

# *Active Communities Malvern Hills District: A Vision for the Future*

## **Malvern Hills District Sport and Leisure Strategy 2014 - 2024**

Headline Strategy



## FOREWORD

Welcome to our first Malvern Hills District Sport & Leisure Strategy, entitled *Active Communities Malvern Hills District – A Vision for the Future*.

This strategy defines how the council will support sport and leisure provision in the future. It has been developed within the context of the council being committed to improving the quality of life for all of our communities within an environment of change and financial constraint.

The strategy identifies key priorities for the council in the future, through its new 'deal' with the community and a clear three pronged policy position on **what we will continue to do, what we will support and enable others to do and what we will no longer do**.

Pressure will continue to increase on sport and leisure budgets over the next five years. It will be vitally important to be able to draw upon this strategy for guidance into what to support and what options there are available for alternative approaches to sustain valued local facilities and services.

This council has a strong track record for innovation, best practice and partnership working. By applying these principles, we will be able to optimise the opportunities of working with its communities and supporting the provision of sustainable facilities and services for the district.

Looking ahead this strategy will ensure the council takes an evidence based approach to the allocation of resources for sport and leisure provision.

**Councillor Phil Grove**

**Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Tourism & Leisure**



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## 1. ACTIVE COMMUNITIES MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT – A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Our Vision for Sport and Leisure

*“To create a network of high quality accessible and sustainable sport and leisure opportunities within Malvern Hills district that encourages increased participation, improves health and wellbeing and enhances the quality of life for existing and future communities”.*

This supports the council’s overarching vision of:

*“Through enterprise, innovation and working in partnership, Malvern Hills District Council will deliver high quality, really good value services to improve the living, environmental and economic conditions and the health of our communities.”*

Everything we do will be guided by the principles of enterprise and partnership.

Our key objectives are:

1. We will stimulate economic development
2. We will sustain high quality, really good value services through innovation and more effective partnership working
3. *We will improve quality of life for all our communities.*

We aim to exploit our new role in ‘Health & Wellbeing’ to produce improved health outcomes, increase support for volunteering and enable closer engagement with our local communities.

There are two priority actions identified in support of achieving objective 3 which relate specifically to sport and leisure, these are:

- Put in place a new Sport and Leisure Strategy by 31 March 2014 in support of the new District Health & Wellbeing Plan (2013-2016)
- Develop more effective management arrangements for sport and leisure facilities for implementation by March 2015.

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## 2. UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES OF THE SPORT AND LEISURE STRATEGY

The aim of this strategy is to improve the quality of life for Malvern Hills district residents through increased participation and access to sport, leisure and physical activity. It is key that opportunities to take part in sport and leisure are provided and sustained at all levels of our communities, so as to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents.

The strategy will be utilised as a tool to build healthy, safe and strong communities as well as supporting economic growth. This strategy focuses on the council's position within the context of the wider community of sport and leisure provision, which includes opportunities and facilities incorporating sports clubs from grass roots to elite level as well as facilities owned by the council, its partners, community organisations, private facilities and schools.

The following principles support the Sport and Leisure Strategy.

### Partnership

We will facilitate partnership and ensure that organisations work together across the public, voluntary and private sectors to maximise the sport and leisure offer.

### Empowerment

We will encourage and enable local communities and organisations to take responsibility for, and improve their own sport and leisure provision. We will also ensure that targeted support is available where necessary to increase community resilience and self-reliance.

### Local Action

We will recognise local resources and strengthen the ability of communities to develop local solutions to local issues.

### Rigour

We will draw on appropriate evidence, ensuring that the delivery of the sport and leisure strategy is undertaken with full reference to the council's plans and strategies and other strategic influences.

### Involvement

We will respect the views of residents, user groups, providers and other stakeholders and ensure that they have an opportunity to shape how sport and leisure opportunities are organised and provided.

### Transparency & Accountability

We will be clear about the impact we expect from investment and action to improve sport and leisure opportunities and be open about the progress we are making.

### 3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The development of this strategy is set in the context of the period of austerity facing the nation and impacting on local authorities and their communities. Faced with year on year reductions in government funding, councils are obliged to seek out savings and efficiencies wherever possible and fundamentally alter the way services are delivered across the board.

As a discretionary, non-statutory service, sport and leisure is far from exempt from these conditions. While the council recognises the value of its sport and leisure provision and its importance to local residents, as explicitly outlined in the council's Strategic Review and further supported by the recently adopted Malvern Hills District Health & Wellbeing Plan, it also has a duty to ensure that its resources are being deployed to greatest effect.

This reality will have a significant impact on the way the council seeks to deliver this service in the future. Local authorities must now deploy their resources more strategically, seeking to supplement a core of services by enabling and supporting local communities, educational establishments and private and third sector organisations to contribute to the delivery of facilities and activities available to residents.

The development of this strategy has been influenced by a number of policies and strategies at national, regional and local level policies and considered the role of other key stakeholders in the community, including:

- Sport England, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, (January 2012), and How we play – the habits of community sport, (September 2013)
- The Health and Social Care Act (2012)
- Localism Act (2011) - Role of Localism and Neighbourhood Plans
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sports Partnership, Sport Facilities Framework Report (2010-2016)
- South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Sports Facilities Framework (July 2010)
- Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, (2013-16)
- NHS South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 5 Year Strategy (2013-2018)
- Malvern Hills District Council Strategic Objectives and Priorities (May 2013)
- Malvern Hills District Health and Wellbeing Plan (2013-2016)
- Malvern Hills Playing Pitch Strategy (2010)
- Submitted South Worcestershire Development Plan (2013)<sup>1</sup>.

The strategy also considers the role of other stakeholders in the community. The consultation with stakeholders is detailed in **Chapter 8**.

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<sup>1</sup> Note – currently in draft form and subject to formal approval.

## Snap Shot of Malvern Hills district

### Demographics:

- The district of Malvern Hills covers an area of c. 557 square kilometres of West Worcestershire. With a population of c. 75,000 (2011 census), the district is sparsely populated and predominantly rural, consisting of many hamlets and villages.
- Office of National Statistics population projections show that the population is set to increase by c. 6% by 2021. However, these projections do not account of the housing growth proposed by the South Worcestershire Development Plan.
- The population of the district is broadly affluent, with low unemployment and high levels of satisfaction with local public services. However, the rural nature of the district means that in 2011 over 45% of its residents lived in areas which were amongst the 10% most deprived areas nationally in terms of geographical barriers to services.
- The population of the district is relatively heavily weighted towards the older age groups, and its profile is projected to continue to age over the forthcoming decade.

### Wider Determinants of Health:

- Life expectancy is: 79.8 years for men and 83.4 years for women
- Malvern Hills district has a higher proportion of residents reporting long term limiting illness (19.5%) compared with the national average (17.6%)
- Residents in the district's 'healthiest' wards can expect to live up to 10 years longer than those in the least healthy
- The unemployment rate in Malvern Hills district (around 2%) is much lower than the Worcestershire (2.9%) or the West Midlands average (4.5%)
- In socioeconomic terms, there is a high proportion of 'wealthy achievers' in Malvern Hills district (55%), higher than the Worcestershire average (38%)

### Participation in Sport & Leisure:

- Has a higher demand for sport and leisure provision than the national average, with more people being active once a week, participating in organised sport.
- Council funded sport and leisure facilities received over 500,000 visits 2013/14.
- The projected population growth displays an ageing trend which will impact negatively on demand for sport and leisure provision.
- There are currently over 50 sports clubs within Malvern Hills district registered with the Sports Partnership – Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

**Facilities:**

- There are 8 sports halls (4 badminton court size or larger).
- Only 2 of the 12 swimming pools in the district offer full community access.
- All of the district's 5 full size synthetic turf pitches (STP) are located at educational establishments.
- There are no athletics tracks within the district, however there are 2 tracks within a 5 mile radius.
- 11 of the 16 health and fitness facilities have some degree of community access, with an aggregate of 447 stations.
- The district has 3 squash (8 courts) facilities.
- There are 1 indoor and 5 outdoor bowls facilities within the district.
- There are 1 indoor (3 courts) and 5 outdoor tennis (25 courts) facilities within the district.
- There are 14 multi use games areas (MUGA) with secure community access.
- There are 99 grass playing pitches – football (66), rugby (16), cricket (17)
- There are 4 golf facilities within the district.
- There are 46 village halls and community centres. Most of the facilities are used as a venue for a range of sport and leisure activity such as ballet, indoor short-mat bowls, keep-fit classes, dance classes, martial arts etc.
- There are 27 educational facilities with dedicated sport and leisure provision with variable amount of community access.

## 4. KEY OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL POLICIES

The specific objectives of the Sport and Leisure Strategy are:

- to **analyse** the current supply of and future demand for sport and leisure provision to identify surplus, gaps in provision and opportunities for improved provision
- to **review** the present and future roles of the council as provider, partner, enabler, and/or strategic director of sport and leisure provision
- to review and identify appropriate **approaches** for the council to deliver its existing facility portfolio which facilitates self-reliant and sustainable provision through effective procurement
- to **inform** and guide the council's future revenue and capital programme and asset management plan and identify additional or alternative revenue sources in order to achieve best value in the medium / long term
- to **define** the need for future sport and leisure provision which seeks to influence developer contributions and other investment initiatives
- to **maximise** opportunities to encourage active and healthy lifestyles throughout the district through active promotion and community engagement.

These are described in greater detail in subsequent chapters, however the summary is as follows:

### Analyse – (Chapters 7 and 9)

***“To analyse the current supply of and future demand for sport and leisure provision to identify surplus, gaps in provision and opportunities for improved provision.”***

The assessments of current provision and of need as set out in **Chapters 7 and 9** formed the basis of the work done to address this objective. This analysis has identified a shortfall of playing pitch space, outdoor tennis courts and MUGA facilities and the need for an additional STP to meet demand created by the housing developments set out in the SWDP.

Increased access to sport and leisure provision at educational facilities should be encouraged in particular to meet any demand for swimming provision that is not being met by the numerous facilities bordering the district and provision within it. The identified need for junior football pitches should also be met through increased community access as there are a large number of junior pitches within the district on school sites that are not being fully utilised.

The development of an athletics track has been identified as desirable, and although the presence of two tracks within reach of the district boundaries mean it need not be a priority, the enthusiasm of the Malvern College to developing such a facility with community access arrangements creates the opportunity for the council to support its development if it is deemed to be strategically beneficial.

Additional health and fitness facilities, although not required at present, can also be considered if further studies demonstrate that enhanced provision can improve a facility's sustainability in the longer term.

## **Review – (Chapters 8 and 11)**

***“To review the present and future roles of the council as provider, partner, enabler, and/or strategic director of sport and leisure provision.”***

The council have developed the following policy position underpinning the strategy. The future role of the council with regard to sport and leisure provision is to be defined by the 3 pronged approach. It sets out what involvement the council will have in funding, delivering or enabling sport and leisure provision.

### **What we will continue to do - Building on success of the past**

- Supporting local providers in recognising the important role sport and physical activity can play in reducing health inequalities
- Encourage the wider use of community use in schools
- Support communities and individuals who wish to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through improvements in sport and leisure provision
- Celebrate local achievements of volunteers who make sport and physical activity opportunities happen in Malvern Hills district.
- Facilitate partnership and collaborative working across the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide local sport and leisure opportunities
- Support facility developments that are evidence based on needs of the local community
- Maximise opportunities with partners to encourage active and healthy lifestyles throughout the district through active promotion and community engagement
- Seek to identify opportunities to enable investment in sport and leisure facilities in the district
- Facilitate partnership and collaborative working with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

### **What we will support and enable – New ways of working**

- Recognition of local resources and support for strengthening the ability of communities to develop local solutions to meet local needs
- Encourage shared use of sports facilities and infrastructure to support sustainability of local sports clubs

### **What we will no longer do - Promoting self-reliance**

- Subsidise sport and leisure facilities that should be self-sustaining
- Provide financial support on the basis of historical arrangements and previous policy decisions
- Commit to re-provision of sport and leisure facilities that come to the end of their operating life.

An important aspect of the council’s role in sport and leisure will be its planning role, and its involvement in securing funding, direct development of provision and / or community access through its role as a planning authority.

In the immediate future, this will also involve the council supporting the town and parish councils that are significantly affected by large scale developments as set out in the SWDP to identify, evidence and define their sport and leisure needs, and liaising with developers to ensure that the greatest possible benefit for residents is achieved.

The council will also seek to make land acquisitions where it is deemed strategically beneficial and cost effective.

### **Approaches – (Chapters 10 and 16)**

***“To review and identify appropriate approaches for the council to deliver its existing facility portfolio which facilitates self-reliant and sustainable provision through effective procurement.”***

In order to ensure that the council’s involvement in delivering sport and leisure provision is cost-effective and maximises its impact in terms of delivering against the council’s strategic outcomes, a number of proven delivery approaches have been identified to guide the council’s future interventions.

A number of examples of best practice, both within the district and beyond are provided in **Chapter 10**. These case studies provide examples of some of the approaches the council can take towards sport and leisure provision in the future in seeking to achieve best value and maximum impact for district residents.

Another important element of the council’s role will be in developing a procurement strategy that supports its strategic objectives and ensures value for money. In developing the council’s leisure procurement strategy, a number of areas have been explored. These are set out in **Chapter 16**.

### **Inform – (Chapter 11, 12, 14 and 15)**

***“To inform and guide the council’s future revenue and capital programme and asset management plan and identify additional or alternative revenue sources in order to achieve best value in the medium / long term.”***

Condition surveys were commissioned for facilities owned by Malvern Hills District Council. A condition survey for Tenbury Swimming Pool was also commissioned by the council on behalf of Tenbury Swimming Pool Limited due to the age and poor condition of the facility. These have informed the council in assessing the current condition of the facilities, the scale of investment likely to be needed in the future in order to maintain the facilities in an acceptable condition, and the approach to procurement for each facility from 2015.

The condition survey forecasts a significant future capital investment requirement (**£1.2m**) to maintain the current portfolio of facilities. The council will need to consider value for money indicators such as utility costs and expenditure per visit to support its prioritisation of resources and commitment to leisure provision in future.

The condition and future performance of facilities will be inextricably linked to investment in their maintenance during the life of the building. These factors will impact on the council’s priorities as regards how it prioritizes its investment.

### **Define – (Chapter 9 and 13)**

***“To define the need for future sport and leisure provision which seeks to influence developer contributions and other investment initiatives.”***

The council is drawing upon a number of strategic documents to support the definition of need for future sport and leisure provision and to optimize contributions from developers and external funders. Through existing playing pitch strategies, neighbourhood plans and the emerging opportunities being presented through the SWDP, the council is in a strong position to optimise investment. This is on the basis that these strategies and plans are regularly reviewed and updated working in partnership with key stakeholders. This will then be updated within the Council’s Strategic Planning Documents including the Public Open Space Supplementary Planning Document

The council will also need to consider revising its existing Playing Pitch Strategy in order for it to be in line with Sport England’s new guidance launched in August 2013.

### **Maximise – (Chapter 17)**

***“To maximise opportunities to encourage active and healthy lifestyles throughout the district through active promotion and community engagement.”***

The council will build on its proud tradition of partnership working with partners such as the Sports Partnership - Herefordshire & Worcestershire and through its recently published Health and Wellbeing Plan. Key examples of current initiatives and programmes include:

- Enabling and supporting a sustainable portfolio of community leisure facilities within the district.
- Securing investment in local sport and leisure projects where there is a demonstrable need and realistic opportunities for investment.

## 5. SUMMARY

Looking ahead it will be vitally important to take an evidence-based approach to the allocation of resources for sport and leisure provision. The limited funds available must be used to meet the needs rather than the desires of local communities. There will be little sense in seeking to replicate facilities in wards which should be complimentary and seek to serve residents across ward and district boundaries. A new pragmatism and collaborative approach will be required to seek to maintain balanced coverage of facilities and opportunities throughout the district.

Given the financial realities of the current climate, the council must develop a fresh approach to the delivery of highly valued sport and leisure provision. This approach will encompass a strategic approach to the procurement of leisure management contracts to ensure that best value is achieved for the core services provided by the council, but will also include enhanced emphasis on enabling others to take ownership of non-statutory services they wish to see delivered in their area.

New housing developments within and adjacent to the district will bring with them the opportunity for investment in new or enhanced / extended facilities. Through neighbourhood plans local communities will have the opportunity to influence the deployment of those funds. However, to ensure that these resources are best utilised and serve as wide a catchment as possible it is vital that councillors, both at the ward and town/parish level, take a broader view, beyond the demarcations of their boundaries, to consider the needs of the wider community. A development in a particular ward or parish will often benefit the residents of those that surround it, and the needs of the wider catchment may be met more effectively by the amalgamation of funds rather than their individual deployment.

This strategy focuses on communities – not just the buildings within them, and will seek to find innovative ways to maximise the opportunities for Malvern Hills district residents to improve their health and pursue more active lifestyles, regardless of who they are and where they live in the district.

The council's future role in sport and leisure is summarised in three key statements:

- **What we will continue to do** - Building on success of past
- **What we will support and enable** - New ways of working
- **What we will no longer do** - Promoting self-reliance.

This approach is designed to ensure that the council deploys its limited resource to maximum affect, and that its efforts and resources are directed towards supporting the facilities, services and provision that are valued by the community and delivered on the council's strategic outcomes.

The period covered by the strategy is 10 years from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2024. It is envisaged that the strategy action plan will be reviewed annually and the strategy itself reviewed after 5 years.

## Summary of outcomes to be achieved by 2019

### What we will continue to do:

- Put in place a new Sport and Leisure Strategy by March 2014 in support of the District Health & Wellbeing Plan (2013-2016)
- Developed more effective management arrangements for sports and leisure facilities for implementation by March 2015
- Developed robust evidence for sport and leisure to support the planning process
- Secured significant investment in sport and leisure provision resulting from housing growth
- Purchased and secured community benefit of Langland Stadium
- Increase participation of 11 – 25 year olds through the delivery of Sport England funded programme ‘Sportivate’
- Annually host the district’s Community Sports Awards

### What we will support and enable:

- A minimum of 6 neighbourhood plans developed, that identify priorities for investment in sport and leisure
- More educational establishments accessible for community use
- Increased participation in sport and leisure provision
- Increased number of volunteers involved in sport and leisure

The action plan for the delivery of this strategy is shown in **Chapter 17**.

## 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A series of detailed chapters accompany this headline strategy:

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|-------------------|--|
| <b>Chapter 7</b>  | Current Sport & Leisure Provision  |
| <b>Chapter 8</b>  | Consultation Findings  |
| <b>Chapter 9</b>  | What Sport & Leisure Provision Does Malvern Hills District Need?                   |
| <b>Chapter 10</b> | Current Good Practice & Case Studies Across the District                           |
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| <b>Chapter 17</b> | Action Plan  |

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**Malvern Hills District  
Sport and Leisure Strategy 2014 - 2024**

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