunday services
- Stated preference for more frequent buses above quality

- Passenger counts over a couple of weeks to examine where main current passenger flows are
- Analysis of long-term patronage in relation to passenger satisfaction surveys
- Making compromises: delivering an improvement in one area can have a detrimental impact elsewhere.

- Still opportunity to review detail
- Still opportunity for commercial activity which may affect proposals



- November/December 2012 – consultation with local communities
- January 2013 – design revised network
- February/March 2013 – Feedback on proposed network
- April 2013 – new services registered
- June 2013 – revised services begin



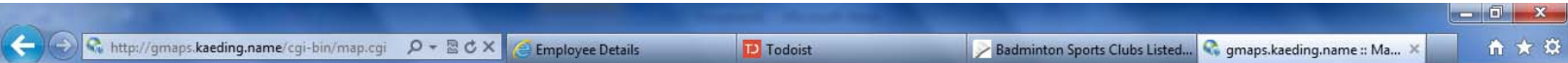


Improving facilities for young people

February 27th 2013

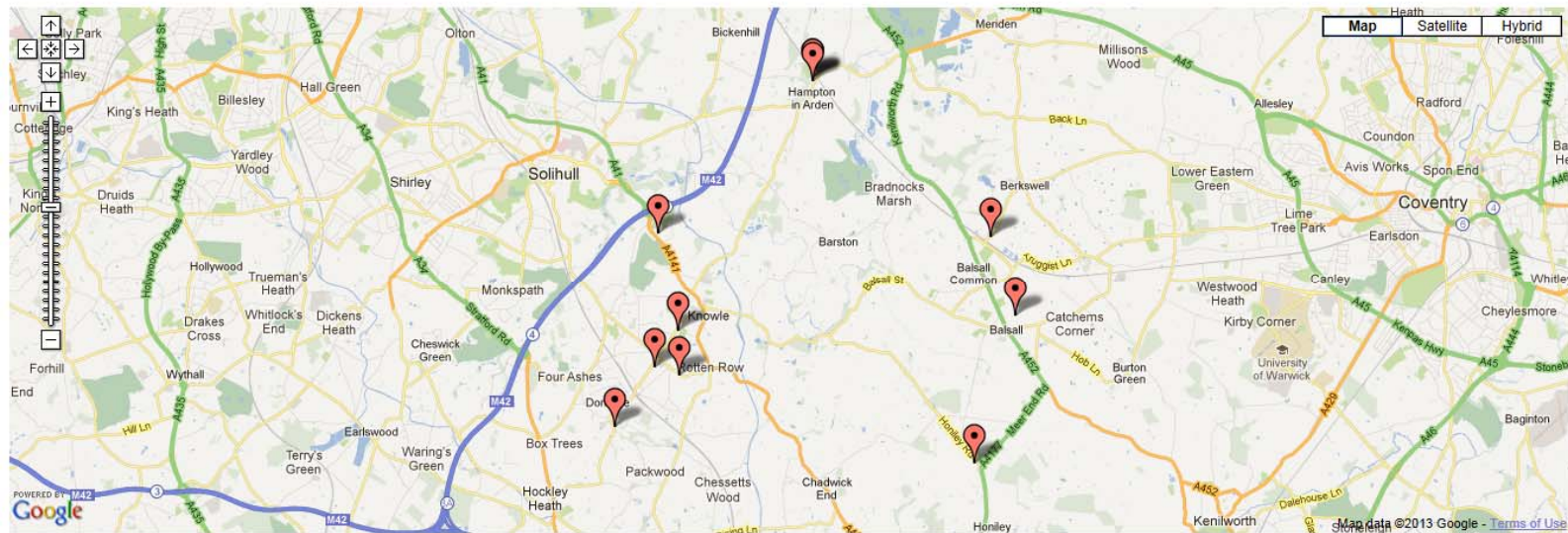


Some of the rural sports clubs

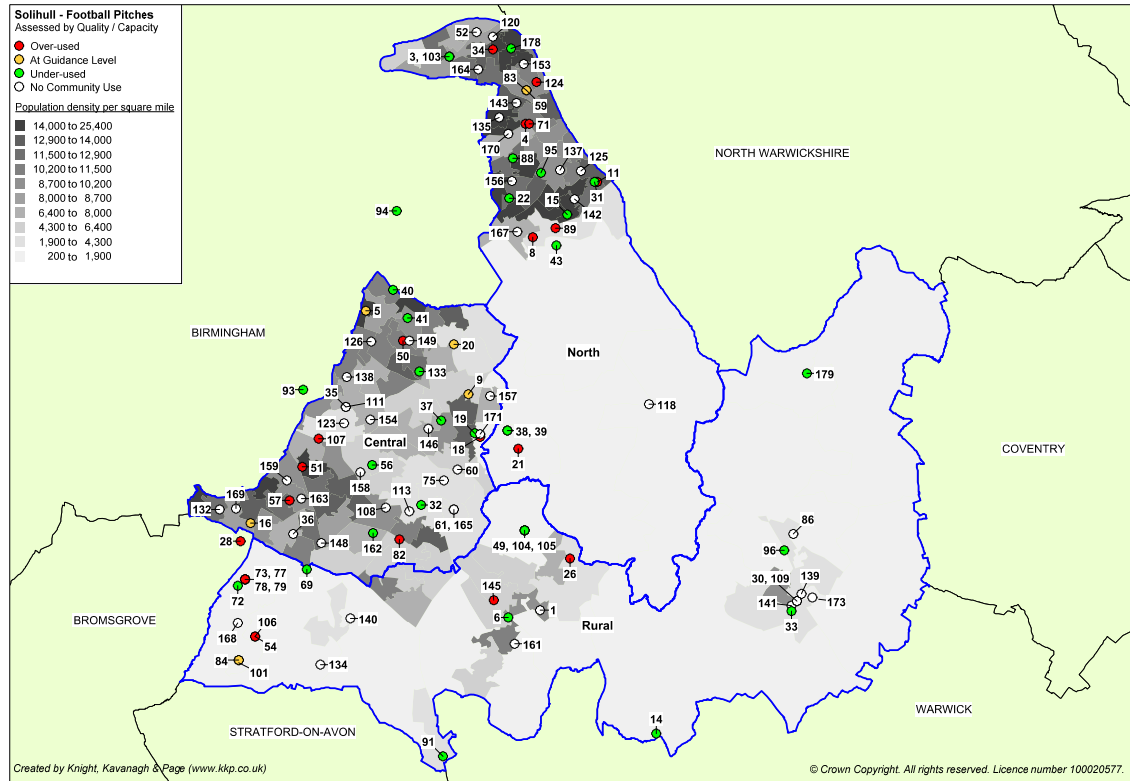


You can link to this page using <http://gmaps.kaeding.name/saved/Sports%20in%20rural%20Solihull>.

Map results



Playing pitch provision



Key actions



- Protect existing stock through planning policy
- Improve quality of identified pitches
- Addressing pitch deficiencies
- Increase community use of schools
- Consider use of artificial cricket wickets
- Re-allocate some use to other venues



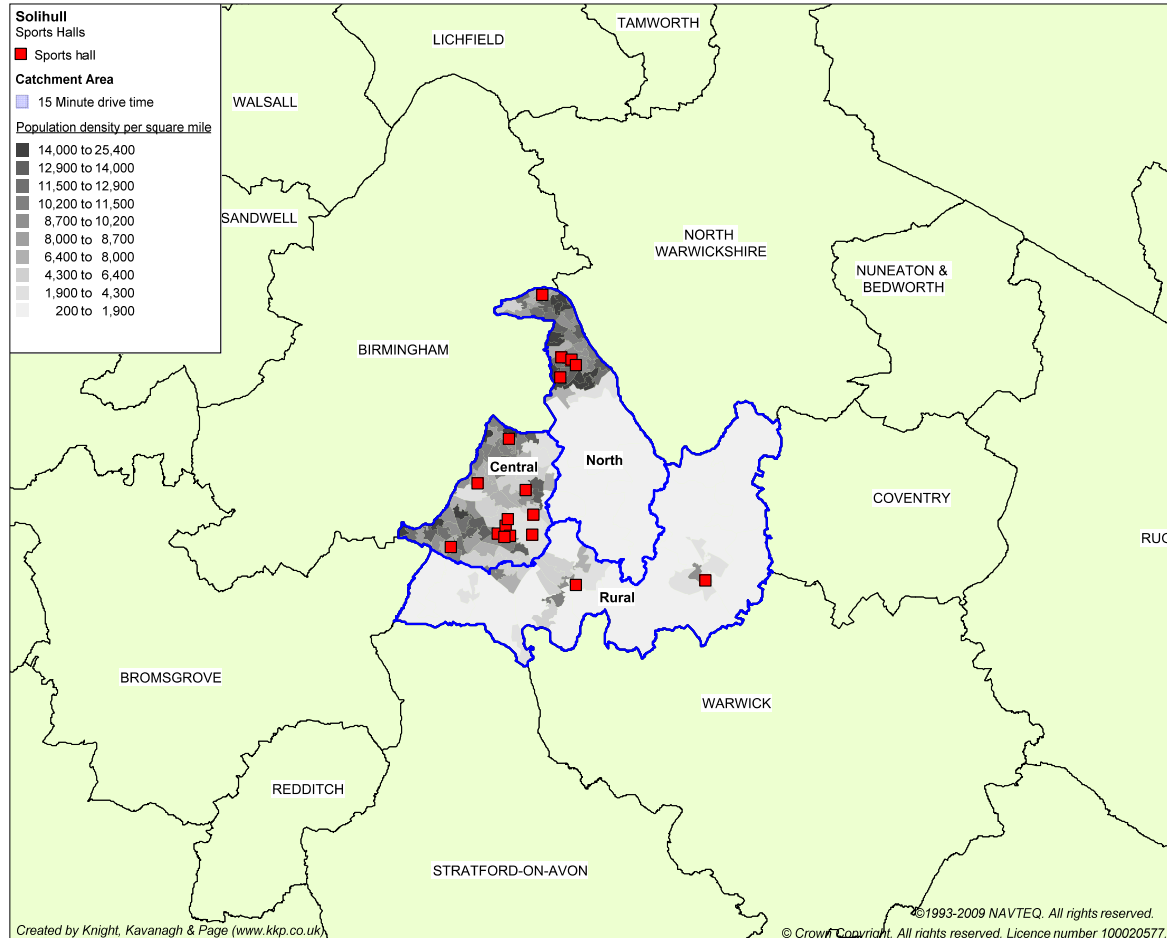
Indoor provision



- Sports halls
- Activity halls
- Swimming pools
- Health & fitness facilities
- Indoor bowls
- Indoor tennis



Sports hall provision



Key actions



- Protect existing stock through planning policy
- Increase community use of schools
- Improve quality of identified venues
- Look at provision of community halls and health & fitness provision.

