

Leisure Facilities Strategy 2017-2027

Mid-Point Review 2022



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Elite Sports Grant Recipients

Introduction

Rushcliffe is proud to be at the heart of Nottinghamshire sport, playing host to iconic facilities such as Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Nottingham Forest FC's City Ground, Holme Pierrepont National Water Sports Centre and Nottingham Rugby's 'Lady Bay' sports ground.

The Council recognises the role such facilities can play to inspire residents to take part in sport. Equally importantly we are committed to provide (directly and in partnership with others) leisure facilities to enable all of our community to lead healthy lives, by participating in a wide range of activities.

This document is a mid-point review of the 2017-2027 Leisure Facilities Strategy which sets out the Council's vision and key strategic objectives. It supports the suite of local plan documents to guide future leisure requirements arising from housing growth across the Borough. The strategy has been written as a concise summary to aid usability and will be underpinned by more detailed delivery plans such as the Playing Pitch Strategy and Local Football Facilities Plan.

We have reviewed a range of evidence and responses to consultation which highlighted the main national and local issues this strategy should consider.

Finally, as Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change, I am delighted to have overseen the development of this important strategy and look forward to seeing it come to fruition.



Cllr Abby Brennan
Portfolio Holder, Communities and Climate Change

Executive Summary

This document highlights the achievements of the first five years of the Leisure Facilities Strategy 2017-27 which sets out the vision, key strategic objectives, and the framework of principles for the Council to ensure leisure provision meets the needs of our residents over the remaining five years and beyond. Care has been taken to ensure that the strategy supports and contributes towards the Council's goals, core values and priorities for improvement as embodied within the Council's Corporate Strategy. The Leisure Facilities Strategy supports the suite of local plan documents to guide future leisure requirements arising from housing growth across the Borough.

The strategy covers indoor leisure facilities directly provided by Rushcliffe Borough Council as well as outdoor playing pitch facilities owned by a range of providers across the Borough such as town and parish councils, schools, and community sports clubs.

Stakeholder consultation was undertaken to understand the development of leisure facilities as well as the satisfaction of users.

**Our
vision:**

“To provide high quality, financially sustainable leisure facilities to support Rushcliffe residents to enjoy healthy, active lives”



Our guiding principles



- To protect and enhance facilities where there is evidence of need
- To invest in major facility enhancements only where a sound business case exists
- To work in partnership to meet the needs of communities
- To focus on improving community health and wellbeing

Our six objectives (2023-2027)



1. To retain five indoor leisure facilities and ensure they are fit for the future by:
 - a) Completing Bingham Arena and maintaining community usage of the sports hall and outdoor leisure provision at Bingham Leisure Centre/Toot Hill School
 - b) Developing a business case for capital investment to refurbish and develop the existing Cotgrave Leisure Centre and Keyworth Leisure Centre
 - c) Maintaining the quality of provision at all five sites by producing a prioritised capital programme for investment not only from an end user but also from a carbon reduction and energy reduction perspective
 - d) Closely monitoring the performance of facility operators
 - e) Re-tendering for a Leisure Provider to deliver the Leisure Contracts from 2028
2. Supporting partners/parishes to deliver the priority projects within the Playing Pitch Strategy
3. Addressing inequalities in participation
4. Working in partnership with local health services to support 'the inactive' into regular activity
5. Maintaining the existing local standards for provision of open space, children's' play and allotments
6. Creating more outdoor wellbeing opportunities including walking and cycling throughout the Borough to encourage Active Travel and support our Carbon neutral by 2050 objective

Strategy Development and Mid-Point Review

Context

Rushcliffe Borough Council produced the first 10-year Leisure Facilities Strategy in 2006, which was subsequently reviewed in 2011. The initial Strategy resulted in some significant changes to leisure provision and management across the Borough which included the transfer of the management of the five leisure centres from direct delivery to specialist leisure providers.

This was then followed by the publication of the current Leisure Facilities Strategy in 2017 which sets out the Council's provision and development of leisure facilities over a further 10-year period. This mid-point review aims to ensure that we remain on track in delivering our strategic objectives and if any emerging priorities need to be included of the next 5 years until the end of the current strategy period.

Key achievements in the first 5 years (2017-2022) include:

-  Replaced the oldest leisure provision in the Borough at Bingham Leisure Centre with a new modern facility at Bingham Arena, whilst maintaining the sports hall and outdoor facilities at Bingham Leisure Centre
-  Development at Gresham Sports Park which includes the installation of a second 3G pitch, the resurface of the existing 3G pitch, grass pitch improvements and pavilion upgrade enabling us to deliver our priorities of targeting equality and inclusion, such as women and girls, disability sport and socio-economic targeted groups
-  Renegotiation of the contract with Parkwood Community Leisure for Rushcliffe Arena, resulting in significant financial savings
-  Improvement of five concrete skate parks – East Leake, The Hook - Lady Bay, Radcliffe-On-Trent, Rushcliffe Country Park and Keyworth
-  Development of new and enhanced children's play facilities across the Borough based on the adopted 'spatial standards of provision'



-  Supported 3G facility development at Platt Lane in Keyworth and pavilion development at Costock Road in East Leake
-  Resurfacing of Bingham athletics track including repairs to the steeplechase, long jump and sandpits
-  Developed a walking and cycling action plan to encourage Active Travel and support the Council's Carbon Reduction objectives
-  Successful introduction of Studio 3 at Rushcliffe Arena following a post Covid-19 review of the indoor bowls hall, to be a multi-functional space including group exercise classes, wellbeing activities and events
-  Refurbishment of the Education Centre at Rushcliffe Country Park which includes the introduction of a café and Changing Places toilet, new audio-visual equipment to enable meeting room bookings and a historical interpretation of the site
-  Feasibility study and ongoing course improvements at Edwalton Golf Centre resulting in increased usage and club membership



Why was the Strategy developed?

This strategy aims to build on and refresh the previous strategies to reflect the current operating environment which has changed significantly since 2006. Major contemporary influences on leisure provision include the adoption of an approved core strategy which identifies the growth areas for 13,150 new homes by 2028. As of 31 March 2022, 5,596 had been built, which equates to 42.6%.

The Leisure Facilities Strategy is required to present the Council's objectives and priorities to ensure that future leisure facility provision continues to meet the changing needs of residents, whilst remaining financially sustainable.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear about the role that sport plays in delivering sustainable communities through promoting health and well-being. Local authorities are therefore required to plan and provide accordingly through policy and development management.

This aligns with the local policy, 'Spatial Planning for the Health & Wellbeing of Nottinghamshire,' which Rushcliffe Borough Council signed up to in 2016. This document intends to make Nottinghamshire a place that improves the mental and physical wellbeing of residents, reduces health inequalities and promotes the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs), where appropriate.

The NPPF (paragraph 73) explicitly notes that: "Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area".

Sport England guidance, in line with the NPPF (paragraph 73) advocates that planning for sport in communities should be based on a clear strategy which sets out the case to protect, enhance and provide facilities (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Sport England Strategic Planning Model

How was the Strategy developed?

The methodology adopted followed Sport England's "Assessing needs and opportunities guide for indoor and outdoor sports facilities". The quality of the indoor leisure stock of the Council was assessed through an independent condition survey undertaken (incorporating both the fabric of the buildings and mechanical and electrical services).

Sport England was commissioned to undertake a detailed evaluation of the demand, quantity and accessibility of leisure centres using sophisticated facilities planning model software. Two scenarios were modelled. This consisted of a baseline assessment for 2016 and a forward-looking assessment for the year 2028.

Specialist playing pitch consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page were commissioned to undertake an audit, condition survey and stakeholder consultation to develop the outdoor leisure element of the strategy.

This involved a detailed assessment of the number and quality of sports pitch sites as well as consultation meetings and surveys of both pitch providers and users. This action plan for delivery has been updated by officers in 2019 and is currently being reviewed for 2022/23.



Costock Road Pavilion – East Leake



Why was the Mid-Point Review developed?

The mid-point review aims to build on and update the Council's 10-year Leisure Strategy which was developed in 2017, highlighting the work already completed and identifying any changing priorities that have emerged over the past 5 years.

With a growing emphasis on using green, blue and open spaces for leisure, Active Travel and the introduction of the Council's Walking and Cycling Action Plan, it is imperative this is captured in this review.

How was the Mid-Point Review developed?

In 2017, responsibility for the development of the Leisure Strategy was delegated to the cross-party Community Development Scrutiny Group, which consisted of an analysis of supply (quality, quantity and accessibility), needs assessment, physical activity participation trends, leisure industry trends and stakeholder consultation findings.

This review will not undertake any technical assessments but will seek stakeholder consultation with residents, sports clubs and organisations, town and parish Council's and schools, to understand usage and satisfaction of the leisure facilities, playing pitches, parks, and open spaces throughout the borough.

In 2019 an initial review of the 10 year Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), which was developed to highlight the outdoor leisure element of the Leisure Strategy, was undertaken. To update and monitor recommendations and actions, and to identify any new developments, advice and guidance was sought from the National Governing Bodies (NGBs), sports clubs/organisations and schools. This is currently being updated and a mid-point review for the PPS will be produced to compliment the Leisure Strategy mid-point review.

Tour of Britain



Cycling in the Borough



Scope and Vision

Scope

The strategic recommendations of this review will be supported by more detailed delivery plans which will follow the production of this document.

The playing pitch element of the strategy focuses geographically on all provision including both public and private ownership and control relating to club, education, and industrial ownership, as follows:

- Football pitches (including grass and 3G pitches)
- Rugby union pitches (including grass and 3G pitches)
- Cricket pitches
- Artificial grass pitches (AGPs)
- Outdoor tennis
- Outdoor bowls
- Athletics
- Outdoor netball

The inclusion of non-pitch sports i.e. tennis, bowls, netball is covered by separate guidance (Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide - ANOG). Thus, where applied, the approach to assessing non-pitch venues is a supply/demand assessment based on a 'light touch' approach.

Since the implementation of the Leisure Strategy in 2017, the Football Association (FA) has developed the Rushcliffe Local Football Facilities Plan (2019), which enables investment in football facilities to be accurately targeted. The plan identifies priority sites for funding to develop playing pitches, changing pavilions and clubhouses. A review of this strategy will take place in early 2023.

A feasibility study into Edwalton Golf Centre has been undertaken during this period and associated investment has resulted in improved course conditions, which in turn has increased footfall and club membership. To ensure the Council explores opportunities to protect and enhance facilities where there is evidence of need, this work will continue over the next period.

The study also includes an audit of skate park provision across the Borough. Existing spacial standards for children's play facilities were not reviewed as part of this strategy and will be retained at current levels.

Our vision:

“To provide high quality, financially sustainable leisure facilities to support Rushcliffe residents to enjoy healthy, active lives”

Strategic Context

Background

Rushcliffe lies immediately south of the City of Nottingham and the River Trent and extends across towards Newark in the north east and Loughborough in the south west. Rushcliffe covers 157 square miles (around 400 sq km) and the circumference of the Borough is 72.8miles (123.3km).

Although parts of the Borough lie close to Nottingham, Rushcliffe has a strong identity of its own with a population of 119,000 (ONS 2021), an increase of 7.1% since 2011.

The main centre of population is West Bridgford with a population of 45,667 (ONS 2021), and it is also the home of Trent Bridge Cricket Ground and the City Ground, home of Nottingham Forest Football Club.

There are six other large settlements – Bingham (population: 10,349), Radcliffe-on-Trent (8,266), Cotgrave (8,299), Keyworth (6,687), Ruddington (7,913) and East Leake (8,290) – and a large number of smaller villages dispersed throughout the remainder of the Borough, which is largely rural in character (ONS 2021).

There are 37 town and parish councils covering Rushcliffe, and 17 parish meetings, some of which own and manage playing pitch provision and small activity halls.

Rushcliffe's population is also notable for its more elderly profile. Compared to 2011, the 2021 Census reported an increase of 26.3% in people aged 65 years and over, compared to an increase of 2.7% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 4.4% in children aged under 15 years.

Rushcliffe Health and Activity profile Update

Although deprivation is lower in Rushcliffe than the England average, 6.9% of children live in poverty. Life expectancy in areas of Rushcliffe with highest deprivation is 6.6 years (men) and 4.3 years (women) lower than in the least deprived areas.

11.3% of children in year 6 are classified as obese – the figure for adults is 18%. Out of the 32 indicators which make up the Rushcliffe Health Profile (compiled by Public Health England 2020) Rushcliffe is significantly better than the England average, but within this predominantly positive picture there are pockets of deprivation and health inequalities which require a targeted approach.

Rushcliffe has the most active population in Nottinghamshire with 67.3% of residents aged over 16 years taking part in 150+ minutes of activity each week, a slight increase of 0.7% compared to 2017 when the Leisure Strategy was published. The levels of physical inactivity (less than 30 minutes per week), are better than the England average of 27.2% but still represent more than one in five people (22.2%) (Source: Active Lives Adult Survey November 2020-21 Report – Published April 2022)

Health Guidelines Update

The Chief Medical Officers of the four Home Countries report evidence showing that physical activity has a range of health benefits, recommending that:

Adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Alternatively similar benefits can be obtained through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity.

Children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.

People of all ages should minimise the amount of time spent sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.



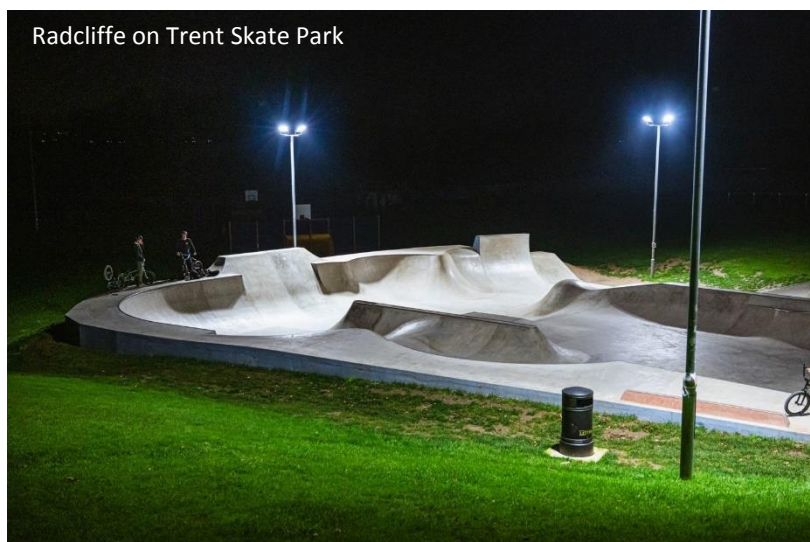
Policy

A broad range of national, regional and local policy documentation has been reviewed to provide the context for the strategic framework:

- National Planning Policy Framework 2021
- Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation 2016
- Sport England – Uniting the Movement 2021 - 2031
- Childhood Obesity: a plan for action, chapter 2 – U.K. Government (updated June 2018)
- The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2022 - 2026
- Nottinghamshire Spatial Planning and Health Framework 2019 – 2022
- Rushcliffe Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2019 - 2023
- Active Rushcliffe Health Partnership Strategy 2021 - 2025

In general terms, these identify a broad set of aims and objectives to encourage:

- Planning for healthier communities and environments
- Residents to be physically active through any means, not just playing sport
- Increasing activity levels of all groups within society, but with a focus on the 'inactive'
- Physical activity to be introduced from an early age and become a lifelong habit
- Awareness amongst residents of the threat that a poor diet and lack of exercise can pose to their physical and mental health
- The leadership role that local councils play in the provision of leisure participation opportunities
- Co-location of services, flexible multi-sport hubs and partnership working



Covid-19 and Cost of Living Crisis

In March 2020, the country went into lockdown due to the global pandemic Covid-19, and the government issued guidance on social distancing which limited people to outdoor exercise once a day.

In April 2021 Sport England published the first findings for the impact of Covid-19 on sport and physical activity. It revealed that

‘Despite a huge effort from activity providers to adapt throughout the year and continued efforts by the population to remain active by switching to alternative or adapted activities, the pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our ability to take part in sport and physical activity’

(Active Lives Adult Survey November 2019/20 Report, page 3)

- Nationally the number of ACTIVE adults fell by 1.9% or 710,000 compared to 12 months earlier
- Nationally the number of INACTIVE adults rose by 2.6% or 1.2 million compared to 12 months earlier

For the same period, the Active Lives Children’s Survey also reported fewer children and young people were active, falling by 2.3%, with just over 100,000 fewer children meeting the recommended level of activity compared to the same period 12 months earlier.

With the closure of gyms, stadiums, pools, dance and fitness studios, the number of people walking, running, cycling, and doing at home fitness increased, limiting the negative impact on overall activity levels.

1.6m children and young people went for a walk (+22.2%) or did fitness activities (+22.1%) whilst 1.4m more cycled for fun or fitness (+18.4%).

In March 2020 when the pandemic began, all sports clubs ceased training and competition, and NGBs worked to produce rules and guidance specific to their sport for the safe ‘Return to Play’.

Several funding streams were made available for sports clubs to support them through the pandemic and to get back on their feet. In May 2020 Sport England’s Emergency Fund saw an allocation to sports clubs in Rushcliffe - 18 applications were submitted, 10 assessed and 6 approved with 60% of applications being awarded a total of £22,305.

As restrictions started to lift and NGBs moved through the different steps of their 'Return to Play' guidance, some sports clubs were faced with facility access issues. Restrictions on facilities and how operators had to use them put pressure on the space that was available, and some sports returned before others, depending on whether they were played outdoors or indoors.



Cost of Living

A recent survey by London Sport showed the rising cost of living is limiting people's ability to take part in sport and physical activity with 27% of people across the UK reporting that they are less active, and 33% are now discouraged from using their local leisure facilities, due to the associated costs. (London 2012 Games Legacy Report, July 2022 - <http://londonsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/London-2012-report-1.pdf>)

In a recent survey conducted by The Children's Society, 85% of parents and carers are concerned about the impact of the cost of living crisis on their family over the next 12 months. (The Children's Society, The Good Childhood Report 2022 - <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood>)

The impact on leisure facilities will be great, not only by the increase in their running costs, but also by the reduced number of people accessing their facilities and services. This brings challenges to look at how energy costs can be reduced.

Covid-19 and the current cost of living crisis has highlighted the importance of creating more opportunities for residents to enjoy the Boroughs outdoor parks and open spaces to improve their mental and physical wellbeing and that these opportunities are free at the point of entry.

Feedback from Consultation

As part of the consultation, several surveys were made available for the Council to understand the wider leisure provision in Rushcliffe and views from across the borough. These surveys targeted:

- Sports Clubs and Organisations
- Secondary Schools
- Residents

Sports Clubs and Organisations – 18 sports clubs and organisations responded to the survey with all but 5 of them using Council-owned Leisure Centres for training and competition. 28% use other venues, parks or playing fields operated by the Council, namely Rushcliffe Country Park, Gresham Sports Park, Alford Road and West Park.

37% rated the quality of the facility they use as excellent or good, with 47% rating it as adequate.

When asked how the club has been affected by Covid-19 50% stated they drastically lost members during this time, and only recently have seen numbers slowly increase to what it was pre-pandemic. 17% reported that they have seen a significant increase in membership and in some cases, the club does not have the capacity to accept more members. 74% are expecting to see an increase in membership in the next 12-18 months.



Secondary Schools – all Rushcliffe secondary schools (including Nottingham Emmanuel) were contacted to complete a survey to help us understand community use of their leisure facilities. A total of 3 of the 7 schools responded, all of whom provide community access to their sports facilities.

Two sites provide over 20 hours per week access with only 1 school reporting an increase in community use following the pandemic. 67% of schools indicated more requests to hire than they can accommodate. This highlights the important role of schools in the overall facility provision in the Borough.

Residents – A total of 184 residents completed the survey of which 70% use Council owned Leisure Centres, with Rushcliffe Arena being the most popular (37%). 55% rated the quality of the facility/facilities used as excellent or good and 27% adequate.

21% of residents stated they are more active compared to before the pandemic, and 60% reported their level of sport and /or physical activity is about the same.

Swimming is the most popular activity with 42% of residents stating they regularly take part, with walking a close second with 32% of those who completed the survey reporting this as their regular form of physical activity.

80% of residents stated they would welcome more opportunities across the borough to walk and cycle.



Nottingham Leander Swimming Club

Strategic Objectives

1. Retain five indoor leisure facilities and ensure they are fit for the future:

Bingham Arena and former Leisure Centre

- Completion of Bingham Arena and to maintain community usage of the sports hall and outdoor leisure provision at Bingham Leisure Centre/Toot Hill School

Cotgrave and Keyworth Leisure Centres

- Develop a business case for capital investment to refurbish and develop within the next two years

East Leake Leisure Centre

- Review the contracted agreement with Mitie

Operational Management, Carbon Reduction and Modernisation

- Maintain the quality of provision at all five sites by producing a prioritised capital programme for investment not only from an end user but also from a carbon reduction and energy reduction perspective
- Tender for a leisure provider to deliver the leisure contract from 2028
- Support the maximum utilisation of all leisure centre facilities

2. Support partners/parishes to deliver the priority projects within the playing pitch strategy

- The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is a live document which supports the development of the Borough's pitches. The PPS mid-point review 2022/2023 is a supporting document to this strategy

3. Address inequalities in participation

- Undertake a phased programme of disability inclusion audits and produce an action plan to increase participation
- Review a package of measures (including pricing strategy, promotion and programming) to increase participation by residents in the lower (5-8) National Statistics Social Economic Classification groups

4. Work with local health services to support 'the inactive' into regular activity

- Continue to support the re-launched GP Referral programme
- Continue to deliver the Active Rushcliffe Health Partnership Action Plan
- Evaluate the success of the Reach Rushcliffe funding programme which aims to tackle social isolation and loneliness and consider future funding options
- Based on Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB) need, establish local connections with NHS services at Leisure Centre Manager level

5. Maintain the existing local standards, as per The Local Plan for provision of open space, children's play and allotments

- Formal and informal amenity open space and formal paths and gardens 0.72 hectares per 1,000 population
- Equipped children's play areas 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
- Unequipped children's play areas 0.55 hectares per 1,000 population

6. Create more outdoor wellbeing opportunities including walking and cycling throughout the Borough to encourage Active Travel and support our Carbon Neutral by 2050 objective

- Continue to invest in our parks and open spaces to ensure that people have access to wellbeing opportunities
- Deliver the Walking and Cycling Action Plan, which was supported by Scrutiny in February 2022, focussing on three key priorities - Promotion; Safety; Infrastructure





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