



PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT: PROPOSED INDOOR PADEL VENUE
UNIT 1A,2A AND 3A CONSORT WAY, BURGESS HILL, RH15 9TJ (MARCH 2026)



Oxygen Consulting – strategic analysis and insight for the global health and fitness sector

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed change of use of the building to an indoor padel venue in Burgess Hill. It is intended as a concise supporting document to assist the local planning authority in considering the likely public health, community and economic implications of the proposal. In particular, the statement considers three linked matters:

1. The extent to which the proposed padel venue aligns with local objectives for healthy lifestyles, community wellbeing, and access to sport and recreation.
2. The extent to which the proposed operating approach, including affordability, community access and inclusive participation, supports the credibility of those benefits in practice.
3. The likely economic and social benefits of the proposed indoor leisure venue, including local employment and the strengthening of Burgess Hill's leisure offer.

This statement is a concise, evidence-led note on the material public benefits relevant to the planning balance, drawing on the local development plan, the Burgess Hill neighbourhood plan, and the local health and physical activity evidence base.

2. THE PROPOSAL IN SUMMARY

The application relates to Unit 1A, 2A and 3A Consort Way, Burgess Hill, RH15 9TJ, a newly built commercial building. The proposal seeks a change of use to enable the building to operate as a full-time indoor community padel venue, with ancillary social and welfare space.

The proposed venue would comprise four indoor padel courts within a fully enclosed, weather-protected environment, supported by reception, café and lounge space, changing facilities, accessible WC provision, an exercise studio, and a treatment or rehabilitation room. The scheme would also support inclusive and physically accessible use, including wheelchair-accessible court provision and accessible customer areas.

The venue is designed to function as an affordable, community-oriented space that operates on a pay-to-play basis, rather than as a private members' club. It is expected to serve a broad user base, including residents of Burgess Hill, adults and children, local workplace groups, schools, and older adults. In particular, the fully indoor format will provide a more comfortable year-round setting for participation for some users, including older adults and those living with longer-term health conditions.

3. RELEVANT LOCAL POLICY THEMES

This section provides an overview of the local policy context relevant to the proposal's potential health, community, and local economic benefits. In broad terms, the adopted policy framework, including the Mid Sussex District Plan and Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan, supports the following objectives relevant to the proposed venue:

1. Mid Sussex District Plan Policy DP24: Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities is the most directly relevant district-level policy, as it supports new and enhanced leisure and cultural facilities and activities. It also aligns with the District Plan's wider objective of creating places that encourage healthy and enjoyable lifestyles through sporting provision.
2. Mid Sussex District Plan Policy DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services is also relevant, as the proposal would create a community-facing indoor leisure venue capable of supporting wider local participation, wellbeing, and community use. The policy supports the provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to sustainable communities.
3. The Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan also provides relevant local support, particularly Core Objective 3, which seeks to ensure that all sections of the community in Burgess Hill have appropriate access to leisure facilities.

4. Wider district-level policy support is also relevant in economic terms, including support for local jobs, economic vitality, and places that are attractive to business and help people live and work locally.

4. LOCAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

The local need case for this proposal is best understood at the catchment level. Figure 1 shows that the warehouse is situated within reach of a significant population of residents, workers, and students, including around 5,600 people within a 15-minute walk, approximately 46,000 within a 10-minute drive, and a further 59,500 within an 11 to 15-minute drive (Census 2021).

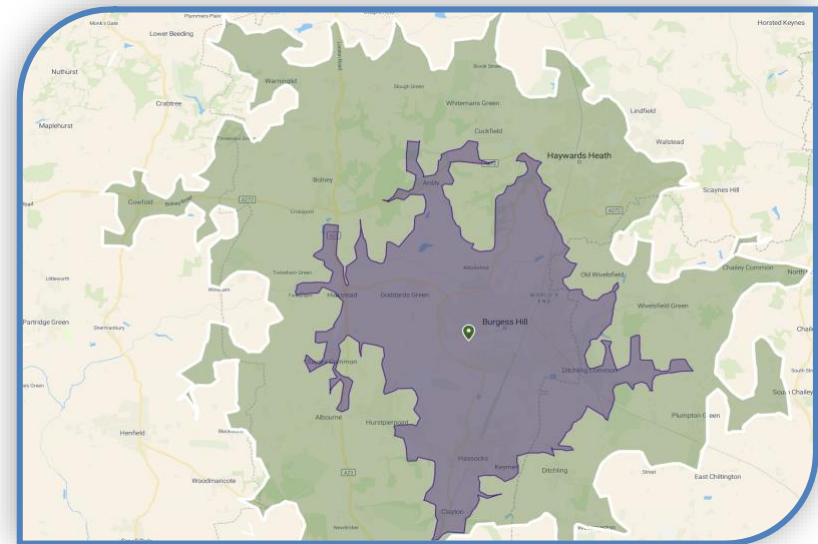


Figure 1: 10 and 15-minute drive-time from the proposed indoor padel venue

The venue is also within reach of 36 schools within five miles. ([West Sussex County Council](#) accessed March 2026) which is relevant to its potential role in supporting school and junior participation. Burgess Hill railway station is approximately 15 to 20 minutes on foot, according to Google Maps, indicating a reasonable level of public transport accessibility for some users.

Local health and physical activity need

Set against that accessible catchment, Sport England Active Lives data indicates that 27% of adults in Mid Sussex were not meeting recommended physical activity levels in 2024, despite improvements since 2020 (see Figure 2). Ward-level health data for Burgess Hill, Victoria also points to a wider prevention case: while most residents report good or very good health, around 14% report their health as fair, bad or very bad (Census 2021), indicating that there remains a meaningful local cohort for whom local opportunities to be active may be particularly important. Against that backdrop, the proposal would add more than just indoor sports capacity. It would provide a high-quality, affordable and physically accessible indoor venue, designed for year-round use, which could help reduce barriers linked to comfort, weather exposure and consistency of access.

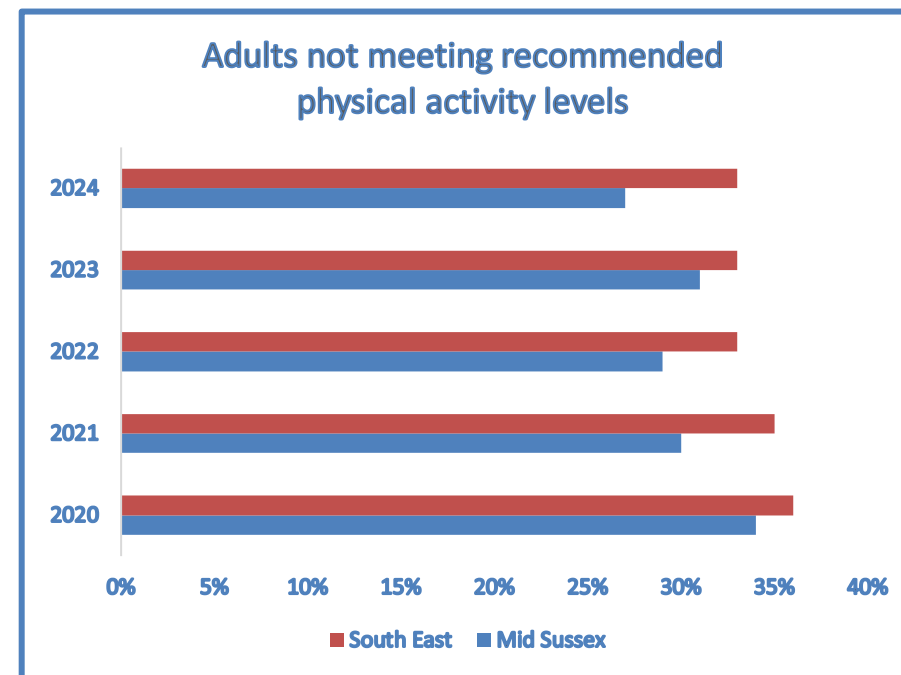


Figure 2: Active Lives, Sport England Physical Activity Levels for Mid Sussex

The Triangle Leisure Centre

Existing local padel provision is limited in scale and format. The nearest facility, at [The Triangle](#) Leisure Centre, comprises a single outdoor covered court. While this is a valuable local asset, the current proposal is materially different: it would provide a larger-scale, fully indoor, weather-protected venue designed for year-round use, with inclusive design features that would broaden its accessibility and usability for a wider range of users.

5. WIDER COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING BENEFITS

Beyond the immediate provision of indoor courts, the proposal has the potential to generate broader community and wellbeing benefits by creating a local place for regular shared activity. As a fully indoor venue, it would provide year-round opportunities for participation that are less dependent on weather or season, which is relevant to supporting routine use by local residents, families, schools and workplace groups.

The proposal could also support wider social connections. Padel is typically played in a social format, and a community-facing venue can create opportunities for informal interaction, repeat participation and broader community involvement rather than functioning solely as a specialist sports facility. In that respect, the proposal could make a meaningful contribution to community life in Burgess Hill.

More broadly, the scheme would provide an indoor leisure venue serving Burgess Hill and would add to a relatively limited stock of indoor padel provision. Based on our audit of existing and planned padel venues (Oxygen Consulting padel venue audit, December 2025), only around 20% of courts are fully indoor, with the remaining 80% outdoor, whether uncovered or covered. In that context, the proposal would make a relevant addition to the wider supply of reliable year-round indoor sport provision.

This is also consistent with the wider policy support for improved access to leisure, recreation and sports facilities in Burgess Hill and Mid Sussex.

Taken together, these wider benefits help demonstrate the proposal's community value to Burgess Hill as an accessible, year-round indoor sport and leisure facility.

6. INCLUSIVE OPERATING MODEL AND COMMUNITY ACCESS

The proposed venue is intended to operate as an affordable, community-focused indoor padel venue on a pay-to-play basis. This is relevant to the planning case because it helps explain how the proposal's claimed health, community and inclusion benefits could be delivered in practice rather than remaining aspirational. In particular, the operating model is intended to widen access to indoor padel, support a broader range of users, and provide more inclusive year-round local leisure provision.

Key features of the proposed operating model include:

1. **Affordable pay-to-play access:** The venue is intended to operate on a pay-to-play basis, with pricing intended to support broader access to year-round indoor provision. The intention is to widen access to the sport so that it is not limited to higher-income users.

2. **Variable pricing throughout the day:** Prices would fluctuate to support a more flexible, affordable offer.
3. **Concessions and targeted access:** Concessionary rates are intended for children and targeted adult groups. The proposal team is also exploring the possibility of donating some off-peak court time available to relevant local groups to further widen access.
4. **School and junior participation:** The operating model is intended to support local school and junior use, given the number of schools within a reasonable drive-time catchment and the cost barriers that can limit access to indoor courts.
5. **Older adult participation:** The venue is also intended to support programming for older adults. As a doubles sport, padel has the potential to offer a more comfortable and accessible route into regular physical activity for some older users.
6. **Inclusive design and accessibility:** The proposal aims to incorporate accessible design principles in line with Part M, including an accessible entrance, toilet and changing facilities, step-free movement through the venue, and access to the courts and viewing areas.

7. **Active programming and coaching:** The venue is intended to be fully staffed throughout operating hours, with a team of four coaches supporting beginner activity, junior coaching, social group sessions and wider participation opportunities. This is relevant because it indicates that the venue would be actively programmed rather than operating solely as a passive court-hire facility.
8. **Opening hours:** Proposed opening hours of 7 am to 11 pm would provide flexibility for different user groups, including schools, workers, families and older adults. These hours are also consistent with those approved under the earlier planning permission for the commercial building on the site (reference: DM/24/2970).

The proposal team is also exploring links with relevant local community groups and, potentially, social prescribing pathways. Social prescribing is the practice of connecting people to non-clinical community activities and support that may help improve health and wellbeing. While this remains exploratory, it is consistent with the wider intention to create a physically accessible, inclusive and welcoming venue in Burgess Hill that can support a broad cross-section of the local community.

7. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

The proposal would generate economic and social benefits at the local level by creating a staffed, community-facing indoor leisure venue in Burgess Hill. These benefits would arise through direct employment, freelance instructional work, contracted services and wider participation opportunities. Relevant benefits include:

Employment creation and associated service activity

Based on the current feasibility staffing model for a four-court indoor venue, the proposal is expected to support direct staffing equivalent to 6 to 8 full-time equivalent posts. This includes management, coaching, front-of-house, cleaning and wider operational support.

Employment creation and associated service activity			
Staffing / service category	Indicative number of roles	Current operating plan	Likely role in the venue
Core full-time employed roles	3	Club manager; assistant club manager; head/senior coach.	Day-to-day management, programming, coaching leadership and venue operations.

Part-time employed support team	9 roles	Team of 7 front-of-house staff working to rotas; 2 internal cleaners sharing the role.	Front desk, customer welcome, café/reception support, cleaning and operational cover across trading hours.
Freelance activity and instructional roles	6 roles	3 freelance coaches; 3 exercise instructors.	Coaching delivery, classes, instructional activity and wider participation programming.
Contracted specialist services	5 service areas	Marketing; accounting/payroll; health and safety support; window/signage cleaning and waste disposal	External specialist support required to operate and maintain the venue.

Table 1: Employment creation and associated service activity

Overall, the current operating model indicates a meaningful mix of direct, flexible and contracted work, with final staffing arrangements shaped by programming, events and operational demand.

Wider community-facing leisure value

- 1. **Community-facing leisure provision:** The proposal would create an active indoor leisure venue capable of serving residents, families, schools, workplace groups and older adults.
- 2. **School and group access:** The proposed operating model is intended to support junior activity, school engagement, beginner sessions and social group play. This is relevant to the venue’s role as a broader community asset rather than a narrow specialist offer.
- 3. **Exploratory off-peak community access:** The proposal team is also exploring the possibility of making off-peak court time available to relevant local groups. While this is not yet a formal commitment, it signals an intention to expand access where possible for groups that may otherwise face barriers to participation.

Collectively, these features reinforce the venue’s practical local value not only in employment terms, but also through participation, inclusion and wider community access.

8. SCALE OF PARTICIPATION SUPPORTED BY THE PROPOSAL

The proposed venue has the capacity to become a well-used indoor sports facility with meaningful participation value. On prudent assumptions drawn from the feasibility study (Oxygen Consulting, December 2025), the scheme could support approximately 44,605 annual player visits in Year 1, rising to around 49,289 at stabilised operation. These estimates are intentionally conservative and do not aim to capture the higher participant throughput that may arise from some coached sessions, social formats, or other group-based activities. Table 2 sets out this indicative estimate together with the principal assumptions.

Indicative annual player visits and underlying operating assumptions		
Metric	Year 1	Established Operation
Annual player visits	44,605	49,289
Annual booked court-hours	13,939	15,403
Occupancy across a 16 hour day	60.0%	66.3%
Assumed player visits generated per booked court-hour	3.2	3.2
Number of courts	4	4
Days open per year	363	363

Table 2: Indicative annual player visits and underlying operating assumptions

A facility that generates participation at this scale has the potential to serve as a meaningful local community asset rather than simply a private leisure use. The likely volume of visits suggests regular, repeated opportunities for physical activity, informal social contact, and community participation throughout the year. In public health terms, that matters because well-used, socially orientated and accessible places can help support healthier routines and stronger local connections.

Potential breadth of community reach

Based on careful assumptions, the proposed centre could potentially engage around 1,100 to 1,500 individual users in Year 1, increasing to approximately 1,250 to 1,650 as the venue becomes more established. This indicates that the venue has the capacity to engage a diverse range of users throughout the year, rather than catering solely to a small group of highly frequent players.

Annual player visits remain the most robust measure of likely usage. Indicative unique-user reach has been estimated using a blended repeat-participation assumption across occasional, emerging and regular users, recognising that some people will visit infrequently while a smaller core will play much more often.

This is better expressed as a range rather than a single fixed figure because the operating model is intended to encourage broad community access. In particular, booking arrangements can be managed to reduce the risk of a small number of highly frequent players dominating court availability. Combined with coaching, social sessions, introductory activity and other programmed formats, this could help support a wider spread of participation across the community.

9. COMMUNITY VALUE BEYOND SPORT IN BURGESS HILL

Taken as a whole, the proposal could deliver a range of material local benefits in Burgess Hill through the creation of an accessible, inclusive and fully indoor leisure venue. In planning terms, this is relevant because it would:

1. Widen access to year-round physical activity within a meaningful local catchment, including residents, schools, workplace groups, families, older adults and disabled users.
2. Provide a community-facing indoor leisure use with the potential to support wider wellbeing, social connection and inclusive participation.
3. Generate practical local benefits through employment, contracted services and broader access to leisure and wellbeing opportunities.

This is particularly relevant for older adults. Although activity levels do not decline evenly across all age groups, both national and local evidence suggest that inactivity becomes more pronounced in later life and that adults aged 65 and over are among the groups least likely to be active (Sport England, Active Lives Adult Survey, England data; West Sussex County Council Public Health and Social Research Unit, *Physical Activity Briefing*, August 2025).

Against that backdrop, a warm, fully indoor and weather-protected venue could help reduce practical barriers to participation and provide a more comfortable, consistent setting in which some older adults can remain active.

Overall, the proposal's benefits go beyond the provision of indoor padel courts alone. In Burgess Hill, it would create a fully indoor, weather-protected and inclusively designed leisure venue capable of supporting year-round physical activity, wider community participation and a broader local wellbeing offer through its courts, exercise studio and ancillary spaces. The proposal would enhance the town's leisure infrastructure in ways relevant to a wide range of users, including families, younger and older adults, schools, people with disabilities, and those seeking both active recreation and wellbeing activities. In that respect, it would make a positive contribution to local objectives around healthier lifestyles, access to leisure and sporting facilities, and the strengthening of community, health and recreation provision.

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