



Fenland District Council

Leisure Strategy

2017-2021



**Creating an active,
healthy and
prosperous
local community**

**2017-2021
Leisure Strategy
Fenland District Council**

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Foreward

Fenland is a district that has diverse leisure opportunities – from playing a sport with one of our local clubs, to using swings in a play area, or swimming in one of our pools, or taking a walk in one of our parks, there is something for everyone, whatever your age or ability. Maintaining and developing these opportunities for the community is important to ensure that Fenland continues to be a great place to live, work and visit.

This paper sets out the framework within which this strategy sits and then sets out a vision, strategic priorities and key indicators that the Council will focus on over the few years.

The challenge facing Fenland is clear – we have considerable health inequalities when compared with the rest of Cambridgeshire, including very poor physical activity levels. Additionally, the age profile of the District is changing,

with the number of people aged over 65 expected to increase by around a third in the coming decade. Increasing the level of participation in sport and physical activity can reduce those health inequalities and active older people will remain more healthy.



"Ensuring that Fenland continues to be a great place to live, work and visit"

With a clear path to follow, the Council will be able to apply resources effectively, ensuring that local people enjoy high quality leisure opportunities that suit their lifestyle and maintain and improve the quality of their lives.

The continued offer of excellent leisure centres, varied activity programmes with something for everyone, supported by a

focused sports development function within the Council, will contribute to the health of our community and the prosperity of the district. This strategy will ensure that a focus is maintained on providing leisure opportunities that our communities deserve.

This strategy should not be read in isolation and complements other national, regional and local strategies and information briefings, including;

- Fenland Council's Business Plan
- Fenland Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and 2016 Annual public health report
- Fenland Communities Development Plan: Core Strategy & Fenland Neighbourhood Planning Vision
- UK Government Strategy - Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation
- Sport England Strategy – Towards an Active Nation

Cllr Michelle Tanfield
Portfolio Holder for Leisure

Introduction

In recent years the term leisure when used to describe sporting activities has changed. The Government and Sport England understand that many people are active, but not necessarily playing formal sport. Recent strategies from the Government and Sport England recognise physical activity. This leisure strategy considers sport and physical activity – including play for younger children.

Strategy Context

There have been several significant changes in local government over the past few years – particularly with regards to finance and the pressure that this has exerted over local authorities.

A photograph of a baby in a swimming pool, with a woman's face visible in the background. The image is partially obscured by a large blue diagonal graphic element.

Many people are
active, but not
necessarily playing
formal sport



Complementing National Strategies

Additionally, the Government and Sport England have both issued sports strategies recently. The Government's first new strategy for sport in over a decade, Sporting Future, a new strategy for an Active Nation, identifies a new approach and considers sport and physical activity. Five key outcomes form the basis of the Government's strategy:

Outcome

Measureable

Physical wellbeing

An increase in the percentage of people in England achieving the **Chief Medical Officer's guidelines** for physical activity and a decrease in the number of people who are physically inactive; those who are active for less than thirty minutes a week.

Mental wellbeing

improved subjective wellbeing of participants. Government will be working with the What Works Centre for Wellbeing to identify measures that can be used to inform this outcome.

Individual development

Increased levels of perceived self-efficacy. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport is working with the Office of National Statistics to identify the best way of evidencing self-efficacy.

Social and community development

Increased levels of social trust in local communities.

Economic development

Value of sport to the UK's economy.

Another significant national strategy recently published is Public Health England's 2014 strategy, Everybody Active, Every Day – a key priority of which is;

Active Society: Creating a social movement – aims to improve the general awareness of the benefits of physical activity through working with a broad range of organisations to refocus their efforts on getting more people, more active, more often.

2.3 Complementing Local Strategies


The Fenland Health and Wellbeing Partnership, as well as the Countywide Health and Wellbeing Board both highlight health inequalities in Fenland, with obesity and overweight adults as well as low physical activity levels featuring as key issues. Within the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Priority 3 targets 'Encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviours in all activities ...' This priority targets an increase participation in sport and physical activity, and encouraging a healthy diet to reduce the rate of development of long-term conditions, increasing the proportion of older people who are active and retain their independence, and an increase in the proportion of adults and children with a healthy weight.

2.4 Fenland Playing Pitch Strategy and Fenland Indoor Sports Facility Strategy

The Council has recently worked with Sport England to commission two strategies regarding Playing Pitches and Indoor Sports Facilities. These 2016 strategies consider the development of sporting infrastructure with regard to current provision and anticipated population growth in the District. Whilst significant investment in infrastructure is not indicated in either study during the period of this Leisure Strategy, continued support for sports clubs and maintenance of facilities and pitches by way of successful funding bids to third parties continues to be necessary. The Council will support this work through the sports development team.

2.5 A Partner to manage Fenland's Leisure Centres?

A further consideration, in addition to financial challenges and the changes in national strategy and development of local strategies, is that the Council is progressing a project regarding the externalisation of the Council's leisure centre service. Ensuring that the Fenland Leisure Strategy is up to date is of significant importance for this project as it will guide the work of any future managing company, should that be the path that the Council takes.



"Ensuring that Fenland continues to be a great place to live, work in and visit"

/3 What are the broader outcomes of sport and physical activity participation?

There is a body of evidence regarding the positive impact that regular participation and engagement in sport and physical activity has on shaping people and places. The wide-ranging benefits to individuals and communities include:

- Increased skills, employment and economic prosperity
- Improved health and reduced health inequalities
- Strong, sustainable and cohesive communities
- Improved life chances for children and young people

Fenland District Council has always played a pivotal role in supporting sport and physical activity.

Ensuring that local people have access to good sport and physical activity provision is essential in ensuring that Fenland is a great place to live, attracting people into the area and having a subsequent positive impact on the economy.

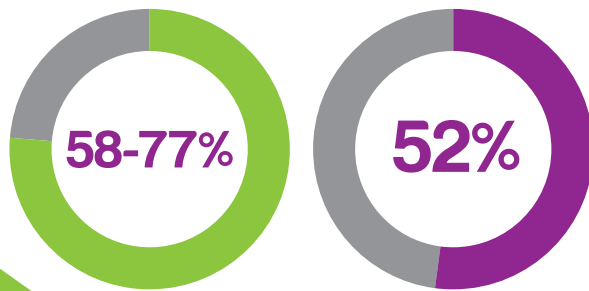
With such an opportunity to impact on a wide range of outcomes, a focused approach on sport and physical activity is necessary. This strategy highlights the importance of sport and physical activity

and will ensure that the Council continues to focus on improving opportunities for the community to take part in sport and physical activity opportunities in the future.

Unfortunately, it is clear that in Fenland too few people are active. When compared with the rest of the East of England, Fenland is one of the least active Districts¹. The Council must apply focused support and opportunities to ensure that our communities increase the amount of sport and physical activity that they take part in every week, improving the community's health.

/4 Barriers to sport and physical activity participation?

When comparing Fenland with the rest of Cambridgeshire, the difference in sport and physical activity participation levels is stark. Other Districts within Cambridgeshire have physical activity levels between 58% and 77%, with Fenland at just 52%.



Barriers to sport and physical activity that were highlighted by the insight research conducted by Sport England prior to the Active Fenland project include:

- The low wage economy in Fenland leading to affordability issues
- The physical nature of many jobs in Fenland leading to less desire for active leisure
- Shift work making commitments to a regular sports session difficult
- Access to sport and physical activity opportunities, given the rural nature of the District
- A simple lack of time to spend on sport or physical activity

/5 A brief review of the 2012 - 2016 Leisure Strategy

As a result of the most recent Leisure Strategy, the Council has significantly improved sport and physical activity opportunities and services available to the community. Highlights of the work that the Council has achieved as a result of the last strategy include:

Priority 1: Continue to Provide an Efficient Service

- Attendances have increased in leisure centres
- Leisure centres are now branded New Vision Fitness
- Investment of over £800k has seen considerable improvements at the George Campbell centre
- £840k investment in energy efficient plant will see energy costs reduce significantly
- The annual cost of operating FDC's leisure centre service remains stable at approx. £500,000
- Leisure centre customer satisfaction levels are running above 80%
- The project to consider alternative management delivery options for leisure centres is ongoing

Priority 2: More people, more active, more often

- Attendances have increased in Fenland's leisure centres
- Membership sales are at their highest point
- Professional support for the marketing of leisure has been used for the first time
- Social media plays a key role in promoting leisure opportunities across Fenland
- Continued improvements in Fenland's open spaces, including significant investment in several play areas, such as a skate park in Chatteris and a large new play area in Whittlesey featuring interactive equipment for the first time in Fenland.
- The Active Fenland programme is promoting varied activities in Fenland's open spaces, including run routes, table tennis and walking football.

Priority 3: Supporting Community Sport

- Strategies have been developed, with Sport England support, for playing pitches and sports facilities to highlight demand led investment need for the future
- Successful funding bids to Sport England include £200k investment in leisure centres, as well as the support of £250k for the Active Fenland project
- The Active Fenland programme has been developed between Living Sport, National Governing Bodies of sport and the Council

Priority 4: Linking with partners to encourage tourism and economic development

This part of the previous leisure strategy has been delivered through the Fenland Tourism Partnership, with this work becoming more linked to local tourism business input.

/6 The future challenges for leisure in Fenland

6.1

The increasing role for leisure to deliver across different agendas

The leisure service can deliver across the different agendas highlighted below, but must ensure that it can evidence the difference it plays in tackling these challenges. Successful interventions will involve working together better with partners to effectively coordinate limited resources across the District and monitoring outcomes from interventions.

6.2

Meeting increasing customer expectations

Customer's tastes and preferences have changed and are continuing to change. Investment in Fenland's leisure centres, to match customer expectations based on customer feedback should be planned. Without a focus on keeping the facilities attractive and appealing to our community, the service will not be sustainable.

6.3

Maintaining delivery in a challenging economic climate

Reductions in Council budget over the past seven years have proved challenging, leading to significant service redesign. This has improved the focus on customers. However short term financial pressures will continue and a focus on more people, more active, more often is essential to increase income levels and ensure the service remains sustainable in the future.

The project to change the delivery model for the service addresses some of these challenges. Should the Council procure a management partner for the leisure centre service, significant investment and revenue savings would be anticipated.



/7 Why does the Council need a leisure strategy?

Sport and physical activity has a significant positive impact on people and places; the Council invests significant funding in the provision of leisure opportunities for the benefit of the community;

7.1

Leisure Centres

Leisure centres in Fenland must focus on being sustainable in the future and broadening their impact on improving community health. This strategy prioritises a focus on ensuring that leisure centre provision in the district is sustainable, encouraging the community to increase their participation levels in sport and physical activity, in turn reducing the level of health inequalities found in the district.

7.2

Sports Development

Over the past 2 years the sports development function of the Council has developed and managed the Active Fenland project. With funding from Sport England, this project has attracted more than 4,000 individuals to take part in a diverse range of sport and physical activity opportunities across the District. The Sports Development Team will continue to support Active Fenland, as well as identify funding opportunities for community sports clubs and support successful applications to those funds. Working together better with other partners will also form a key role for the Sports Development Team, further enhancing opportunities to reduce health inequalities in the District.

7.3

Open Spaces

Finally, the Council provides significant open spaces for the community to enjoy. These areas promote opportunities to be active as an adult, but are also the key spaces that children and young people use for play, either in an open space or in one of our many play areas. Fenland's open spaces are well maintained and accessible by all. Open spaces provide a platform for community activities, social interaction, physical activity and recreation, as well as reducing social isolation, improving community cohesion and positively affecting the wider determinants of health.

▲ This strategy sets out a **vision, strategic priorities and key indicators** to monitor, giving the Council a clear focus, ensuring that sport and physical activity continues to contribute to improving local community outcomes. ▲

/8 Why a leisure strategy can help Fenland prosper

8.1

Leisure and Social Inculson

Sport and physical activity builds social capital in communities and fosters understanding between different cultures. Sport builds intergenerational respect, as well as a greater understanding of cultural differences.

8.2

Leisure and Community Safety

Sport and physical activity can contribute to reducing crime and levels of antisocial behaviour. As a diversionary activity, sport is especially effective at reducing crime and disorder in young people – the most significant group in terms of offending. Involvement in sport and physical activity at an early age is proving to prevent young people taking up criminal or anti-social activities.

8.3

Lifestyle and Health Improvement

There are many factors that affect a person's health. These are summarised in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Model of wider determinants of health & wellbeing



Source: Modified from Dahlgren & Whitehead's rainbow of determinants of health (G Dahlgren and M Whitehead. Policies and strategies to promote social equity in health, Institute of Futures Studies, Stockholm, 1991) and the LGA circle of social determinants (Available at: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/health/journal_content/56/10171/3511260/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE)

It should be noted that whilst sport and physical activity play a key role in a person's health, so does the local economy. This model encourages taking an overall view of a person's health – highlighting the link between this strategy and other FDC and partner work that contributes to overall wellbeing.

'The scientific evidence is compelling. Physical activity not only contributes to wellbeing, but is also essential for good health. People who are physically active reduce their risk of developing major chronic diseases by up to 50%, and the risk of premature death by about 20% - 30%.²

8.4

Significant Health Inequalities in Fenland

Fenland's community suffers from significant health inequalities and earlier mortality than the Cambridgeshire average³.

8.5

Healthy Weight and Obesity in Fenland

The 2015 Public Health England health profile for Fenland highlights that obesity levels in the district are some of the highest in the East of England with 26.8% of adults classed as obese. An additional 45.6% of the Fenland adult population are

classed as overweight. These are the highest levels in Cambridgeshire.

High obesity levels, low levels of sport and physical activity combined with low levels of healthy eating in Fenland are leading to high levels of diabetes in the population, with 7.7% of the population, or 7,078 people, living with diabetes in Fenland.

8.6

Open Spaces

The Government, Public Health England and Sport England have all acknowledged that there is a significant problem with the low levels of sport and physical activity being undertaken in the UK.

Sport and physical activity levels in Fenland are significantly worse than county, regional or national levels.

With a national picture of 66% of adults aged 50 – 70 years not having engaged in any moderate physical activity for the past month⁴, the scale of the physical activity challenge is clear.

With regard to the impact that the Council can have in Fenland, Sport England's recent strategy has highlighted that the most significant impact on public health can be made by focussing on those who are currently sedentary. This is highlighted in the following diagram⁵:

‘There are few public health initiatives that have greater potential for improving health and wellbeing than increasing the physical activity levels of the population of England’⁶

/9 Strategic Vision

To improve community health and community cohesion by encouraging more people to be more active, more often

/10 Key Outcomes

- More people, more active, more often across Fenland
- Participation in sport and physical activity is increased in target groups
- Providers of sport and physical activity opportunities work effectively together with health partners

This strategy gives clarity to the Council's desired community outcomes for leisure in Fenland. The Council has adopted the following priorities:

Priority 1:

Provide an efficient, sustainable leisure centre service, focused on getting more people, more active, more often

Priority 2:

Support varied community sport opportunities

Priority 3:

Support programmes that target a reduction in health inequalities

Priority 4:

Work more collaboratively with other bodies on health, sport and physical activity initiatives

/11 Strategic Priorities

/12 Priority 1

Provide an efficient, sustainable leisure centre service, focused on getting more people, more active, more often

12.1 Why has this priority been chosen?

To ensure that the Council can continue to support local leisure centre facilities, running costs must be kept to a minimum through efficient service provision whilst income levels must grow – reducing the net cost further still.

12.2 What we will do:

- Focus on increasing leisure centre attendance levels, leading to improved public health, as well as a more financially sustainable service
- Offer committed, market value, membership schemes for gym and fitness class users
- Ensure that the leisure centres follow health and fitness trends to be more attractive to target groups, providing activities that will ensure sustained use and customer growth
- Use insight led, effective, targeted marketing to develop a larger customer base
- Use customer satisfaction to promote the service throughout Fenland, driving up income and attendance levels
- Consider alternative management options for Fenland's leisure centres

12.3 Key Performance Indicators

- At least a 1% rise year on year of people attending the leisure centres
- Leisure centre income rising by at least 2% year on year
- Investment to improve the customer offer will take place annually in the leisure centres
- Customer satisfaction levels will remain above 80% in the leisure centres

Performance indicators will be revised should the Council decide to outsource leisure centre management.

/13 Priority 2

Support varied community sports opportunities

13.1 Why has this theme been chosen?

The Council will continue to work to make leisure and sport accessible to the whole population. Leisure centres and community colleges act as sports hubs, with other activities in community settings, such as village halls and local playing fields, reducing the need to travel, increasing accessibility, and subsequently increasing participation levels.

Community sport is thriving in Fenland and the Council recognises the importance of working with the community to maintain current and develop new sporting opportunities. There are many clubs supported by community volunteers with a wide variety of activities taking place, all of which will benefit from support over the period of this strategy.

13.2 What we will do:

- Ensure that the Sports Development Team works as an enabler, not a provider, to support community sports clubs to improve participation, local facilities and coach education
- Work with partners to identify funding opportunities and submit applications to support sport and physical activity in Fenland.
- Develop the skills and capacity to submit funding bids that have a high chance of success, impacting on sport and physical activity opportunities in the district
- Work with National Governing Bodies of Sport, the County Sports Partnership and Sport England to develop, monitor and evaluate programmes in the district
- Work with partners to deliver effective active leisure programmes that develop respect and strengthen community cohesion, including cross-generational and cross-cultural activities
- Continue to manage the Active Fenland project and focus on sustainable project delivery in 2018 and beyond

13.3 Key Performance Indicators:

- Active Fenland hits annual attendance targets
- Number of funding applications submitted with Sports Development Team support increases year on year from a 2017/18 baseline
- Value of funding brought into the District supported by the Sports Development Team increases year on year with a baseline established in 2017/18
- Number of active leisure schemes set up and supported by partners with the Sports Development Team increases year on year

All performance indicators will be reviewed annually to reflect realistic achievable targets.

/14 Priority 3

Support programmes that target a reduction in health inequalities

14.1 Why has this theme been chosen?

As a Council committed to improving the health of our local community, schemes targeting a reduction in health inequalities can positively impact segments of the population requiring extra support.

14.2 What we will do:

- Increase the number of exercise referral clients joining the exercise referral scheme by 25% annually (to a minimum of 400 across the service per year) through more effective partnership work with local referring medical professionals
- Focus the exercise referral scheme on those people who have diabetes or are overweight or obese –health indicators that are significantly worse than the regional average
- Work with the County Public Health Team to set up and effectively manage a Let's Get Moving scheme in Fenland, targeting an increase in community physical activity levels
- Use lessons learned from the Active Fenland project to promote informal sport and physical activity opportunities in Fenland's open spaces
- Use social media and effective marketing in open spaces locations to promote opportunities that Fenland's open spaces offer for sport and physical activity

14.3 Key Performance Indicators:

- Exercise referral numbers will increase by 25% p.a. to a minimum of 400 clients p.a. with a 60% completion rate
- Let's Get Moving (LGM) sessions set up in 15 locations by the end of year 2 of the programme
- Increase the number of people aged 60+ taking part in FDC community sports and physical activity opportunities with a baseline established in 2017/18

/15 Priority 4

Work more collaboratively with other bodies on health, sport and physical activity initiatives

15.1 Why has this theme been chosen?

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies, as a priority, the importance of working with other providers in the health sector to increase the amount of sport and physical activity being undertaken by sedentary and hard to reach users. The Council provides leisure centres and these community hubs could be used more effectively, along with the data they collect, to support varied health improvement initiatives across the District more effectively.

15.2 What we will do:

- Continue to work closely with the local Health and Wellbeing Partnership to improve community health in Fenland
- Offer the use of leisure centre rooms to health partners to aid the development of accessible community health initiatives
- Work with the Public Health Team on the Let's Get Moving initiative to provide more opportunities to be more active in Fenland

15.3 Key Performance Indicators:

- Regular health and physical activity sessions taking place in leisure centres, provided by other health partners
- Let's Get Moving project providing at least 10 sessions across Fenland in year 1

² Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, 2004

³ Fenland District Council health and well-being strategy, 2016

⁴ Chief Medical Officer, Annual Report - Baby Boomers: Fit for the Future, 2015

⁵ Sport England, Towards an Active Nation, Strategy 2016 - 2021

⁶ Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, 2004

Fenland District Council

Leisure Strategy

2017-2021

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Leisure Strategy | Key Performance Indicators

Priority

Key Performance Indicator

Priority 1

Provide an efficient, sustainable leisure centre service, focused on getting more people, more active, more often

- At least a 1% rise year on year of people attending the leisure centres
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- Investment to improve the customer offer will take place annually in the leisure centres
- Customer satisfaction levels will remain above 80% in the leisure centres

Priority 2

Support varied community sports opportunities

- Active Fenland hits annual attendance targets
- Number of funding applications submitted with Sports Development Team support increases year on year from a 2017/18 baseline
- Value of funding brought into the District supported by the Sports Development Team increases year on year with a baseline established in 2017/18
- Number of active leisure schemes set up and supported by partners with the Sports Development Team increases year on year

Priority 3

Support programmes that target a reduction in health inequalities

- Exercise referral numbers will increase by 25% p.a. to a minimum of 400 clients p.a. with a 60% completion rate
- Let's Get Moving (LGM) sessions set up in 15 locations by the end of year 2 of the programme
- Increase the number of people aged 60+ taking part in FDC community sports and physical activity opportunities with a baseline established in 2017/18

Priority 4

Work more collaboratively with other bodies on health, sport and physical activity initiatives

- Regular health and physical activity sessions taking place in leisure centres, provided by other health partners
- Let's Get Moving project providing at least 10 sessions across Fenland in year 1

