

# Leisure Facilities Strategy 2017-2027



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# 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'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.

The opening of Rushcliffe Arena in January 2017 represented a significant step forward in the quality of our indoor leisure provision and was a major achievement resulting from our first leisure strategy.

This document sets out the Council's vision and key strategic objectives for the next 10 years. 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 for outdoor sports pitches.

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 Community and Leisure I am delighted to have overseen the development of this important strategy and look forward to seeing it come to fruition.

I wish to record my personal thanks to the members of Rushcliffe Borough Council's Community Development Group and all others involved for their dedication and hard work over a period of 12 months to guide the production of the strategy.



**Cllr Debbie Mason**  
Portfolio Holder, Community & Leisure

# Executive Summary

This document sets out the vision, key strategic objectives and a framework of principles for the Council to ensure leisure provision meets the needs of our residents over the next 10 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.

Extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken as well as a comprehensive assessment of the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing provision. In addition to this, research into a range of national, regional and local strategic influences has informed the final content of the strategy.

**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 five objectives



1. To retain five indoor leisure facilities and ensure they are fit for the future by:
  - a) Developing a business case for capital investment in Bingham Leisure Centre within five years
  - b) Maintaining the quality of provision at the four other sites by producing a prioritised capital programme
  - c) Closely monitoring the performance of facility operators
2. Supporting partners/parishes to deliver the priority projects within the playing pitch strategy
3. To address inequalities in participation
4. To work with local health services to support 'the inactive' into regular activity
5. To maintain the existing local standards for provision of open space, childrens' play and allotments

# Why and how was the strategy developed?

## Context

Rushcliffe Borough Council produced the first leisure facilities strategy in 2006, which was subsequently updated in 2011. The original strategy was written to guide the provision and development of leisure facilities over a period of 10 years. It resulted in some significant changes to leisure provision and management across the Borough.

Key achievements include:

- 
 Transfer of the management of five leisure centres to Parkwood Community Leisure, delivering significant revenue savings for the Council
- 
 Realisation of the vision to rationalise provision in West Bridgford from two outmoded facilities into one new, state-of-the-art facility at Rushcliffe Arena
- 
 Renegotiation of the contract with Parkwood Community Leisure for Rushcliffe Arena, resulting in significant financial savings
- 
 East Leake Leisure Centre – on-going contract negotiation of the PFI arrangement with Carillion
- 
 Partnership working with other public sector bodies to open 'Gresham Sports Park' which includes a top quality 3G synthetic turf sports pitch, grass football pitches and changing pavilion
- 
 Redeveloped the dilapidated Alford Road changing facility into a new six changing room pavilion
- 
 Developed new and enhanced children's play facilities across the Borough based on the adopted 'spatial standards of provision'



Rushcliffe parkrun



Ellie Downie - Rushcliffe Sport Awards

## Why was the strategy developed?

This strategy aims to build on and refresh the previous strategy to reflect the current operating environment which has changed significantly since 2006. Major contemporary influences on leisure provision include a prolonged period of public sector austerity which has put increased pressure on revenue budgets and the adoption of an approved core strategy which identifies the growth areas for 13,000 new homes by 2028.

A new strategy is therefore 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?

Rushcliffe Borough Council Cabinet delegated responsibility to the cross-party Community Development Scrutiny Group to oversee the development of the updated strategy.

The Community Development Scrutiny Group agreed the scope of the strategy and debated detailed investigation work over a period of 12 months. This consisted of an analysis of supply (quality, quantity and accessibility), needs assessment, physical activity participation trends, leisure industry trends and stakeholder consultation findings.

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 in November 2016 (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 to model the impact of the new Rushcliffe Arena, closure of Rushcliffe Leisure Centre and changes to population through housing growth and demographic factors such as population ageing.

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.

Stakeholder consultation consisted of a survey of all sports clubs using RBC indoor facilities, a survey of all secondary schools within the Borough, consultation presentations at two Rushcliffe Town and Parish Council forums, a survey of Town and Parish Councils, written consultation with other stakeholders and promotion of an opportunity for leisure centre users to provide their views.



# Scope and vision

## Scope

The strategy covers a ten year period from 2017 onwards. However, given the on-going changes in the operating environment a review and refresh will be undertaken after five years. The strategy, by its very nature, provides high level direction of the Council's ambitions. The strategic recommendations will therefore be supported by more detailed delivery plans which will follow the production of this document.

The strategy focuses on indoor leisure centres directly provided by Rushcliffe Borough Council and considers provision and demand across local authority boundaries. The strategy does not cover community halls, golf or countryside/natural resources such as facilities for sailing or rowing.

The playing pitch element of the strategy focuses geographically on all local 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.

The study also includes an audit of skatepark provision across the Borough. Existing special standards for childrens play facilities were not reviewed as part of this strategy and will be retained at current levels.



Nottingham Rugby Club

**Our vision:**

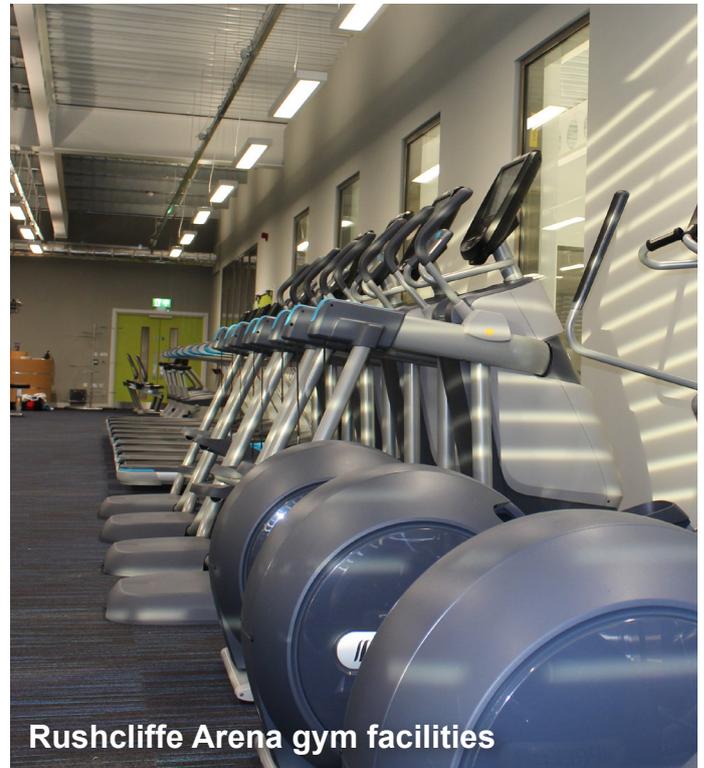
***“To provide high quality, financially sustainable leisure facilities to support Rushcliffe residents to enjoy healthy, active lives”***

Based upon the Sport England ANOG guidance the key outcomes identified for the needs assessment are:

- Contributing to aims and objectives for improving health and wellbeing and increasing participation in sport
- Developing a priority list of deliverable projects which will help to meet any current deficiencies; provide for future demands and feed into wider infrastructure planning work
- Providing evidence to help protect and enhance existing provision
- Providing evidence to help secure internal and external funding
- Ensuring the most efficient management and maintenance of sports facility provision in response to identified issues such as budgetary pressures



Rushcliffe Arena swimming pool



Rushcliffe Arena gym facilities

# 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 72.8 miles (123.3 km).

Although parts of the Borough lie close to Nottingham, Rushcliffe has a strong identity of its own. The main centre of population is West Bridgford, where around 41,000 of the Borough's 111,100 population live. West Bridgford 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: 9131), Radcliffe-on-Trent (8205), Cotgrave (7203), Keyworth (6733), Ruddington (7216) and East Leake (6337) – and a large number of smaller villages dispersed throughout the remainder of the Borough, which is largely rural in character.

There are 55 parish/town councils covering Rushcliffe, some of which own and manage playing pitch provision and small activity halls.

Rushcliffe's population is also notable for its more elderly profile. There is a lower percentage of 25-29 year olds in Rushcliffe than is generally the case in the rest of the country and an above average proportion of adults aged over 45 years.

## Rushcliffe health and activity profile

Although deprivation is lower in Rushcliffe than the England average, 7.3% of children live in poverty. Life expectancy in areas of Rushcliffe with highest deprivation is 6.1 years (men) and 6.3 years (women) lower than in the least deprived areas.

9.7% of children in year 6 are classified as obese – the figure for adults is 19.1%. Out of the 32 indicators which make up the Rushcliffe Health Profile (compiled by Public Health England 2015) Rushcliffe is significantly better than the England average in 27 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 63% of residents aged over 16 years taking part in 150+ minutes of activity each week. The levels of physical inactivity (less than 30 minutes per week), are better than the England average of 27.7% but still represent more than one in five people (22.3%). Investigating the Rushcliffe data in more detail highlights increased levels of inactivity by specific sectors; namely people with a limiting disability, lower socio-economic groups (NSEC 5-8) and females (**source: Active People survey 9**).

## Health guidelines

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

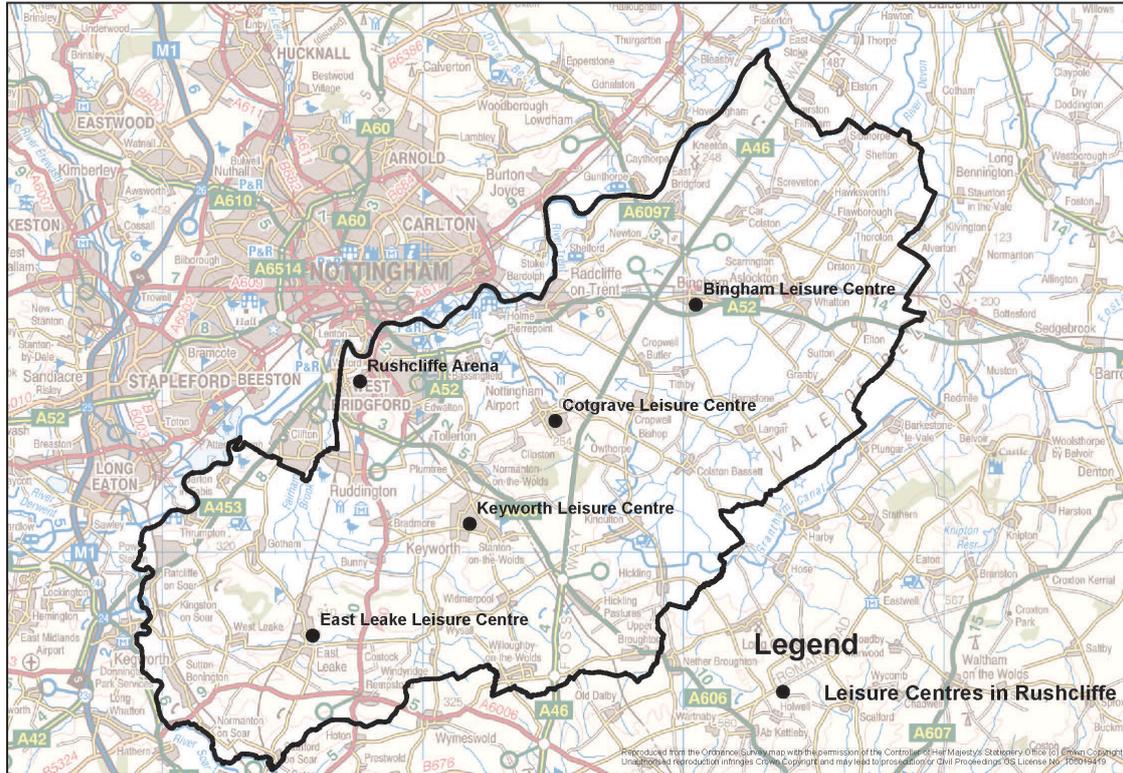
A broad range of national, regional and local policy documentation has been reviewed to provide the context for the strategic framework:

- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation 2016
- Sport England – Towards an Active Nation 2016-2021
- Childhood Obesity: a plan for action – U.K. Government (updated Jan 2017)
- Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017
- Nottinghamshire Tackling Excess Weight Action Plan 2016/17
- Spatial Planning for the Health & Wellbeing of Nottinghamshire 2016
- Rushcliffe Borough Council Corporate Strategy – Building on Firm Foundations 2016-2020
- Rushcliffe Borough Council – Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy adopted 2014
- Rushcliffe Health Partnership Action Plan 2016-17
- Active Rushcliffe Action Plan 2016-17

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

## Current provision



## Condition survey summary

A condition survey was undertaken in November 2016 for the leisure centres in Bingham, Cotgrave and Keyworth. Other sites were not included - East Leake has a separate PFI contract including maintenance, Rushcliffe Leisure Centre closed in December 2016 and Rushcliffe Arena opened in January 2017.

The condition surveys assessed the buildings' structure and fabric, internal and external finishes and mechanical and electrical services. Estimated costs cover essential health and safety and the maintenance of acceptable operational and quality standards but not improvements in layout, car-parking or additional sports capacity.

Works were categorised as short-term (0-5 years), medium-term (5-10 years) and long-term (10-15 years). It is estimated that around £1.5M of works are recommended in the short term, rising to a total of £5M within the next 15 years.

Bingham Leisure Centre, as the largest and oldest of the sites assessed, unsurprisingly requires the most significant works in the short, medium and long term. The cost of maintaining Bingham continues to increase within each five year time frame over the fifteen year period. This is in contrast to Cotgrave and Keyworth where initial investment in the short-term reduces costs required in the medium and long term. Bingham is therefore highlighted as a priority site for replacement/substantial improvement.

# Assessment of needs

## Facilities Planning Model key findings

Rushcliffe Borough Council has developed the evidence base for the strategy by undertaking an assessment of the supply, demand and access to swimming pools and sports halls by applying the Sport England Facility Planning Model (fpm). The modelling is based on the population of Rushcliffe and all neighbouring authorities in 2016 and 2028 and includes facilities provided by private operators and schools.

The assessment established that:

- By 2028 there will be a 16.3% increase in demand for swimming and 19.4% increase in demand for sports halls
- In 2016 over 80% of all visits to pools and sports halls are by car
- The average age of facilities by 2028 will be 36 years
- Overall satisfied demand (the proportion of total demand that is met by capacity at facilities for residents who live within the catchment area) is very high for both pools and halls in 2016 and 2028
- Public sports halls have a high level of used capacity - however this varies between facilities
- Retained demand is very high at over 70% of satisfied demand. This means that over seven out of ten visits to a sports hall/pool by a Rushcliffe resident is to a venue located within the Borough
- The swimming pools and halls are very well placed in relation to the location of Rushcliffe demand
- The overall strategic focus from the fpm is very much on modernisation or re-provision of the existing sports halls and swimming pools, with Bingham Leisure Centre highlighted as the site of greatest need

## Feedback from consultation

Leisure Centre Clubs – 25 clubs representing over 2,000 members from all leisure centres responded to the survey. Overall 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with the leisure facilities provided. Half of the clubs stated that membership had increased over the previous 2 years and this was expected to continue, however despite this 80% were satisfied with the number of hours available to hire.

The key facilities issue identified for improvement was car parking (particularly at Bingham Leisure Centre).

Town and parish councils – consultation was undertaken through a workshop at the Parish Forum, attended by 40 delegates representing 17 parish and town councils. This was built upon with a survey of all town and parish councils and finally the draft strategy document was consulted upon.

The issues raised by parish councils were the quality/accessibility of Bingham Leisure Centre, community demand for improved provision in Radcliffe on Trent and concerns over rural transport.

Secondary Schools – all Rushcliffe secondary schools (including Nottingham Emmanuel) were surveyed in November 2016. A total of 6 of the 8 schools responded, all of whom provided community access to their sports facilities. Four sites provide over 20 hours per week access and 90% report an increase in community use over the last 2 years. Half of the 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. (Note: two of the schools that responded provide joint-use leisure facilities.)

The following organisations were consulted on the draft strategy;

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  NHS Rushcliffe Clinical Commissioning Group |  Rushcliffe town and parish councils |  West Bridgford Local Area Forum |
|  Notts County Sport Partnership              |  Rushcliffe secondary schools        |   |
|  Neighbouring local authorities              |  Sport England                       |   |

# Strategic Objectives

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

### Bingham Leisure Centre

- Develop a business case for capital investment for a major facility improvement within five years
- Establish a site location, subject to the business case

### Cotgrave Leisure Centre

- Prioritise a programme of essential maintenance and incorporate into the medium-term financial plan
- Explore opportunities for internal reconfiguration following the relocation of other public sector partners to the new Cotgrave multi-service hub

### East Leake Leisure Centre

- Review the contracted agreement with Carillion Leisure

### Keyworth Leisure Centre

- Prioritise a programme of essential maintenance and incorporate into the medium-term financial plan
- Explore the business case and options to enable an increase in exercise class provision

### Rushcliffe Arena

- Assess the impact of the new centre establishing 'lessons learned' to inform future facility improvements
- Support the maximum utilisation of all leisure centre facilities including the re-establishment of a sustainable indoor bowls club

## 2. Support partners/parishes to deliver the priority projects within the Playing Pitch Strategy

- A detailed playing pitch strategy will follow in summer 2017 as a supporting document to this strategy
- Support partners and parishes to provide sustainable skatepark facilities across the Borough

### **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**

- Review and re-launch the GP referral programme
- Develop a programme of activities for older people across Rushcliffe
- Based on Clinical Commissioning Group need, establish local connections with NHS services at Leisure Centre Manager level

### **5. Maintain the existing local standards for provision of open space, children's play and allotments as follows:**

- Formal and informal amenity open space and formal paths and gardens 0.72 hectares per 1000 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
- Allotments 0.4 hectares per 1,000 population



Rushcliffe  
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