

2018-2020

Sport and Physical Activity Development Plan



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE
TOWN COUNCIL

“A community to be proud of”

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Executive Summary

The Town Council has sought the creation of a Sport and Physical Activity development plan so that it can try and help adopt a holistic approach to the provision of sport and physical activity across its geographical area.

The plan seeks to assess current club and activity provision, the facilities that support these activities, and estimate future facility needs and requirements to ensure that good quality, sustainable demand-led facilities and activities remain available to its residents.

The scope of the plan is to help comprised a review of existing and projected facility stock, a detailed overview of sporting provision available through the sporting club network, together with an overview of non-club-based opportunities available through the Leisure Centre, Community Centres and the Parks and Open Spaces across the Town. It also looked at the support and resources available through national and local sporting agencies and the opportunities to for possible partnership working to try and secure a future inward investment to help satisfy the demand of an increasing and ageing population.

Significantly the plan includes a number of potential partnership actions which, if jointly implemented, will positively impact upon the Town's vision to 'improve what we have, to try and create new facilities and work in partnership to ensure that we have excellent quality and sustainable sport and physical activity opportunities for the town.



1.0 Introduction

The Leighton-Linslade Sport and Physical Activity Development Plan sets out the possible actions that could be undertaken in order to invoke the vision presented below:

Sport & Physical Activity Opportunities – from the beginner’s first steps through to competitive games; for all ages and abilities; Leighton-Linslade will be a place to take part in sport and physical activity for fitness, competition and community fun.

Investing our time, using our influence; the Council will try and improve what we have, by looking at how we can create new facilities and work in partnership to ensure we have excellent quality and sustainable sport and physical activity opportunities in Leighton-Linslade

In creating this document, the following list of actions and processes have guided the creation of the action plan;

- Review current sport provision in Leighton-Linslade
- Provide a Plan that is considered fit for purpose by potential funders in securing valuable funding to develop new and existing facilities.
- Provide information to assist with the existing provision of outdoor sports space and its improvement.
- Provide an up to date audit of facilities available for outdoor sports, to assist the public and sporting groups to access sporting facilities.
- Consider implications of corporate documents including the Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy
- Inform sport and physical activity development opportunities and initiatives.
- Consider the importance of the public health agenda and the role that sport and physical activity has to play in this area.
- Encourage and facilitate community use of outdoor facilities on education sites.
- Help inform responses to planning policy, particularly the standard for outdoor pitch and play provision in association with existing and new development.
- Inform policies to protect sites for outdoor sport and physical activity from inappropriate development, particularly those identified as being of particular importance for the delivery of outdoor sport and physical activity in Leighton -Linslade.
- Consider who the key strategic and delivery partners are and how they can help inform and deliver this development plan.

This strategy has been aligned where appropriate to those sports and strategy processes recognised by Sport England (SE) and other key sporting governing bodies and funding agencies. The main sports and physical activities being:

- Football
- Cricket

- Rugby Union
- Hockey
- Bowling
- Tennis
- Open water sports, e.g. canoeing
- Swimming
- Running
- Cycling
- Athletics
- Netball
- Badminton
- Various fitness programmes, aerobics, Pilates, yoga, circuits and dance

2.0 Leighton-Linslade Population Context

Population & Projected Growth - The parish of Leighton-Linslade has an estimated population of just under 40,000 however this figure is set to grow substantially in the coming years. Between 2001 and 2011 the population grew by 14% to 37,340 residents (Office for National Statistics, 2011 census). Office of National Statistics projections indicate that the population of Central Bedfordshire will increase by approximately 28% over the 25 year period from 2012-2037.

Central Bedfordshire Council's Customer & Community Insight projected new housing completions trajectory by ward (May 2015). This work suggests that there will be 1061 new builds in Leighton-Linslade between 2015 and 2023 and 2500 new builds on land to the East of Leighton Buzzard, urban extension, between 2015 and 2028. These statistics suggest that the population of Leighton-Linslade and the immediate surroundings will grow to at least 50,000 during this period.

The age structure of the population as per the Office for National Statistics, 2011 census is as follows:

0-15 **Leighton-Linslade – 19%**; Central Bedfordshire – 20%; England – 19%

16-64 **Leighton-Linslade – 66%**; Central Bedfordshire – 65%; England – 65%

65+ **Leighton-Linslade – 15%**; Central Bedfordshire – 16%; England – 16%

The projected growth in population is expected to see the greatest growth in the following age bands (Office for National Statistics):

0-15 projected growth of 22.5%

16-35 projected growth of 15%

36-55 projected growth of 12%

56 plus projected growth of 64%

Ethnicity - Ethnic groups other than White British comprise 9.5% of the local population, well below the national average (Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Ethnic Group). Minority ethnic groups traditionally have lower rates of involvement in physical activity, which is unlikely to reduce local levels of demand.

It should be noted however that residents of Eastern European decent (particularly Polish) have become established within the Parish.

The Parish also sits within easy travelling distance of Luton and Milton Keynes. Both towns have much higher ethnic populations. The Asian population in particular have shown a willingness to travel reasonable distances to play cricket and this is now reflected within the demand for cricket facilities within the Parish.

Health – The rate of people in the Parish who said that their health was ‘Very good’ or ‘Good’ and therefore self-reported is 85% compared with 85% for Central Bedfordshire and 81% for England. A similar proportion of Leighton-Linslade residents stated that their activities were limited a lot compared to the Central Bedfordshire average, at 6%. This was significantly lower than the England average at 8.3% (Office for National Statistics, 2011 census).

Many of the leading causes of ill health such as coronary heart disease, cancer and type two diabetes could be prevented if people were to play more sport and increase their overall levels of sport and physical activity.

In July 2011 the Chief Medical Officers from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales launched a joint report on physical activity, which included guidelines for participation across the life course. These guidelines provided recommendations on the levels of physical activity needed to provide population level changes in health. Professor Dame Sally Davies (The Chief Medical Officer for England) said that ‘if physical activity was a drug it would be regarded as a miracle’

The Health & Wellbeing Strategy has been written at a local authority level. The first strategy was approved in 2013. It has been refreshed in 2015. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Central Bedfordshire informed this review and helped identify areas of focus. Highlights from the review are as follows :

Average life expectancy at birth is increasing for both men and women with both statistics better than the national average. There is however a significant gap in life expectancy between those living in the 20% highest areas of deprivation compared with the least deprived.

Many deaths below the age of 75 year are avoidable, so there is an increasing focus on reducing these, particularly in the most deprived areas and in vulnerable groups within the population. The biggest causes of death under 75 are cancer, heart disease and stroke.

The Strategy has identified the following actions which are reliant on robust and appropriate sport and physical activity opportunities and supporting environments :

Improve the physical health of those with mental illness by ensuring good access to healthy lifestyle support, particularly to stop smoking and become more physically active.

Ensure that residents are supported to adopt as healthy a lifestyle as possible through, amongst others, weight management programmes. Ensure that people are physically active whether that is through everyday activities, leisure services, sports and clubs or enjoying the natural environment.

Promote local social opportunities outside the home including health walks, library, leisure and educational services.

Deprivation - Four of Leighton-Linslade's 22 lower super output areas (LSOAs) are in the 50% most deprived in England. One of these is the 5th most deprived area in Central Bedfordshire. (Department for Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2010).

The number of children living in Leighton-Linslade in income deprived households stands at 13%, compared to 13% in Central Bedfordshire and 22% in England. (Department for Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2010)

Sport England Market Segmentation - Sport England's market segmentation has been designed to help understand the life stages and attitudes of different population groups –and the sporting interventions most likely to engage them.

The market segmentation data builds on the results of Sport England's Active People survey; the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Taking Part survey; and the Mosaic tool from Experian. It presents a picture of the dominant social groups in each area, and puts people's sporting behavior in the context of complex lives.

Propensity modelling – a statistical technique that matches the probability of displaying a particular behavior or attitude to each demographic category – was used to link the survey data to wider population groups.

This created a tool with two key elements:

- a Sport England segment for every adult in England
- the ability to count market segment profiles for any region community, down to postcode level.

Key findings from the tool suggest the following for Leighton-Linslade:

The four most prominent market segments support continued high demand for football, rugby union, athletics(including running), cycling and swimming amongst the male population and athletics(including running), keep fit, gym and swimming amongst the female population.

Section II – Key Findings

With population growth it is anticipated that wider determinants of health will become more pertinent as the demand for facilities and access to services increase.

Sport & Physical Activity will have a significant part to play in the Social Prescription agenda and related funding streams are expected to be underpinned by health and wellbeing budgets. The Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Central Bedfordshire underpin this.

Competitive sport teams from neighbouring Parishes seek to engage with the Parish towards using and establishing facilities that can address a lack of, or outgrown, sporting facilities elsewhere. This is particularly prevalent for cricket due to large numbers of Asians living nearby.

Population and market segmentation data suggests that there will continue to be strong demand for outdoor playing pitches, particularly for football.

Longer term growth in population suggests that while existing playing pitch facilities need to be maintained, particularly to meet growth within the U15 population, the significant increase in the average age of the population is likely to see demand increase for sports such as Bowls, Cycling, Golf and indoor activities such as dance, keep fit and swimming.

The projected growth in the population may result in existing playing fields coming under threat of development to accommodate new housing. It should also be considered that developer contributions through the Community Infrastructure Levy may provide an opportunity to fund provision that will demonstrably meet the needs of new residents.

Growth in demand for sporting facilities is seen as an opportunity to provide facilities that are seen to be significant centres for sport development by locally based sporting agencies and clubs.

3.0 Sport and Physical Activity in Leighton-Linslade

Leighton-Linslade demographic information indicates that trends and percentages are comparable to those for Central Bedfordshire with some minor anomalies picked up from research through National Governing bodies data and local knowledge. (Participation rates and indices along with market segmentation data for Central Bedfordshire formulated by Sport England.)

Participation rates - Based on the current 'Active People' survey, overall sports participation rates in the Central Bedfordshire area (participating in moderate activity for 30 minutes at least once a week) have fluctuated since 2005/6 and are currently on a par with the regional and national averages at 34.5%. However the general trend is upwards, suggesting that local demand for pitches and outdoor sports facilities will increase accordingly and only in the Central areas of the Parish are there indicators below this.

Other participation indices - In line with regional and national trends, the other participation indices measured by the 'Active People' survey, such as sports club membership, are also falling in Leighton-Linslade.

Market Segmentation - The Market Segmentation data suggests that demand for pitch sports is likely to be higher than the national average given the relatively large proportion of Leighton-Linslade residents from market segments which participate in football in particular but also, to a lesser extent, Rugby and Cricket.

A) Locally based Sporting & Physical Activity Opportunities

Football - For most formats of the game, football participation rates in Leighton-Linslade area are above the National and regional rates. A total of 94 teams draw their membership from within the Parish and its clubs, male, female, adult and youth. The majority of respondents to the clubs survey have increased their membership over the past three years.

Cricket - A total of 12 cricket teams draw their membership from within the Parish and surrounds, utilising Club and Council run facilities. These range from adult, youth, Saturday and Sunday teams. Leighton Town Cricket Club is the largest club in the Parish and have an excellent reputation throughout Bedfordshire for providing

good quality cricket development opportunities. They currently run 5 adult and 7 junior sides from U10 through to U16's and hold ECB ClubMark accreditation. Their primary site is as Bell Close however their development squads have recently started to use Pages Park.

Rugby Union – The only club near is Leighton Buzzard Rugby Club. Based outside the town on Stanbridge Road. The facilities play host to 4 men's teams, an academy side, 1 ladies team, mini rugby from U7-U12's and junior rugby from U13's-U17's. There is limited scope for expansion of adult teams due to limited pitch capacity at the site. The junior section is however growing.

Hockey - The only club in the Parish is Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club, based at Vandyke School which runs 4 men's, 5 women's and a men's over 40's senior side teams. It also has a thriving junior section with a team in every age group from U8's through to U16's.

The club hold Hockey's Club First accreditation (the Hockey equivalent of ClubMark)

Bowls – There are two clubs based in the Parish. Leighton Buzzard Bowls Club are based in Grovebury Road, has an aging membership and is seeking involvement in local sports development initiatives to attract new bowlers. Linslade Bowls Club is one of the largest Bowls Clubs in Bedfordshire with just over a 100 members. Based at the Memorial Playing Fields in Mentmore Road the club has excellent social facilities and is able to provide a year round offering with an indoor 'Short mat' Bowls offering in the close season.

Tennis – There are two clubs based in the Parish. Leighton Buzzard Tennis Club are based at Bell Close. They take juniors from age 4-18 years and adults of any age and ability. Linslade Tennis Club are based at the memorial Playing Fields in Mentmore Road. The club have 150 adult and junior members respectively. Their junior section is open from age 5-18years and adults of any age and ability are welcome. Both clubs are registered as approved play tennis sites on the LTA website.

Canoeing & Kayaking – There is one club, based at Cedars School, this thriving club has approx. 100 active members, draws its participants from a wide area within and outside of Bedfordshire and has achieved international standards success. A new club house and storage facility has recently been erected on site.

The club has a thriving junior section and offers its junior membership from age 9 upwards, although members must be able to swim for safety reasons. It also enjoys Sport England's ClubMark and BCU Top Gold accreditation.

The club has a robust development plan in place and regularly provides initiatives to attract new and returning members and develop its coaching workforce.

Athletics – There are 2 clubs based in the Parish. Leighton Buzzard Athletics Club runs a junior and senior section with different offerings. The junior section provides a full track and field offering for participants from age 9-16years. This is based at Vandyke Upper School. The adult section is for anyone aged 16 plus irrespective of ability and experience. Social and competitive running opportunities are provided from the clubs base at Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre.

Leighton Fun Runners provide running opportunities from beginners jogging through to competitive racing including 10K, half marathons and marathons. The club take members from age 16 upwards and are based at the Cricket Pavilion, Bell Close.

Both clubs are affiliated to England Athletics and the Athletics Club is working towards ClubMark accreditation.

Golf – There is one club based within the Parish. Leighton Buzzard Golf Club is based at Plantation Drive on the North Western edge of the town. Non-members are given access to the course during the week. Access is restricted to members only at the weekends.

The club carries GolfMark accreditation confirming that it has been externally assessed as providing junior and beginner friendly golf facilities and development opportunities.

Cycling – There is one club based in the Parish. Leighton Buzzard Road Cycling Club delivers three led cycle rides each Sunday from the Bell Public House on the High Street. The club are keen to attract both juniors and adults from novices through to racing cyclists. The club currently has 89 active members and is keen to grow its membership. The club is affiliated to British Cycling.

Swimming - There are two clubs based in the Parish. Both clubs operate out of the Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre pool and provide competitive swimming opportunities for members.

Leighton Buzzard Swimming Club provide a learn to swim package from age 5 and hold Swim 21 accreditation.

Linslade Crusaders Swimming Club also provide a learn to swim package from age 5 and also hold the Swim 21 accreditation.

Netball- There is one club based in the Parish. Leighton Buzzard Netball Club provides opportunities for social and competitive play from age 10 upwards. The club has four adult teams and an U19 development squad. It also runs junior sides at U11,13 & 16. The club has full CAPS accreditation from England Netball which confirms its status as a club that looks after the future and safety of its junior members.

The club uses facilities at both Vandyke Upper School and Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre.

Badminton- There are four clubs within the Parish. Leighton Buzzard, Vandyke, Brooklands and Border. None of the clubs carry accreditation with their National Governing Body.



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Martial Arts – Judo – well established club with 60 plus members catering for 5-16 year olds operating out of Cheddington (Formerly Leighton Corinthians Judo Club).

Taekwondo – A variety of opportunities available during the week at Cedars and Vandyke Upper School and the Church Riverside Scout Hut for adults and juniors.

Physical Activity programmes including Keep fit, Yoga, Pilates, Aerobics and Dance – Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre provide a range of physical activity programmes that are considered to be affordable and readily accessible. The range of activities on offer includes Aerobics, Zumba, Circuits, Boxercise, Aqua, Bodypump, Yoga and Pilates. A number of private operators provide a similar range of activities in community halls across the parish and in some of the schools where community use is available. Examination of current offerings reveals the following activities are available:

- Zumba is available at Southall Village Community centre; Astral Park Centre and Brooklands School on a weekly basis.
- Keep fit is available for U3A members at Linslade Community Hall.
- Yoga for adults and ballet for school age children is available at Sandhills Community Hall.

B) Local supply

Adult football pitches – Facilities range from privately run clubs to school and council run facilities. Feedback indicates that pitch quality is of good standard with adequate changing facilities.

The use of 3G pitch at Cedars School has taken some pressure off the grass pitches and the introduction of pitches at Astral Park (opened in 2014) will encourage growth.

Youth football pitches – Most youth football is played on school or public facilities, Leighton United being the exception having its own site. Pitches for 11 v 11 and 9 v 9 mix matches must comply with the Football Association's Youth Review standards. The local quality of facilities is mixed with the issue of being overplay/used. Use of the 3G facilities, as per adults with multi-pitch markings, allow for multiple games on the Cedar's site. The introduction of pitches at Astral Park has encourage growth.

Mini-soccer pitches - Mini-soccer pitches (7 v 7 and 5 v 5). The commentary under the youth football section above are relevant for mini-soccer.

Cricket pitches - There are 3 cricket pitches with community use at Leighton Buzzard Cricket Club (Bell Close), Pages Park and Mentmore Road (Casual bookings). There is also a cricket square at Cedars School. This is not currently used by the community and would require investment to bring it up to a suitable standard for adult competitive cricket.

Rugby pitches - There are 4 adult and additional junior rugby facilities at Leighton Buzzard Rugby Club. These are privately run with no community use although the club is open to new members.

Synthetic turf pitches - There are two synthetic turf pitches with community use. Cedars School offers a full size Floodlit 3G "Football Turf" offering training and playing options from 5 v 5 to 11 v 11 football. Vandyke

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School offers a “sand filled” floodlit astro-turf facility used for hockey practice and competitions. It is also used for football training and coaching sessions.

Bowls greens - There are 2 bowling greens within the Parish: Leighton Buzzard Bowls Club are based at Bell Close and Linslade Bowls Club are based at Mentmore Road.

Tennis courts - There are a total of 12 tennis courts in the Parish although most are located in school sites have additional courts that double as netball courts. LTA recognised facilities are based at Bell Close, Mentmore Road and Pages Park.

MUGAs (Multi-Use Games Areas) - There are a number of MUGAs in the Parish. They are primarily provided for informal casual play. The multi-use goal end has been well received in Mentmore Road. However, there is a lack of fully enclosed units.

Leisure Centres - Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre – Owned by Central Bedfordshire Council and managed by leisure provider 1Life this facility was significantly upgraded in 2014. The facility offers casual usage and membership access to formal and informal activity and classes. The venue offers 2 swimming pools, a 25 yards casual and competitive community pool and a smaller, purpose built pool specifically designed for disabled users and those recovering from life threatening health conditions.

The facility also houses a 6 court badminton hall which in addition to Badminton is used for indoor 5 a side football, basketball, netball, table tennis and indoor cricket nets. The facility also houses 2 studios for cardio and weight based exercises and dance and squash courts.

A full analyses of the supply of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities in Leighton-Linslade is covered within the Central Bedfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy. Please see Appendix B

C) Sport & Physical Activity Provision through Central Bedfordshire Council and other locally based partners

Central Bedfordshire Council in delivering their Physical Activity Programmes, offer a range of activities targeting participation for all. Their Physical Activity Team work in conjunction with a variety of partners both nationally and locally forming part of an annual programme, including come and try sports and general activities.

The programmes utilise the wide range of facilities available. These include Leisure Centres, park based MUGA, parks, schools and privately owned club facilities. They have bespoke programmes targeting specific groups in order to hit specific agendas:

- i. School Holiday activities
- ii. Adult “Fit and Active”
- iii. Get Back Into – This is delivered by team BEDS&LUTON and their partners to bring adults of any age a choice of activities to help people get fitter, healthier and back into a sport or physical activity. The activities are led by qualified coaches and instructors.

- iv. Sportivate – Sport England participation programme. This is delivered by team BEDS&LUTON and their partners to provide those aged 11-25 with a choice of activities over a 6/8 week programme to encourage participants to take part in regular sport and physical activity. The activities are led by qualified coaches and instructors.
- v. Satellite Club Links – Sport England participation programme. This is delivered by team BEDS&LUTON and their partners to provide opportunities for clubs to link with upper schools and colleges and provide regular coached/led sessions on school/college sites, helping to build confidence, awareness and a relationship that will encourage participants to join the club in due course. As at June 2015 2 Leighton Buzzard sports clubs had set up formal links with schools in the town.
- vi. No Limits – Sport England Inclusive Sport participation programme. The Disability Resource Centre have commissioned team BEDS&LUTON to develop and deliver sustainable sporting and physical activity opportunities to the disability communities of Bedfordshire. The programme will run through to June 2017 and targets an increase in regular participation by anyone aged 14 and over who has a mental or physical disability.
- vii. 50+ Fit4Life – see below:

Walking Footballing - is a new exciting version of the beautiful game and is ideal for the over 50's or players returning to the game following injury. Walking Football in Bedfordshire has seen great interest in the past year with a number of sessions available to anyone interested from across the county. As the name suggests in Walking Football, running is not allowed, and if a player breaks into a jog, run or sprint (with or without the ball!) then a free kick will be awarded to the opposition.

Walk4Health - programmes run throughout Central Bedfordshire. These individual programmes are led by trained volunteer Health Walk Leaders. Health walks are regular walks which are free and open to all – though aimed particularly at people who are presently doing little or no exercise – and usually last for about an hour. People are encouraged to walk at their own pace, safe in the knowledge that they are walking with trained leaders.

Library Walks - the aim of these walks is to encourage everyone in Central Bedfordshire to get moving. These are for beginners, so they will be short walks of 30-45 minutes

Armchair Exercise - keeping fit through strength and balance classes.

Bikeability - is a national cycle training scheme. Bikeability is 'cycling proficiency' for the 21st century designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads. Bikeability has 3 levels to aspire to.

Outdoor Gyms – provide open access to gym style equipment.

Exercise Referrals – means, when appropriate, General Practitioners and health professionals refer patients to a qualified exercise specialist. The specialist devises and delivers a 12 week tailored exercise programme for the patient, at a reduced price. The scheme is seen as a means of helping motivate people to become more

physically active under the guidance of qualified exercise professionals. The majority of schemes target primary prevention of diseases and conditions such as:

- coronary heart disease and stroke
- obesity and type II diabetes
- arthritis and common mental health problems

Section III – Key Findings

Leighton-Linslade has a healthy number of well-established and respected sports clubs providing opportunities for all ages and abilities across a range of different sports and physical activities. Many of these clubs have secured or are working towards security quality standards through their respective National Governing Body (typically referred to as ClubMark). The club infrastructure is supported by a number of well-established and equipped sporting facilities. These are supported by the essential use of the recently refurbished local leisure centre and facilities within the schools, particularly the upper schools, which provide permanent bases for a number of the sport clubs and physical activities. These facilities require regular investment to maintain ever more demanding quality standards.

The Central Bedfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy has highlighted existing and projected areas for new/further investment in outdoor sporting facilities.

There are a number of private providers who deliver physical activity programmes within the community halls, schools and parks in the Parish. It is important that such providers are appropriately qualified and insured. Policies, procedures and pricing for the use of such facilities should not however be prohibitive as they provide a valuable additional delivery resource for the communities they deliver into. There are a number of opportunities available through locally based organisations that provide both targeted interventions and widely accessible opportunities for participants to participate in sport and physical activity in a friendly, sociable and non-competitive way. It is important that appropriate links are made with providers to ensure that Leighton-Linslade receives an appropriate level of investment through these interventions.

4.0 Establishing Supportive Mechanisms to Support Local Priorities

Corporate Plans - The Town Council's Three-Year Plan & Objectives would benefit from including a commitment to promote active lifestyles, to reduce local health inequalities and safeguard playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities as an integral means of facilitating this priority. This is further reflected in the Central Bedfordshire Council's Leisure Strategy.

Central Bedfordshire Council Playing Pitch Strategy – Central Bedfordshire Council adopted its Playing Pitch Strategy in March 2014. This document identifies a number of deficiencies in pitches and outdoor sports facilities, predicated upon a spatial standards-based approach. It also provides a useful preliminary assessment of pitch and outdoor sports facility needs and is considered by Sport England and other funders as an essential document to justify current and future investment needs.

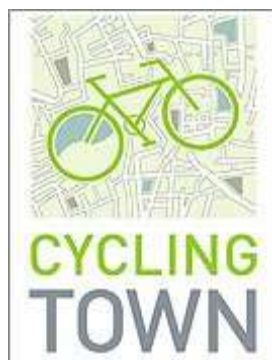
Sport England has recently introduced a new assessment methodology which is anticipated to provide a more precise evaluation of needs in the future.

Understanding the needs of neighbouring areas - Playing pitch assessment in the surrounding towns and parishes show that there are some significant shortfalls in adjoining areas particularly to the east of the Parish. This has been caused by migration of participants and teams due to demand exceeding the supply of suitable facilities. This issue is particularly prevalent within cricket. The nearby towns of Luton and Milton Keynes have much larger Asian communities who are prepared to travel some distance to access good quality and affordable cricketing facilities. Bedfordshire & Buckinghamshire Cricket boards are aware of a number of teams from these areas who are prepared to travel to Leighton Buzzard and use the facilities within the Parish. The Playing Pitch Strategy documents for Luton and Milton Keynes together with knowledge provided by locally based National Governing Bodies of sport are key to understanding the prevalent issues.

Utilising the services of locally based strategic and delivery partners - There is significant expertise and experience within the leisure, sport and physical activity sector that can be used to help provide new and extend existing opportunities for sport and physical activity, improve and or provide new facilities, get more out of existing facilities and secure inward investment from external parties.

Locally based organisations that are available to provide the aforementioned support include the following:

National Governing Bodies of sport. Bedfordshire based support is provided for the development of football and cricket with regional representation, including Bedfordshire, for canoeing & kayaking, netball, badminton, cycling, athletics, hockey, rugby union, tennis and bowls. These organisations can be accessed directly or through the County Sports Partnership.



team BEDS&LUTON The County Sports Partnership. Sport England's local deliverer with responsibility for delivering Sport England's participation initiatives across the county. They also provide wider support to clubs, coaches, volunteers and statutory organisations to aid the development of the sporting infrastructure throughout Bedfordshire.

Central Bedfordshire Council. The council is likely to play the lead role in co-ordinating the development of the larger, more strategic pitch and sports facility sites, in conjunction with other partners where appropriate. They have a Sport Development Unit that are responsible for delivering programmes, including the GP referral initiatives, across Central Bedfordshire. They are also responsible for Public Health and will therefore play a strategic role in the implementation of the social prescription agenda across Central Bedfordshire.

Local sports clubs - The local sports clubs are significant providers of pitches, outdoor and indoor sports facilities and will continue to do so. Some clubs may be interested in taking on delegated management responsibilities for pitch and changing facilities management and maintenance from the Council or parish council through an asset transfer arrangement.

Schools and colleges. Many schools already provide pitches, outdoor and indoor sports facilities from which local communities benefit and there will be further opportunities to extend and formalise community access to a range of provision on school sites.

The importance of school sites to the ongoing provision of sport and physical activity in the Parish cannot be understated. This facility provision is incorporated within the findings of the Central Bedfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy and therefore informs potential current and future investment.

Sport England provide support, advice and guidance to educational outlets wishing to open up their sporting facilities to the local community and keep them open for ongoing use. This is provided through their 'Use our School' tool. This tool is available via the following link on the Sport England website.

Section IV – Key Findings

Strategic planning through national and local government provides significant guidance in a number of key areas covered by this plan. These documents will also be instrumental in the council's ability to secure inward investment from external parties in the future. It is important that the findings within these documents are reflected within decision making processes in the future.

Recent experiences in Bedfordshire and surrounding counties have highlighted the importance of understanding the situation regarding the demand for sporting facilities in neighbouring towns and cities. This is expected to have an ongoing effect in demand for facilities in Leighton-Linslade.

The sporting infrastructure provides a wide range of support through a number of organisations that have national coverage and a local presence. Consideration should be given to regular engagement with these key partners to ensure that opportunities for development and investment can be maximised. It should however be noted that national government have announced a consultation on a new strategy for sport and this could change the sporting infrastructure significantly within the next 2 years.

5.0 Meeting Wider Priorities

Central Government - National planning policy is supportive of undertaking local assessments of current and future provision for the protection of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities which provides helpful context for local planning policies and development in and around the Parish. This is outlined within the National Planning Policy Framework which came into force in March 2012 and makes several references to planning for sport, recreation and open space. The framework acts as guidance for local planning authorities, both in drawing up plans and making decisions about planning applications.

Improving health, social and cultural well-being is one of the framework's twelve core principles. Paragraph 171 places health considerations and by extension participation in sport, as a key consideration in the planning process.

Central Government have also decided to put in place a new strategy for Sport. The London 2012 games inspired many people to do many amazing things. Turning this inspiration into participation has been a challenge and the fact that nationally participation rates are now beginning to decline from their peak in 2012 has prompted the need for a new strategy.

The development of the strategy means joining up effectively across government and it is acknowledged that delivery for the Department of Health and the Department for Education are affected by this issue. The consultation process is now underway and it is expected that a white paper will be issued early in 2016.

Central Bedfordshire Council - The Priorities for Local Government are set out within the Council's Leisure Strategy. Adopted in March 2014 the document sets out the priorities and actions for the implementation and delivery of Leisure across Central Bedfordshire. The Strategy covers four key areas. These include Leisure facilities; Recreation and Open Space; Playing Pitches and Physical activity. These are key drivers for investment and action across the Parish and Central Bedfordshire as a whole.

The Leisure Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (see Central Government section) together with guidance relevant to the specific chapters as detailed in the methodology.

Sport England - The target to increase participation rates will drive up demand for pitches and outdoor sports facilities if it is achieved. The emphasis on developing and funding school-community club links will increase the scope for improving the dual use of education pitches and facilities, as well as more programmes of activity.

Sport England operate on a county wide basis through team BEDS&LUTON but also work directly with each Local Authority Area. Although their work does not extend directly to Town Council level the strategic aims and objectives of Sport England will have a significant impact on the development of sport and physical activity within the Parish.

Sport England's current strategy runs through to March 2017. As with Central Government it will be launching a new strategy for the development of sport in early 2016.

National Governing bodies of sport - All the governing bodies of sport have similar facilities objectives; to improve the quality of pitches/facilities and changing provision and many are introducing new more accessible formats of their sports. Some of which, such as 'Last Man Stands' in cricket, have additional and specific pitch

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requirements. Football has new versions and also from small-sided through 9 v 9 into 11 v 11 as youth and in to the adult game. “Walking Football” and casual “Just Play Centres” provide new opportunities

The ‘Active People’ survey – This was first commissioned by Sport England in 2005 and has been carried out annually ever since. The survey is the largest study of patterns of adult (people aged over 16) involvement in sport and physical activity ever undertaken and involved telephone interviews with a representative sample of between 500 and 1,000 residents of each local authority borough in the country. Seven surveys have been undertaken to date, which has enabled trends to be tracked over a seven year period.

The survey informs national and local government on performance against objectives in this area of work and informs future decision making. Although the results do not filter down beyond local authority areas the significance of the results are such that they merit referencing within this document.

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) are measured and the results for each are tabulated below:

- **Overall participation** - ‘Taking part on at least one day a week in moderate intensity sport and active recreation (at least four days in the last four weeks) for at least 30 minutes continuously in any one session’.
- **Volunteering** - ‘Volunteering to support sport for at least one hour a week’.
- **Club membership** - ‘Being a member of a club particularly so that you can participate in sport or recreational activity in the last four weeks’.
- **Receiving tuition** - ‘Having received tuition from an instructor or coach to improve your performance in any sport or recreational activity in the last twelve months’.
- **Organised Competition** - ‘Having taken part in any organised competition in any sport or recreational activity in the last twelve months’.
- **Satisfaction** - ‘The percentage of adults who are very or fairly satisfied with sports provision in their local area’.
- **Organised sport** - ‘The percentage of adults who have done at least one of receiving tuition in the last twelve months and/or taken part in organised competition in the last twelve months and/or been a member of a club to play sport’
- **Satisfaction with local sports provision:** ‘The percentage of adults who are satisfied with local sports provision’.
- **Participation in individual sports:** ‘The percentage of adults who have participated at least once in a sport in the preceding four weeks’.

Survey data does not go lower than the Central Bedfordshire Local Authority area.

Section V – Key Findings

Central and local government together with the sporting community will strongly influence strategic thinking at a local level. It is important that these issues are understood, that strong and sustainable working relationships are built with representatives of these organisations to ensure that opportunities available to develop the sport & physical activity infrastructure across the Parish are maximised.

The Active People Survey is the primary measure of participation rates in sport and physical activity. As a consequence their results are taken seriously by national and local government together with the sporting community. Indeed they can play a part in determining future policy.

Overall sports participation rates in Central Bedfordshire have fluctuated since 2005/6 but the general trend is upwards, suggesting that local demand for pitches and outdoor sports facilities will increase accordingly particularly as population numbers are also due to increase.

In line with regional and national trends, the other participation indices are falling, including involvement in organised, formal competitive activities like pitch sports.

Levels of satisfaction with local sports provision decreased over the three survey periods for which they were measured but in all cases were well above the regional and national averages. This implies that the quantity and quality of local provision is judged by the majority of participants as adequate to meet their needs.

The Market Segmentation data suggests that demand for the pitch sports is likely to be higher than the national average, given the relatively large proportion of residents from market segments which participate in football, but also to a lesser extent in cricket and rugby union.

6.0 Leighton-Linslade Town Council Leisure Strategy Survey

A consultation document was circulated to clubs and individuals asking questions to help shape how the Town Council's parks and green space are planned, managed and invested in, both now and in the future, taking into consideration the Council's vision for Sport and Physical Activity.

Respondents were asked to consider a list of proposed actions and whether or not they should be a priority issue for the Town Council. Those items where 75% or more either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the item should be a priority action are, together with the %, that strongly agreed or agreed, as follows:

1. To make all sections of the Town Council community feel welcome and safe – 92%

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2. To protect publicly accessible green space from inappropriate development and ensure it meets the need of the community both now and in the future – 93%
3. To encourage and support active and healthy life-styles associated with the use of publicly accessible green space – 89%
4. To maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport links to/from publicly accessible green space – 83%
5. To protect and enhance the ecological, geological, historical and landscape value of publicly accessible green space – 89%
6. To Maximise community use, understanding and enjoyment of publicly accessible green space – 90%
7. To develop and manage publicly accessible green space in a sustainable way that allows them to maximise their resilience to and ability to adapt to the impacts of a challenging climate, and to minimise their impact on natural resources – 90%.
8. To maximise funding and investment opportunities associated with publicly accessible green space – 89%

Specific questions were asked regarding Parks and other green spaces within the Parish. Key Findings are as follows:-

1. 87% of respondents felt it to be very important or fairly important for parishioners to have local parks/green spaces near to where they live.
2. The three most important management issues in relation to local parks/green spaces were as follows :

Specific questions were asked in relation to sport and leisure usage. Of those that responded 89% used leisure facilities in the town at least monthly. Key findings for consideration were as follows:-

1. Improvements to the local leisure centre were raised. It should be noted that Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre is owned and operated through the local authority and that a separate consultation process was undertaken in the spring of 2015.
2. Safer and more extensive cycling routes.
3. Outdoor gym and trim trails. This could be linked in with item 3



7.0 Developing Sport and Physical Activity Provision in Leighton-Linslade

This section comprises an action plan for meeting the deficiencies identified in this strategy. It examines the options for meeting the shortfalls, the delivery partners and an action plan that specifies what needs to be provided where and proposes how best this might be achieved.

The overriding driver is to meet the “Vision” of the Town. Ensuring that things done well continue to be done so, areas for improvement are appropriate, timely and affordable, while new ideas and programmes meet the criteria of the Councils “Vision”.

The action plan has been prepared in tabular format and forms appendix A. The areas covered within the action plan include the following:

- New facility provision.
- Upgrading and refurbishing existing facility provision.
- Making the most of;
 - o existing facility provision.
 - o Enhancing access.
 - o The Cycling Parish.
- Strategic and delivery partnerships.
- Possible Community Asset Transfers.
- Programme awareness and availability.

8.0 Glossary of terms and definitions

Active People Survey – The survey provides by far the largest sample size ever established for a sport and recreation survey and allows levels of detailed analysis previously unavailable. It identifies how participation varies from place to place and between different groups in the population.

The survey also measures; the proportion of the adult population that volunteer in sport on a weekly basis, club membership, involvement in organised sport/competition, receipt of tuition or coaching, and overall satisfaction with levels of sporting provision in the local community.

The questionnaire was designed to enable analysis of the findings by a broad range of demographic information, such as gender, social class, ethnicity, household structure, age and disability.

The Active People Survey also provides the measurement, for the local area estimates of adult participation in sport and active recreation.

Central Bedfordshire Council Health & Wellbeing Strategy – The Health & Wellbeing Strategy outlines Central Bedfordshire Council's vision for improving health & wellbeing and reducing health inequalities in Central Bedfordshire. The first strategy, approved in 2013 contained nine priorities. This document was refreshed in 2015

Central Bedfordshire Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment - The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a process that identifies the current and future health and wellbeing needs of a local population and leads to agreed commissioning priorities that will improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities. Specifically, it is a tool to identify groups where needs are not being met and that are experiencing poor outcomes.

Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy – Adopted in March 2014 it sought to adopt a holistic approach to the provision of sport, leisure and recreational facilities across the Council's area. It sought to assess current facilities and services, estimate future demand and create a strategy that will assist the authority to deliver and facilitate good quality, sustainable, demand-led facilities and services.

The scope of the leisure strategy comprised three facility-based chapters and a fourth chapter marrying together the findings, identifying future requirements and the type of physical activities needed to support Central Bedfordshire's residents to pursue a healthy, active, lifestyle.

Central Bedfordshire Council Playing Pitch Strategy - This document forms chapter 3 of the Leisure Strategy. It assessed the location, availability and quality of existing sports pitches and outdoor sports facilities across Central Bedfordshire and sought to identify future additional investment areas.

ClubMark - Clubmark is the universally acknowledged cross sport accreditation scheme for community sports clubs. It is based on criteria which must be supported by specific evidence. Based on four key areas of club development it centres around:

- Activity/playing programmes - this includes, for example, coaching qualifications required, insurance and coach to participant ratios

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- Duty of care and welfare - appropriate risk assessments, health and safety policies, training, compliance and child protection policies
- Knowing your club and its community - this ensures that your club is committed to fairness and equity in respect of the way they seek to attract and retain members from your local community
- Club management - which covers issues to do with club and committee structures and the general running of the organisation

Evidence can be gathered in a variety of formats including hard copy (in a folder), electronically (online) or at the club itself (e.g., on noticeboards). Licensed organisations are the national governing body of sport or county sports partnership.

Some of the National Governing Bodies brand the ClubMark process differently to identify them to their sport (see club section above).

County Sports Partnership – There are 45 county sports partnerships (CSPs) covering England. They are networks of local agencies committed to working together to increase the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity. CSPs deliver Sport England programmes such as sportivate on a local level.

They are led by a central team of people whose job it is to provide leadership and co-ordination of the network.

The county sports partnership for Bedfordshire are teamBEDS&LUTON. They are a fully hosted organisation with offices in Luton and Bedford.

National Governing Body of Sport – Across England there are many different national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) who have responsibility for managing their specific sport. Sport England recognise dozens of governing bodies and support over a hundred sports in a variety of ways to help them deliver programmes that get more people playing sport.

Between 2013 and 2017, Sport England are investing a total of almost £500 million into 46 NGBs who have submitted whole sport plans that will create opportunities for more people to play community sport.

All of these governing bodies are experts in their sport and they have developed programmes that address the specific problems that are stopping people from playing.

Sport England also provide investment that supports the development of talented athletes in 43 different sports and fund the elite programmes of netball, squash and women's rugby.

Sport England are keen to help all of the NGBs that they recognise to develop and progress as an organisation, so they provide expertise and services in a range of areas such as governance, commercial partnerships and legal issues.

National Planning Policy Framework – Published by the government in 2011. The framework acts as a guidance for local planning authorities, both in drawing up plans and making decisions about planning applications.

Sport England - Sport England is a central government agency. It is committed to helping people and communities across the country create sporting habits for life.

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This means investing in organisations and projects that will get more people playing sport and creating opportunities for people to excel at their chosen sport. Funding is sourced from central government and the National Lottery.







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