



# **KIRKLEES COUNCIL BUILT LEISURE AND SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2015 - 2020**

**Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration**

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2015 - 2020**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In light of economic pressures facing Kirklees Council, the development and implementation of a new Local Plan, and in order to consider how the council can best achieve its aspirations for Health and Wellbeing, a new Built Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategic Framework was commissioned.

The aims of the strategic framework are to consider the current and projected supply of and demand for built leisure and sports facilities, and identify any gaps in provision or key areas where provision needs further consideration and/or to be protected / enhanced. It is not intended to be a business plan, and any decisions taken based on this strategic framework will need to be properly costed at the time.

It will be important to manage expectations about what the council's role will be in the years to come and given the limited availability of funding, it should be understood that not all these recommendations can be delivered. Where the Council identifies key recommendations that they feel they can or need to address, it will be important that they work in partnership and collaboration with other stakeholders to successfully deliver facilities which are viable and sustainable. Where stakeholders wish to investigate the possibility of addressing any of these recommendations themselves, the council should assist through the planning process where proposals which are funded and sustainable are proposed.

The following vision and strategic recommendations have been informed by the research undertaken in the delivery of the Assessment Report and identified need across the area of Kirklees.

### **Vision**

**To maintain and promote a wide range of good quality, affordable and accessible sport and leisure facilities to meet the needs of Kirklees residents.**

From the work, four main themes have been identified to deliver the above vision over the period 2015 – 2020. They provide strategic direction for the council as well as an evidence base for the mixed economy of external providers (Leisure Trusts, private companies, schools and voluntary sector organisations) which provide facilities and opportunities for residents and visitors to pursue sports and recreation as a means to engage in physical activity.

These four themes, each of which carries a series of recommendations, are:

- A: Potential within school facilities
- B: Existing facility condition / development / rationalisation
- C: New facility development / upgrading
- D: Understanding the specific needs of different sports

It is clear that the majority of recommendations will only be possible in partnership with key partners such as Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL), schools and with the voluntary and community sectors (VCS), or with the support of external funding agencies. In all cases, the purpose should be to deliver against the wider participation outcomes set out in the "Kirklees: Everybody Active" strategy and will be mindful of the prevailing financial

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pressures facing both stakeholders and external funders. Inevitably, there will need to be compromise and agreement on priority actions in order to achieve the greatest impact in times of limited resources.

Although the strategic framework can be used by any organisation to support their own plans and aspirations, it is recognised that Kirklees Council will lead on a number of the recommendations. The council will develop annual action plans, capture achievements, report progress and update the recommendations at set points throughout the strategies timeline to the Executive Board of the Kirklees Physical Activity and Sport Partnership, a multi-agency group who have been responsible for the updating of the strategy for sport and physical activity in Kirklees. This will provide a level of accountability and scrutiny and ensure the strategic framework remains at the forefront of strategic decision making. The council will also provide support wherever possible for any external organisations who are seeking to address any of the recommendations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is the Built Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategic Framework (the Strategic Framework) for Kirklees for the five year period 2015 – 2020. Recommendations draw upon the accompanying Assessment Report which was researched and prepared between September 2014 – March 2015 by specialist sport and leisure consultants: Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP). Both the Assessment Report and the Strategic Framework were prepared in accordance with the guidance from Sport England contained in the document 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities (ANOG, Sport England - December 2014).

The assessment is required to provide the evidence to inform the creation of a new Facility Strategic Framework. Increasing financial pressure on the council requires clear priorities on which to focus future resources and policies that can be supported through the new development plan. Funding resources will be scarce and projects will need to be clearly defined and prioritised to potentially receive third party support.

The consultant team is most grateful to the lead and contributing officers from KC, Sport England and the Council's delivery partners, notably Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) and West Yorkshire Sport (WYS) for the time and ideas they have contributed. All agencies will need to continue to work together to deliver strategic outcomes.

### **Strategic context summary**

Everybody Active: The Kirklees Physical Activity and Sports Strategy 2015 – 2020 provides direction in respect of getting more of the population active be it through everyday life, travel, recreation or sport. Referencing these ambitions, the objective of this Strategic Framework is to provide built facility infrastructure that is fit for purpose to facilitate current and anticipated future demand for sport and recreational activity.

Austerity and a continuing squeeze on local government finance, coupled with modest economic growth make these challenging times for sport and recreation providers. Capital funding for new projects is expected to be scarce and operational subsidies for facility management is likely to reduce, if available at all.

In Kirklees an estimated one third of the adult population is active i.e. taking 150 minutes moderate intensity activity per week. Based on the 2012 adult population of 339,000, this leaves a ball park figure of 225,000 people to convert to regular activity. If population growth is factored in, Kirklees will have 250,000 potential new regular participants over the next 5 year period.

Kirklees, for its population levels, has a good supply of sports facilities. Sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness provision are available at about the levels expected to meet current demand. In addition, there is a reasonable selection of specialist sports facilities in Kirklees and in the case of the exceptions, for example, indoor bowls, diving, ice skating and closed road cycling, facilities in neighbouring authorities are accessible within a 30 minute drive.

Kirklees is a blend of urban and rural areas. It is predominately urban in the north and rural in the south, and linked together by Huddersfield, a large town of some 145,000 people. Like many authorities it encompasses significant areas of wealth, mostly in the south and areas of high deprivation, mostly in the north. It has a mixed population,

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predominately white but with significant levels of people from black and minority ethnic groups, notably Asian and British Asian who make up 21% of the resident population.

Figure 1 Kirklees Council main towns and villages



## **PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifies that local plans should meet objectively assessed needs and that planning policy should be based on robust, up-to-date assessments of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new / alternate provision.

Sport England guidance reflects this by promoting a planned approach to the provision of facilities and opportunities to participate in sport and, in so doing, adding value to the work of others and helping to deliver sustainable development goals through:

- ◀ Recognising and taking full advantage of the unique role of sport and active recreation in contributing to a wide array of policy and community aspirations, including leisure, health and education.
- ◀ Using sport and recreation as a fundamental part of the planning and delivery of sustainable communities.
- ◀ Development of partnership work using sport and active recreation as a common interest.

In line with the NPPF (paragraph 73), and as presented in the diagram below, Sport England advocates that at the core of planning for sport should be a robust and up-to-date assessment of need for sport and active recreational facilities and opportunities for new / alternate provision. The results of the assessment should be developed into a clear strategic framework designed to meet identified need, to be integrated into forward planning and applied within development management.

*Figure 1: Sport England Strategic Planning Model*



This Strategic Framework provides partners and stakeholders in Kirklees with a valuable tool to guide and prioritise internal and external investment decisions, support applications for external funding and inform key management decisions.



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## SWOT ANALYSIS

The research and consultation phase of the Strategic Framework was outlined within an Assessment Report; which identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) associated with sport and leisure provision in the Authority area:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Kirklees Council/KAL commitment to sport and recreation</li> <li>◀ New leisure centre provision in Huddersfield town centre</li> <li>◀ Mix of providers that enables access to sport facilities throughout the day/evening</li> <li>◀ Range of good quality swimming facilities</li> <li>◀ KAL aquatic programme and 'swimmer journey'</li> <li>◀ Range of facilities to accommodate the majority of indoor sports</li> <li>◀ High quality health and fitness provision with enthusiastic, committed membership</li> <li>◀ Community use at many school sites</li> <li>◀ Range of specialist facilities e.g. indoor cricket, table tennis, cycle speedway, gymnastics, martial arts.</li> <li>◀ The use of a third party agent in the operation of council stock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Reduced Kirklees Council capacity and budgets</li> <li>◀ The need to utilise facilities in terms of income generation as opposed to sports needs</li> <li>◀ Participation rates in some sports</li> <li>◀ Peak time capacity at some fitness centres and swimming pools</li> <li>◀ Underutilisation of certain facilities</li> <li>◀ Quality of some specialist facilities - often located in converted buildings/not new build</li> <li>◀ Limited number of voluntary clubs aspiring to create /provide elite performer pathways</li> <li>◀ Imminent closure of some facilities</li> <li>◀ Ability, where demand exists, to consistently accommodate separate sessions for cultural reasons</li> <li>◀ Significantly reduced influence of the LEA with local schools, especially secondary schools</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Capacity at many indoor sports halls to accommodate growth in key sports</li> <li>◀ New facilities in Huddersfield town centre in 2015</li> <li>◀ Population growth/housing development provides potential to expand and/or enhance sport and leisure provision</li> <li>◀ Potential opportunity for changes of use at Kirklees Council sports facilities</li> <li>◀ Capacity to increase health and fitness to accommodate demand</li> <li>◀ Snow sports development in the town centre</li> <li>◀ Self-management (citizen services) and/or asset transfer</li> <li>◀ Greater level of community use of school sites</li> <li>◀ Tour de France legacy and popularity of cycling</li> <li>◀ Potential capacity of other community facilities to accommodate activities</li> <li>◀ Bloomberg Challenge (Kirklees award recipient 2014)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Ongoing public sector funding and capacity reductions impacting on Kirklees Council and KAL</li> <li>◀ Pressures facing external funding organisations</li> <li>◀ Inactivity amongst the local population</li> <li>◀ Population growth/housing development will put additional pressures on the existing sport and leisure provision</li> <li>◀ Condition and potential cost of maintaining existing public leisure stock at present levels</li> <li>◀ Potential closure of key local facilities and lack of replacement</li> <li>◀ Sustainability of voluntary sports club infrastructure – coaches, volunteers, participants, possible pressure for the removal of NNDR and increased market reflected rents</li> <li>◀ Limited effectiveness of partner development programmes to sufficiently grow sports to sustainable levels</li> <li>◀ The impact of commercial sector fitness operators on the viability of public sector sports provision</li> </ul>

Kirklees Council is facing significant budget cuts across all service areas, and this includes significant cuts to the budgets allocated for the repair and maintenance of the Council's stock of leisure and sports facilities. These cuts will have a major impact on the KAL, who manage the Council's stock of facilities. It must be recognised that finding capital to build new facilities is likely to be challenging, but the life cycle costs to keep a facility open and to maintain a site are also significant, and will also be affected by limited access to funding. These pressures potentially could place existing facilities at risk if they cannot be maintained adequately, and decisions may need to be taken between supporting existing facilities which still meet strategic needs and building new ones.

There is, thus, a need to ensure that sport and leisure facilities are as financially efficient and sustainable as possible and an understanding of the pressures which will be placed on revenue budgets to ensure that sport and leisure continues to contribute to reducing the wider cost base of the Council as well as delivering physical activity and health benefits to residents. Any proposed new facilities will need to be rigorously assessed to ensure that they are viable, and will support the overall sustainability of facilities rather than impact on them.

### **Health guidelines**

Access to facilities and opportunities at/in which to participate in physical activity, sport and recreational activity is essential if Kirklees residents are to have the opportunity to meet the individual activity targets and goals being set nationally and in the local strategies; and to make sport and wider physical activity a part of their everyday lives.

The four UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that:

- ◀ Adults should be involved in at least 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Alternatively similar benefits can be obtained through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and 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
- ◀ Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes (3 hours), spread throughout the day
- ◀ People of all ages should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods, as sedentary behaviour is now considered an independent risk factor for poor health, no matter how much exercise you do. .

Understanding that people have differing physical activity needs, not to mention the changing challenges and barriers to participation, depending on their stage in life has resulted in the "Everybody Active: Kirklees Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2015 - 2020" being developed using a life course approach.

This approach, which merged strategies around physical activity and sport which had previously been addressed separately and in isolation, considers the specific needs, issues and actions required at 4 identified stages of life: Early years (0 –School Years), Children and Young People(5 - 17), Adults (18 - 64) and Older Adults (65+). The overall vision is that "By 2020 everyone will be physically active in Kirklees through work, play, travel or leisure". Although this is an ambitious target, the strategy also recognises that it is unrealistic for everyone to be active at levels which meet the Chief Medical Officers

guidelines, however it also considers that health gains can be made by simply taking the first steps into activity.

Fundamental to this approach is recognition of the importance of the physical place that people can take part in physical activity and play sport, including formal built facility provision such as leisure centres and swimming pools. These facilities not only provide people with the opportunity to participate in a range of different activities, but in addition sports centres and facilities are major factors in providing vibrancy and contributing to the economic resilience of the town centres in Dewsbury and Huddersfield.

## **ASSESSMENT OF NEED**

### **Policy objectives**

To provide a context for the Strategic Framework a broad range of national, regional and local policy documentation was reviewed:

- ◀ Sport England: A Sporting Habit for Life (2012 – 2017)
- ◀ Public Health England: Everybody Active, Everyday October 2014
- ◀ National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- ◀ Kirklees Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020
- ◀ Kirklees Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment, WYG, September 2014
- ◀ Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Kirklees 2013 – 2020
- ◀ Everybody Active: Kirklees Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2015 – 2020
- ◀ West Yorkshire County Sport Partnership Strategy

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

- ◀ Healthy lifestyles for individuals.
- ◀ Healthier communities.
- ◀ Residents to be physically active through any means not just playing sport.
- ◀ Increasing activity amongst all groups, including the young and the elderly.
- ◀ Residents to be aware and understand the threat that a poor diet and lack of exercise can pose to physical and mental health and the well-being of individuals.
- ◀ Physical activity and sport to become a habit that is maintained throughout life.

Ensuring the health and well-being of local communities and the delivery of sustainable, modern and a fit for purpose range of community facilities is an identified key strategic priority for Kirklees Council. It is recognised by the Council that the voluntary and community sector (VCS) plays a major role in running sport and the sustainability of VCS is vital to providing a robust and resilient sector. It is in line with national policy objectives and the aspirations of national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) to help raise physical activity levels.

### **Demography**

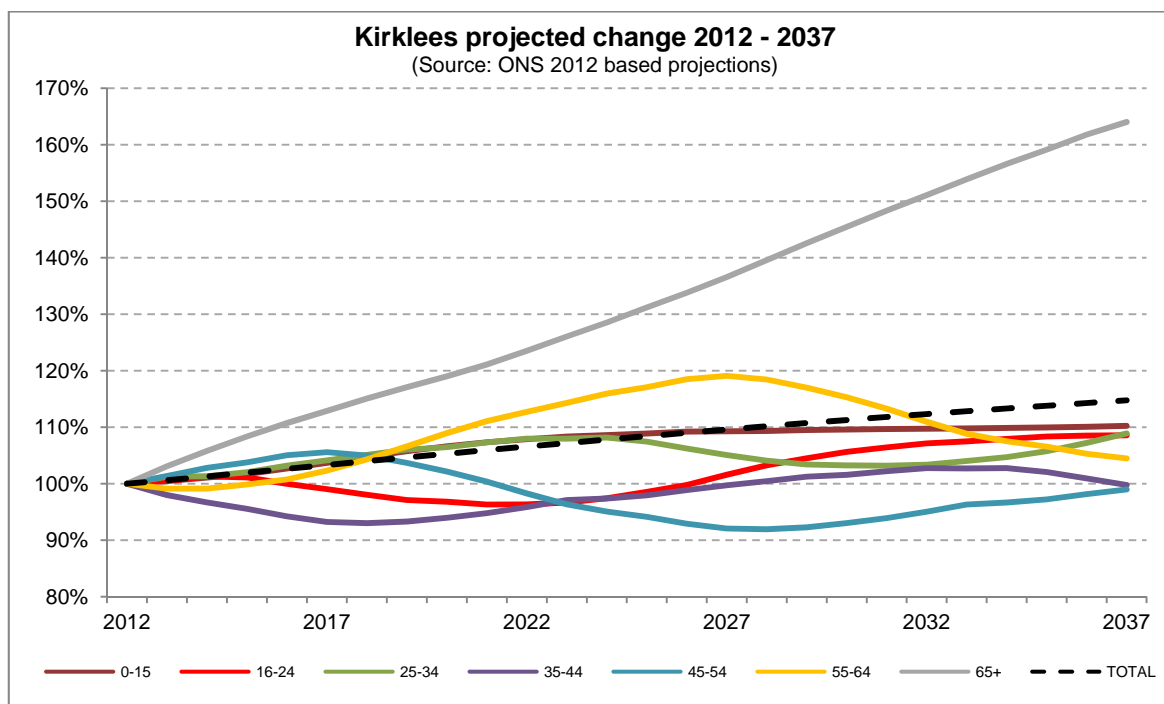
Kirklees is the 11<sup>th</sup> most populated Borough in England with a total population of 428,279 (211,575 males and 216,704 females). It is situated in the south west of West Yorkshire and is bordered by the authorities of Barnsley, Wakefield, Leeds, Calderdale, Bradford, Oldham and High Peak. It comprises a network of settlements; the west and south are mainly rural whilst the urban settlements of Dewsbury, Batley, Mirfield and the Spenn Valley lie to the north. The largest town Huddersfield, links the north and south and is a focal point for employment, services, retail, sport and culture.

Over the next 25 years the population of Kirklees is expected to rise by 14.8% (62,804). Most significant will be the rise in the number/proportion of residents aged 65+. During the next decade Kirklees will 'gain' an additional 15,320 people aged over 65. By 2037 more than one fifth of its population will be 65 or older. At the same time, there will also be an increase of 6,505 of young people (0 – 15) in Kirklees.

79% of the population is white, markedly lower than the average England rate (85.4%). 16% is Asian (national average 7.8%). Relative to other parts of the country Kirklees experiences relative high levels of deprivation; four in 10 (39.6%) of its residents live within

areas categorised as being among the country's the three most deprived cohorts. Conversely, 24.7% live in the three least deprived groupings.

*Figure 2 Kirklees projected population change 2012 – 2037*



**Housing growth**

The Council’s upcoming adoption of a new local plan will set out how much new development is required to meet future housing and employment needs for the Borough and will allocate sites to meet these needs. It is likely that the number of new homes required in Kirklees over the Local Plan period (2013-31) will range from 1,300-1,900 per annum. Work has started on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA); this will set out the actual Kirklees housing requirement over this period. This is expected in to be completed in 2015.

**Sporting characteristics**

The Sport England Active People Survey (APS) provides an interesting picture of participation in Kirklees. When the Active People Survey was first published in 2006 it estimated that 32.6% of adults in Kirklees participated in at least 1 x 30 minutes moderate intensity sport per week. The last complete years data (APS 8 2013/14) shows that participation has dropped slightly from its 2006 levels to 30.4% (although interim data for the first half of the 2014/15 period has shown the figure to have recovered and suggest a slight increase at 33.9%). Although this is the accepted national measure of participation, it is based on very small local sample sizes which mean that these kinds of fluctuation period on period are inevitable and as a result they should be treated with a degree of caution. There can be more certainty attached to the longer term trends, which indicates that participation levels have remained broadly the same over the 9 years of study, and suggests that only a third of Kirklees residents consistently participate in at least 1 x 30 minutes moderate intensity sport per week

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APS8 also showed that male participation in 1 x 30 minutes moderate intensity sport per week is higher (34%) than female participation (26.9%). This gender gap has persisted throughout the period of analysis, with female participation remaining relatively static, and male participation showing more of a fluctuation. This is in line with national findings, and there has been an increasing focus recently from Sport England on tackling this gender gap.

Another useful feature of the Active People Survey is to identify the main activities that people are choosing to participate in. The most recent data from APS8 shows the 5 most popular activities for Kirklees residents were:

Sport	Kirklees		Yorkshire & The Humber		England	
	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate
Gym	30.1	9.1%	450.4	10.4%	4,622.7	10.9%
Fitness & Conditioning	29.4	8.9%	280.6	6.5%	2,854.7	6.7%
Swimming	25.4	7.7%	482.6	11.1%	4,896.9	11.5%
Cycling	21.4	6.5%	337.9	7.8%	3,458.9	8.1%
Athletics	18.7	5.7%	271.0	6.2%	2778.8	6.5%

Source: APS8

### Key findings

#### Core provision - sports halls

Sports hall provision across Kirklees is of reasonable quality and currently fit for purpose. Stock is generally old (1970/80's build) and either already needs, or would benefit from, investment. Not all sports halls are full to capacity and many could accommodate additional activity, particularly sports halls located on school sites. Developing relationships with Academies to facilitate affordable access to sports provision will release capacity and is important as the Council's ability to influence the schools agenda is diminishing as increasing numbers of schools convert to Academy status.

Certain facilities are scheduled to close. For example, Whitcliffe Mount Sports Centre, will shut its doors in May 2016 with a smaller 4 court hall due to open on the same site. This will have implications for the activities based at the centre and for locally based users for whom this is the nearest facility. It is important that every effort be made to secure a community use agreement for the new sports hall.

There is no similar venue locally and moving further afield may disrupt and create barriers to participation in the activities presently enjoyed by the local community. Many of the users have already been relocated and consultation will continue with remaining user groups to, where feasible, relocate them and ensure that they and their members are able to continue to engage in their chosen activity. It is also noted that a new facility development including a sports hall is planned at Odsal in Bradford, which is relatively close to Whitcliffe Mount.

Across much of the sports hall stock there is capacity for local sports clubs to develop and expand sessions to attract new participants. This capacity throughout Kirklees



indicates that, once the new 4 court hall at Whitcliffe Mount is complete, Kirklees will not, in the plan period, require any further sports hall provision.

### ***Sports halls***

- ◀ There is a good supply of sports halls; they are well located across the Borough providing a reasonable degree of access to most residents.
- ◀ The total number of (3+ court) sports halls in Kirklees is 32.
- ◀ The quality is variable, reflecting the age of certain halls across the Borough. Stock is however, mostly fit for purpose.
- ◀ 73% of the population resides within a 20 minute walk-time of a sports hall.
- ◀ The three 8-court facilities (Dewsbury Sports Centre, Huddersfield Leisure Centre and Huddersfield University) in the borough are helping to meet regional competition needs for certain sports.
- ◀ Substantial investment in the existing sports hall stock will be required over the period of the Strategic Framework. For example, floor renewals.
- ◀ There is capacity within existing sports hall facilities to accommodate latent and unmet demand.
- ◀ There is little evidence to suggest that many existing voluntary clubs have the ability to raise participation rates in sports hall activities.
- ◀ The sports segmentation data identifies some latent demand amongst the local population for sports hall activities.
- ◀ No new sports hall provision is required to meet latent or future demand
- ◀ The resources for NGB development programmes to attract new users are limited.
- ◀ The loss of 2 x 4 court sports hall facilities at Whitcliffe Mount Sports Centre in May 2016 will be partially replaced with a new build 4 court sports hall at the replacement school. Most displaced users have been found new venues.

Based upon the variable approaches taken and differential levels of occupancy it is clear that community access to schools' sports facilities should be underpinned and protected via specific community use agreements (CUA's). New agreements should be issued for any new school sports provision and existing agreements should be enforced.

### ***Core provision - swimming pools***

The 23 swimming pools in Kirklees are meeting the needs of the three key geographical areas of Kirklees – the Huddersfield urban area, the smaller northern towns and the rural areas. Kirklees has a mix of pools ranging from the Victorian baths in Batley to a new pool in Huddersfield, although some of the 1970's public pool stock is reaching the end of its economic life.

- ◀ Swimming is the second most popular sport across the Borough.
- ◀ According to the limited findings of Sport England's Active People survey, swimming participation rates in Kirklees are lower than those for Yorkshire and England
- ◀ The Borough has a 23 swimming pools on 18 sites that cater for a wide range of the population's swimming and aquatic needs.
- ◀ The Sport England Facilities Planning model (FPM) calculates that existing pool provision in Kirklees and adjoining local authorities enables 91% of swimming demand to be satisfied, 15% of which is exported to other areas from Kirklees.
- ◀ The main operator, Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL), provides a mixed and balanced programme of swimming, learn to swim, water fitness and other water sport activity to help meet the needs of the local population.

- ◀ School pool sites make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of local clubs and swim schools.
- ◀ Several swimming clubs provide opportunities for residents to access a pathway to competitive swimming. There is no evident unmet demand for water space from swimming clubs in the Borough.
- ◀ 54% of the population of Kirklees is not within a 20 minute walking distance of a pool however all residents are within a 20 minute drive time.
- ◀ Spenborough Swimming Pool is reaching the end of its economic life. Population growth and an existing shortfall of water space across the Borough indicate that Spenborough should be replaced with a minimum 8 lane x 25m pool and a teaching pool.
- ◀ Dewsbury Sports Centre main pool tank is also nearing the end of its economic life and consideration needs to be given to the rectification of this, in order to avoid the potential closure of this key facility at some stage in the future.
- ◀ Further feasibility work should be undertaken to investigate providing an additional pool to meet the demands of the growing and ageing population.

### **Core provision – health and fitness**

There are currently a total of 1,909 fitness stations across 33 sites that are accessible at some level for community use in Kirklees. Based on 'UK penetration rates' there is a predicted need for 1,709 stations by 2037, suggesting that demand is catered for - both now and in the future. Much of this provision is, however, in the wider Huddersfield town centre facilities.

It is a highly competitive market and despite capacity at some sites, some fitness suites are oversubscribed, particularly at peak time and would benefit from expansion, although this may present difficulties as many of the sites are considered to be fully developed.

Health and fitness facilities have been a very successful addition to sports centres over the past three decades and the income derived from them helps to offset the cost/underpin the viability of other aspects of leisure provision, such as swimming pools. The provision also offsets the impact of revenue subsidy reductions.-

- ◀ There are 35 health and fitness suites of 20 or more stations within Kirklees, 33 of which are available to the community, providing a total of 1,909 stations.
- ◀ The more densely populated areas of Kirklees are seemingly well catered for in terms of the number of health and fitness suites available, whilst more sparsely populated areas also generally have access to nearby facilities.
- ◀ The majority of facilities assessed were rated as good (nine) or above average (five). Although there are many privately provided facilities, KAL manages 12 health and fitness suites with a range of price offers, indicating a relatively wide choice of facilities for potential users.
- ◀ Health and fitness through exercising in a gym is very popular across Kirklees, with the Sport England Active People Survey identifying 53,244 participating in 'keep fit and gym'.
- ◀ Using current 'UK penetration rates' the demand in the peak period is for 1,277 stations. This is predicted to grow to 1,709 stations by 2037. Using existing penetration rates current provision can in theory accommodate future demand. However, additional growth will make key fitness facilities even busier, particularly in the peak period. It is therefore anticipated that some key facilities will need to expand to meet growing demand. The difficulty of so doing is recognised as some of the KAL sites are constrained and already fully developed. An option may be to add



additional stand-alone health and fitness sites, along the lines of the operation at Lockwood Park.

### **Specialist facility provision**

The Assessment Report also reviewed facility provision for:

- ◀ Gymnastics and Dance
- ◀ Squash
- ◀ Indoor bowls
- ◀ Indoor tennis and table tennis
- ◀ Athletics
- ◀ Cycling
- ◀ Golf
- ◀ Combat sports and
- ◀ Snow and ice sports

#### ***Gymnastic and dance***

- ◀ There are seven gymnastics clubs in the area, five of which currently hire or rent facilities from local providers. Almost all clubs express a desire to expand the number of sessions but cannot secure additional time at suitable facilities.
- ◀ The demand for gymnastics in the area is high and there is substantial unmet demand, particularly in the junior clubs, which have long waiting lists.
- ◀ There appears to be considerable unmet demand for gymnastics across the study area, which is a trend echoed nationally. A dedicated gymnastics facility could provide an outlet for a large number of new participants to engage in either gymnastics or trampolining and help address the waiting lists found in many clubs.
- ◀ Three clubs in the area have aspirations to develop a dedicated gymnastics facility, however, none of the proposed projects has yet secured funding. Given the current austerity measures and pressure on public expenditure there is no prospect of the council funding such a facility and that other traditional sources, for example Sport England are under financial pressure and facing unprecedented demand for capital funding, this is a major obstacle.
- ◀ British Gymnastics does however identify the potential for raising participation in gymnastics should the development of a specialist dedicated gym club with a sprung matted floor, landing pits and sufficient space to leave equipment in situ and facilitate full length competition run ups become available.
- ◀ There is a recognised shortfall in gymnastics coaches. A coach training programme would be required to help cater for the unmet demand for gymnastics,
- ◀ The North Huddersfield Trust School and Kirklees Rebound Trampolining Club have aspirations to develop a specialist trampolining facility. This would complement existing facilities in sports halls and should be supported.

#### ***Squash***

- ◀ Squash is played at a mix of public and private venues throughout Kirklees.
- ◀ The distribution of courts is relatively even with 17 public sector courts and 23 in the private sector.
- ◀ The majority of residents can access a squash court within a 10 minute drive-time.

- ◀ In common with the rest of the UK it is probably safe to predict that squash will not return to the levels of popularity enjoyed during the 1970/80's and will continue to be a minority sport.
- ◀ Squash facilities in Kirklees are meeting demand and there is capacity for the game to grow within the existing infrastructure should participation trends in squash and racketball change.
- ◀ Talented players who require a higher standard of squash must travel outside the Borough and can play at Pontefract in Wakefield, Chapel Allerton in Leeds and the Queens Clubs in Halifax.
- ◀ Court space offers a level of flexibility; some of it is also set up to enable use for table tennis and a range of exercise and fitness classes.

### ***Indoor bowls***

- ◀ Crown Green Bowls is the most popular bowls format in West Yorkshire.
- ◀ As in other areas of the country, all bowls formats (crown, flat and short mat), are experiencing a decline in popularity.
- ◀ Opportunities to participate in indoor crown green bowls are available at the specialist centre at the Leeds Road Sports Complex near Huddersfield Town Centre in Kirklees.
- ◀ Carpet bowls can be played at a wide number of multi-use venues across Kirklees.
- ◀ With the closure of Huddersfield Sports Centre and the imminent closure of Whitcliffe Mount Sports Centre residents of Kirklees who wish to participate in competitive indoor flat green bowls may have to travel to Leeds or Halifax to participate at a specialist indoor facility.
- ◀ At the moment bowls is a particularly popular sport amongst older age groups. However, as stated earlier the sport is in decline and although the older population (65+years) is expected to increase substantially in Kirklees up until 2037, this does not suggest that the popularity of indoor bowls will increase.
- ◀ The projected increase in residents age 65+ provides an opportunity to review participation trends and demands amongst older people.
- ◀ It is recommended that the Council develops a strategy for increasing activity levels at current indoor and outdoor bowls facilities across the Authority.

### ***Indoor tennis***

- ◀ Supply of indoor tennis provision in Kirklees offers sufficient capacity to accommodate additional members and users at all venues.
- ◀ The private facilities are well used and can accommodate additional members.
- ◀ KAL is continuing to work with LTA to improve the underutilisation of the indoor tennis facilities at Batley Sports and Tennis Centre.

### ***Table tennis***

- ◀ Table tennis tables are available at a number of sports hall venues, although it is not reported to be a particularly popular activity. Table tennis is, however, one of the more popular sports hall based sessions among disability groups. The specialist facility in Mirfield belongs to the Heckmondwike Table Tennis Club, it has five tables and is available for members as a pay and play facility at set times. It is one of four specialist table tennis facilities in Yorkshire (the other three are in Halifax, Keighley and Hull). The Club participates in the Dewsbury Table Tennis League.

### ***Athletics***

- ◀ The athletics facilities in Kirklees are well used by local clubs and should be retained.
- ◀ The potential re-development of Spensborough Pool potentially has implications for the short and long term management of the athletics track, a Category 'A' competition facility. This needs to be factored into any redevelopment feasibility study.
- ◀ Throwing facilities at The Leeds Road Sports Complex are not conducive to the development of throwing events.

### ***Cycling***

- ◀ Cycling is popular in Kirklees. There are a number of cycling clubs in addition to the many participants who ride on a casual basis and do not belong to a club.
- ◀ Traffic volume, traffic speed, poor quality cycling infrastructure and perceived and actual road safety are considered to be barriers to entry and a particular issue when clubs are seeking to cater for young people aged under 16.
- ◀ Specialist indoor velodrome facilities are available in Manchester.
- ◀ The Borough has a number of greenways and has plans to extend this popular traffic free network to increase connectivity
- ◀ Resources to develop the Greenways and off road network are limited
- ◀ A closed road cycle circuit (not British Cycling race standard) is available in neighbouring Elland.
- ◀ The Leeds Road Sports Complex and the track at Spensborough Pool (Princess Mary) are used by people with a variety of disabilities to provide inclusive cycling opportunities. There is capacity at both sites to develop further use of these facilities.
- ◀ Strategically British Cycling would be supportive of development of a closed road cycling circuit in the south of the Borough. Further work is required to establish the viability of such a facility with a strategic location and suitable site.
- ◀ Through the framework of the Cycle West Yorkshire - Tour de France Legacy Group, Kirklees is developing a Walking and Cycling Delivery Plan. This will be developed to fit with the Metro Cycle Prospectus and the new Single Transport Plan.

### ***Golf***

- ◀ There are 12 golf clubs in the Kirklees Council area, of which 11 are traditional membership clubs, and Bradley Park is a 'pay and play' facility.
- ◀ There are three golf driving range facilities, two located in Huddersfield and one at Mirfield. If the HD One proposals to expand the Stadium site in the town centre go ahead, the Huddersfield Stadium driving range facility would be lost.
- ◀ Demand for golf club membership has been in decline over the past decade although pay and play facilities remain popular.
- ◀ There is capacity across golf clubs in Kirklees to accommodate new members.
- ◀ England Golf has a number of initiatives to raise golf participation levels which may help to stimulate demand.
- ◀ Unless the current trends in golf participation are reversed it is possible that supply will substantively outweigh demand and one or more clubs may be forced to close.
- ◀ Bradley Park, operated by KAL, is the only traditional 'Pay and Play' golf provision in Kirklees, which serves as a key entry route into golf.

***Combat sports***

- ◀ There are two boxing clubs in Kirklees offering specialist training and sparring facilities.
- ◀ The new leisure centre in Huddersfield provides a permanent matted combat sports facility that is used by a range of different combat sports.
- ◀ There is a Fencing Club at Royds Hall High School.
- ◀ There is no evidence of a shortfall in facilities to accommodate combat sports although, linked to the collective policy of the five Olympic combat sports, there may be potential to support the development of a joint facility.

***Snow and Ice***

- ◀ New specialist facilities would create opportunities for residents to experience snow sports.
- ◀ Opportunities to participate in snow and ice sports are available at the specialist commercial facilities located in other local authority areas notably X-scape in Wakefield, Chill Factore in Trafford, Greater Manchester and the ice rink in Bradford.
- ◀ The Borough population of 425,000 should be able to support the development of a new snow sports centre.

## **VISION AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following vision and strategic recommendations have been informed by the research undertaken in the delivery of the Assessment Report and identified need across the Council area.

### **Vision**

**To maintain and promote a wide range of good quality, affordable and accessible sport and leisure facilities to meet the needs of Kirklees residents.**

The following recommendations have been identified to deliver the above vision over the period 2015 – 2020. They provide strategic direction for the council as well as an evidence base for the mixed economy of external providers (Leisure Trusts, private companies, schools and voluntary sector organisations) which provide facilities and opportunities for residents and visitors to pursue sports and recreation as a means to engage in physical activity.

The strategic recommendations have been developed around four main themes:

- A: Potential within school facilities
- B: Existing facility condition / development / rationalisation
- C: New facility development / upgrading
- D: Understanding the specific needs of different sports

#### **A: *Potential within school facilities: recommendations***

- A.1 Kirklees Council should seek to gain a clearer picture of the extent to which school facilities are being used by the community and establish the levels of capacity for additional use. This will allow key school sites to be identified where increased access might support unmet demand and the Council should then seek to work alongside these schools to promote and facilitate improved access to their facilities.
- A.2 Kirklees Council should work with Whitcliffe Mount to secure community access to the new sports hall
- A.3 Any subsequent investment in the renewal or redevelopment of secondary school sites in Kirklees should be strongly encouraged to make provision for community use. Where possible, such access should be secured through the planning process, and supported with publication of a community use agreement.

#### **B: *Existing facility condition / development / rationalisation: recommendations***

- B.1 Where there is proven need, community sports\* facilities in Kirklees should be protected through the Local Plan. Any proposed loss of facilities will be considered through the planning process. (Facilities covered in the built facility strategic framework\*)
- B.2 Kirklees Council will seek to support and/or regenerate its facilities via a number of available avenues e.g.

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- ◀ financial investment and / or through externally sourced funding
  - ◀ partnership arrangements and / or appropriate asset transfer arrangements
  - ◀ exploring opportunities to make changes to facilities in order to improve the leisure offer based on evidence of customer demand
- B.3 Kirklees Council and KAL will continue to work together to support user groups displaced as a result of closure of any facilities, including assessing options within the Authority and possible cross border solutions.
- B.4 Kirklees Council and KAL will consider facility mix options for the redevelopment of the Spenborough complex site to provide appropriate facilities for the area. The existing athletics track is meeting a strategic need as a competition venue and needs to be retained or relocated as part of this redevelopment.

### **C: *New facility development/upgrading: recommendations***

- C.1 Kirklees Council will support, as appropriate, evidence based KAL or independent development proposals which help to address unmet demand.
- C.2 Kirklees Council will undertake periodic options appraisals to identify whether additional facilities are required, and if so, what type and where, based on increased demand caused by housing and population growth and a changing demographic profile.
- C.3 Kirklees Council will maintain its support for the HD One Leisure corridor development plans in Huddersfield, which would expand and enhance the range of leisure facilities on offer in the district including the possible addition of a snow sports complex.

### **D: *Understanding the specific needs to cater for different sports: recommendations***

- D.1 Kirklees Council will look to work with local partners including KAL, National Governing Bodies and Voluntary and Community Sector clubs to better understand unmet demand or under-utilisation and consider potential solutions, either on a sport specific basis, or on the basis of brokering collaboration between two or more sports (or clubs).
- D.2 Kirklees Council and partners will complete and publish a comprehensive Walking and Cycling Delivery Plan for Kirklees to ensure that a lasting legacy from the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart is secured. This will include an options analysis which encapsulates consideration of the various sustainable transport, social participation, disability cycling and club demands, and be supported by a feasibility study should any built facility development proposals be identified
- D.3 Consider the findings of the Golf Needs Assessment (Appendix C) and whether provision is meeting the current demands of players.