

EXECUTIVE

16th January 2025

Report Title	Active Communities Strategic Framework
Lead Member	Cllr Helen Howell – Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Report Author	Kerry Purnell - Assistant Director, Communities and Leisure

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with?	Active, fulfilled lives

List of Appendices

- Appendix A:** Active Communities Strategy
- Appendix B:** Executive summary Leisure Facilities Strategy
- Appendix C:** Leisure Facilities Strategy
- Appendix D:** Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan
- Appendix E:** Climate Change Impact Assessment

1. Purpose of Report

**"If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat."
*UK Chief Medical Officers***

- 1.1. This report introduces the North Northamptonshire Active Communities strategic framework. The Active Communities Strategy is the overarching document within the Active Communities Framework for North Northamptonshire. It sets out the active communities' strategic outcomes and priorities for the next 5 years which will feed into and influence a number of other strategic plans set out by North Northamptonshire Council.

- 1.2. The Active Communities Strategy provides the strategic direction for the Leisure Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy. These strategies detail a robust assessment of need and evidence base for future sports and leisure planning, investment and policy decision making.
- 1.3. The report requests approval from Executive to adopt the 3 strategies within the Active Communities strategic framework.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 North Northamptonshire has a wide variety of spaces and places to be active. Ranging from local open spaces to country parks, playing pitches to leisure centres, the Greenway and other dedicated routes for walking, cycling and wheeling, to village halls and community centres. As part of the development of the Strategic Framework an analysis of each of these offerings has been undertaken to determine where and how they meet the current and future demands of residents and where they may fall short. Understanding what needs to be improved will offer more and better choices to encourage active lifestyles.
- 2.2 This report emphasises the benefits of physical activity to health and wellbeing but also in achieving the Council’s wider strategic objectives. It introduces the Active Communities Strategic Framework for North Northamptonshire, comprising of the Active Communities Strategy, Leisure Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy.



Figure 1: Summary of the Active Communities Framework

- 2.3 It sets out the vision for the North Northamptonshire Active Communities:

‘Creating cohesive communities where everyone can live active, happy and connected lives’
- 2.4 It describes the extensive evidence review, stakeholder and public consultation undertaken and the technical methodology used for the two strategies, for Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitches which form part of the Strategic Planning framework.

- 2.5 Taking each strategy in turn it summarises the approach and methodology and introduces the key strategic outcomes identified. For the Leisure Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy, it defines the sports and facilities covered and provides prioritised recommendations in relation to facilities and pitches. These will inform future recommendations for future investment and will aid future negotiations with developers regarding planning obligations.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Approves the Active Communities Strategy;
 - b) Approves the Leisure Facilities Strategy;
 - c) Approves the Playing Pitch Strategy;
 - d) Delegates authority to the Assistant Director, Communities and Leisure in consultation with the Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism to take any actions necessary to further develop detailed action plans and investment plans which will support delivery of the strategies.
- 3.2. Reasons for Recommendations: To support the Council and its partners to prioritise activities which will increase physical activity levels, which in turn will help to improve health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, improve community connectedness and cohesion and promote a sense of pride in place. In addition to inform future investment plans which will assist the Council to secure developer contributions and other external funding to deliver the recommendations in the Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies.
- 3.3 Alternative Options considered:
- The alternative option would be to not develop an Active Communities strategic framework and instead to develop separate Leisure, Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch strategies in isolation of each other. The Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies are legally required under the National Planning Policy Framework and so there is no other option than to produce them for North Northamptonshire.
 - The option to develop a separate Leisure strategy is not recommended because a traditional leisure strategy would have focussed simply on the Council's leisure service offer. It would not have taken a whole systems approach to increasing physical activity, working with our partners, our sports clubs and our communities and taking the broadest view possible of the sorts of activity and the environment and infrastructure which helps make being active the easy choice for our residents, workforce and visitors. This would have considerably limited the opportunities and impact of this strategic framework, not just on physical activity levels but on the population health and wellbeing and

reduction in health inequalities outcomes for the residents and communities of North Northamptonshire.

- The Active Communities strategic framework, based on comprehensive data, evidence and intelligence, will inform such things as future partnership activity and feasibility studies which are required to secure external funding and developer contributions to enable investment into the North Northamptonshire assets and infrastructure. It will also ensure a co-ordinated approach to the Council's corporate and Big 50 Vision and to the Integrated Care System strategic objectives.

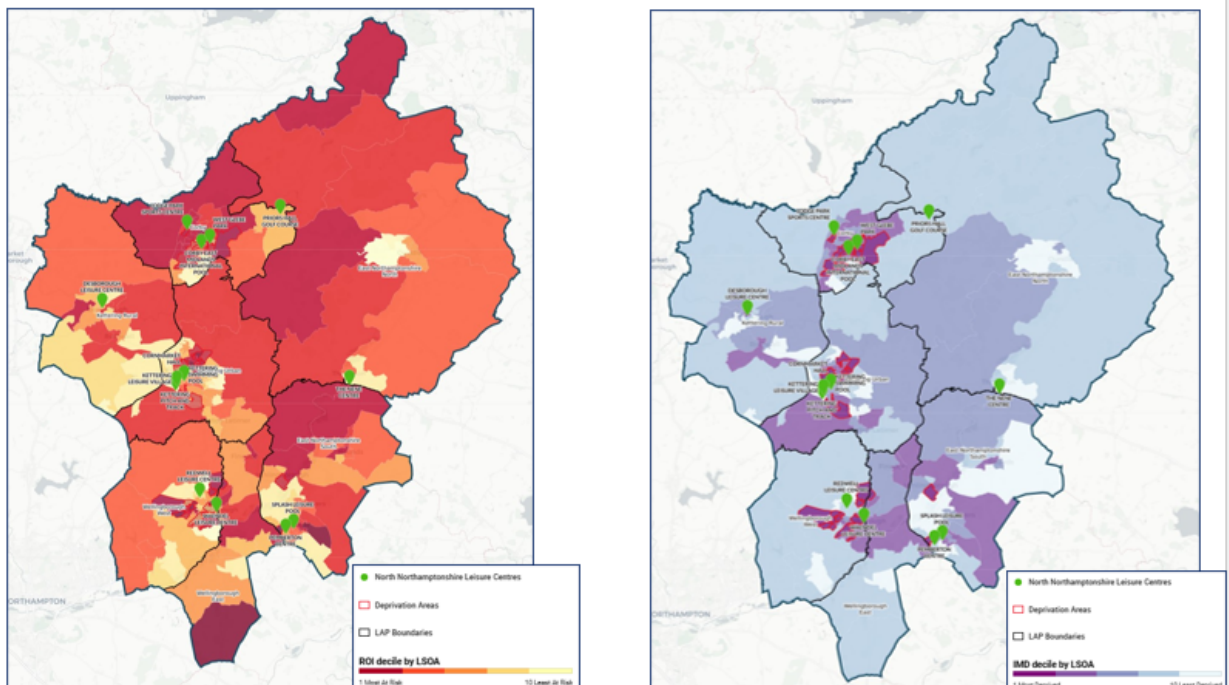
4. Report Background

- 4.1 The purpose of the Active Communities strategic framework is to set out a vision and strategic outcomes over the next five years that will deliver opportunities to enable active lifestyles for people who live in, work in and visit North Northamptonshire.
- 4.2 The positive benefits of exercise and keeping active are:
- Improvement in mental health and wellbeing, self-esteem, sleep patterns, and overall levels of confidence
 - Reduction in the risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes (by 40%), coronary heart disease (by 35%) and some cancers (e.g. colon cancer by 20%)
 - Build up and maintenance of healthy bones, joints and muscles, therefore helping with strength, flexibility, general fitness and wellbeing; and reduction in joint and back pain by 25%
 - Improvement in coordination and motor skills, balance and mobility; reduction in the chance of falling by 30%
 - Help to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
 - Increased resilience within communities
- 4.3 To stay healthy the UK Chief Medical Officers, advise that adults (aged 18-64) should try and be active every day, and aim to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week, through a variety of activities; (clearly alterations need to be made based on a person's age or physical ability).
- 4.4 For most people the easiest way to keep active is to make activity part of everyday life, like walking or cycling rather than taking the car. However, increasing activity through sports and exercise provides even greater benefits.
- 4.5 For any type of activity to benefit your health, your heart rate should increase, with faster breathing and feeling warmer. This is termed 'moderate intensity' activity – there should remain an ability to talk, but unable to sing the words of a song.
- 4.6 What about different ages and abilities:
- Babies (under aged 1) should be encouraged to be active during the day, every day, in a variety of ways, including crawling;
 - Preschool children (aged 1-4) should be physically active every day for at least 180 minutes (3 hours). The more the better – spread

throughout the day, including playing outdoors. Children under 5 should not be inactive for long periods (unless asleep). Watching TV, travelling by car, bus or train, or being strapped in a buggy for long periods are not good for a child's health and development;

- For children and young people aged 5-17, they should be doing both aerobic exercises, and exercises to strengthen muscles and bones, each week. They should aim for an average of 60 minutes per day across the whole week, of moderately vigorous exercise (sufficient to raise the heart rate, breathe faster and feel warmer);
- For those 65 and over, the aim should be to take exercise every day, even if only light activity, and try and do exercises that improve strength, balance and flexibility on at least 2 per week; if someone has fallen or is worried about falling, doing exercises which focus on balance and flexibility can improve confidence;
- For wheelchair users, getting active brings important health benefits; regular aerobic exercise, the kind that raises your heart rate and causes you to break into a sweat. Plus, muscle strengthening exercises are just as important for the health and wellbeing of wheelchair users, as they are for other adults

4.7 The **risk of inactivity** map shown below shows how at risk the people in a LSOA (lower super output area) are at, doing less than 30 min of physical activity in a week. Darker red areas have highest risk, whereas lighter shades have the lowest. Some of these areas most at risk of inactivity are in rural areas of North Northamptonshire and others are located in areas of high deprivation as shown in the **deprivation map** on the right.



4.8 Sport England Active Lives survey 2020/21 shows that North Northants has a significantly higher number of inactive adults (31.4%) and children (33.5%) and has significantly lower numbers of active adults (56.1%) and children (40.9%) than national/regional/county levels.

- Over half of children and young people are not achieving the recommended 60 'Active Minutes' per day.
- Over 50% of adults aged 75+ are inactive.
- People with a disability or long-term health condition are one and a half times as likely to be inactive.
- People from low-income households are 20% less likely to be active than those from higher income households

4.9 Keeping active is also a key feature of **health inequalities**:

- While about 30% of all adults are inactive, disabled adults are almost twice as likely to be inactive as non-disabled adults (42% v 22%)
- People from low-income households are 20% less likely to be active than those from higher income households
- People from ethnically diverse communities are half as likely to be active as those from white British backgrounds
- Over 50% adults aged 75+ are inactive, with that age group to grow significantly over the coming years.

4.10 The Council recognises that to deliver the vision of 'Creating cohesive communities where everyone can live active, happy and connected lives', there is a need to work with key stakeholders and local communities through a 'whole systems' approach. A 'whole systems' approach is defined as responding to complexity, through a dynamic way of working, bringing stakeholders together, to develop a shared understanding of the challenge, and to integrate action to bring about sustainable, long-term systems change. Partnership and collaboration will be key to successfully delivering the Active Communities strategic framework.

4.11 During the latter part of 2022 the Council agreed to allocate £100k of Covid Outbreak Management Funding and £35,000 of Public Health reinvestment funding to support the development of an Active Communities strategic framework. The aim was to ensure that future provision of leisure facilities and services is developed and prioritised by North Northamptonshire Council to meet the needs of the community as it continues to grow and recover from the pandemic. It was recognised at the time that leisure facilities, in their broadest sense, offer a vital role in recovery from illness, injury and help build resilience in the community, especially following Covid, through encouraging people to become more active, support with rehabilitation and offer vital social opportunities to meet other people who may be going through similar circumstances and conditions.

4.12 During the first few months of 2023 the Council procured an industry expert, through the Sport England procurement framework, to undertake a detailed assessment and modelling of current and future provision for both playing pitches, indoor and outdoor facilities and to support Council officers to produce the Active Communities strategic framework.

4.13 Following a robust procurement exercise Max Associates were appointed in April 2023. The consultants are known for working with Councils across the UK to develop these types of strategies, with a particular focus on bringing together leisure with wider physical activity opportunities and health impacts. Max Associates routinely work with Leisure Net, industry experts in

community consultation and engagement and utilise 4global interactive mapping and mosaic profiling. They had already undertaken an analysis of the health profile for North Northamptonshire highlighting issues that increased participation in physical activity could address.

- 4.14 Max Associates undertook a national and local policy and strategy review to inform the context for the strategy. They also collated a range of data appertaining to demographic and census data; health data; Local Area Partnership Profile data and analysis; participation analysis; location, usage and performance of existing facilities; competition analysis:- all of which was used to analyse physical inactivity levels by geography and population cohort and the current opportunities that exist for our communities to be physically active.
- 4.15 Max Associates set out an 18-month timeline for the development of the Active Communities Strategic Framework, largely due to the fact that the engagement and assessment tools for the Playing Pitch Strategy have to take place across both summer and winter playing seasons and so take over a year to produce.
- 4.16 During the summer and early autumn of 2023 extensive stakeholder and public consultation was delivered which included all leisure staff, wider Council staff, the North Northamptonshire Sports Club Network, leisure providers, Northamptonshire Sport, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners, Town and Parish councils, Ward Members and schools as well as a public community survey.
- 4.17 The objective of the stakeholder consultations was to ensure cross sector 'buy in' and to establish how physical activity and more active communities can contribute to wider local strategic outcomes. It was also to promote understanding of what level of direct or indirect influence key stakeholders have over physical activity, leisure, sport and wellbeing services, facilities and provision as an important part of establishing opportunities for more joined up working. It also asked about the likely barriers to physical activity.
- 4.18 The community survey focussed on residents' physical activity habits, the reasons why they were active, what facilities they used, how they access them, what stops them being physically active and what would encourage them to be more so.
- 4.19 An officer steering group was established including council officers from Leisure, Communities, Planning, active travel, Public Health as well as Northamptonshire Sport to oversee the development of the strategic framework.

5. Issues and Choices

“Physical activity has a Social Value in terms of health and wellbeing, economic growth, and the environment that can be measured. The total social value generated by North Northamptonshire leisure facilities is £16.6m per annum”

Active Communities Strategy

- 5.1 It is well evidenced that increasing levels of movement is beneficial for physical and mental health, but it also positively impacts educational attainment, social isolation and community cohesion. Well designed and good quality sport and leisure assets and parks and open spaces can also support regeneration and carbon reduction, provide skilled employment opportunities and increase the sense of pride in place.
- 5.2 As well as the national and local challenges of inactivity, the financial pressures for Councils and across sport, leisure and health sectors have increased in recent years, with rising costs for service providers and an increase in the cost of living for residents. It is therefore important for the Council to identify where resources should be prioritised to have the greatest impact on increasing physical activity levels and how working collaboratively on priority areas and projects can have a positive long-term impact on residents' health and wellbeing.
- 5.3 Whilst the Council provides principal leisure facilities, this is just a small part of the picture in terms of increasing physical activity. The Council also has an enabling and facilitating role, to identify what is being delivered, where and to whom, and then to ensure what is delivered by the Council adds value or ensures there is accessibility for our most vulnerable residents. The Council's role is not to compete with private or budget fitness provision but to ensure there is outreach into our more hidden communities, equity of access to health and wellbeing programmes and to provide infrastructure that makes physical activity an easy choice every day for our residents.
- 5.4 Analysis of inactivity levels has shaped the priorities and strategic outcomes for the Active Communities Strategy:
- Services and resources need to target those with greatest community need in the most deprived areas (Kettering and Corby and Wellingborough) and in the harder to reach groups to help reduce health inequalities;
 - Over 65s are underrepresented in usage of leisure centres, with an ageing population providing programmes, services and facilities which cater for an ageing population is important;
 - Outreach programmes are required in rural as well as deprived urban locations;
 - The quality, cleanliness and accessibility of facilities is very important to inactive residents to increase the chance of participation;
 - Movement needs to be built into everyday life, such as walking to work or school;
 - The timing of programmes around work and school commitments is an important consideration;
 - Working with local residents to champion physical activity can be impactful.
- 5.5 Analysis of stakeholder and community engagement has also shaped the priorities and strategic outcomes for the Active Communities Strategy:
- The purpose of active communities and wellbeing is to provide much more than just leisure centres for sports and fitness, it is about a whole system approach;

- Costs and accessibility/transport were highlighted as the two main barriers to being physically active;
- Increasing outreach in local community-based facilities will make services more accessible to rural communities;
- The VCSE are keen to co-locate to deliver more services from leisure centres;
- 91% of survey respondents said they would like to do more physical activity; we need to encourage them to take that first step;
- The main encouragement factors were accessible, good quality facilities, personal goals, time, cleanliness and lower prices;
- Walking was the most popular everyday activity, presenting an opportunity to extend existing walking projects and infrastructure for active travel;
- The schools survey highlighted the importance of outdoor facilities for getting children active including formal pitches but also parks and open spaces;
- Swimming and football are consistently the most popular sports for children. Enabling club opportunities and accessibility is important;
- Ongoing engagement with communities, particularly the more inactive and those hardly hear, to ensure the offer reflects the needs of these communities, in particular targeting the elderly, children, women and girls, the disabled and minority communities.

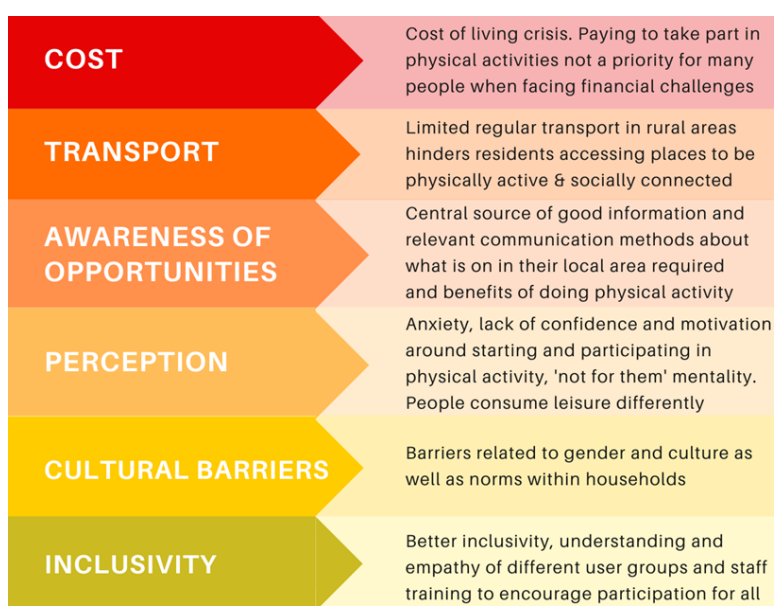


Figure 2 Barriers to physical activity

5.6 Analysis of the current facility provision has also informed the priorities and strategic outcomes for this strategy:

- Overall, there is a wide range of leisure provision and opportunities to be active across North Northamptonshire;
- The Council's leisure assets are ageing, with some nearing the end of their expected life span. There will be a need for continued investment, replacement and in some cases rationalisation to enable a sustainable

asset portfolio over the next five years, that meets the needs of our communities;

- The majority of existing provision is located around areas of higher population, unless they require specific facilities like a body of water, in which case they are in more rural areas;
- All of North Northamptonshire is within a 20 minute drive time catchment of a leisure activity but not necessarily of a leisure facility (East Northamptonshire specifically);
- Nearly all of the most at risk of inactivity hotspots are within a 20 minute drive time catchment of a leisure facility, with 4 exceptions, but some of these have national walking and cycling routes running through them;
- Outcomes and priorities need to focus on all assets, not just built facilities.

5.7 The strategic outcomes for the Active Communities Strategy have been grouped under 4 key themes:

- **Healthy Communities:** - utilising increased participation in recreation, movement and physical activity as a tool for improving health and wellbeing, to reduce demands on health services in future years and to support ageing well.
- **Connected Communities:** - changing the language used in association with being active to make it more accessible and improve perceptions, active lifestyles are for everybody
- **Thriving Communities:** - upskilling the adult active communities workforce, including employees, coaches and volunteers and hard to reach groups to deliver wellbeing programmes within their communities
- **Green Communities:** - delivering active travel strategies to improve infrastructure that enables increased rates of walking and cycling for travel within the community

Active Communities			
Healthy Communities	Connected Communities	Thriving Communities	Green Communities
Outcomes			
To improve health and wellbeing through the development and delivery of active wellbeing opportunities that increases participation in physical activity and movement.	Connecting people and communities through active wellbeing, movement, and physical activity to improve wellbeing and provide active wellbeing assets that communities are proud of.	Increased active wellbeing opportunities will contribute towards vibrant and safe communities where there are increased opportunities for training and development. Active wellbeing services are sustainable and contribute to the visitor economy in North Northamptonshire.	Active travel is the easy choice for residents and local developments embrace active environments. The Council's active wellbeing portfolio is environmentally sustainable.
We will achieve these by			
Start well - Increase early years offer to support increased participation in physical activity including pre-natal, post-natal and 0-5 years to ensure the best start and increase physical	Delivering targeted active wellbeing programmes in the areas of most need and targeted areas identified	Upskilling the adult Active Communities workforce, including employees, coaches and volunteers and hard to reach groups to deliver wellbeing	Delivering Active Travel strategy to improve infrastructure that enables increased rates of walking and cycling for travel within the

literacy in young children		programmes within their communities	community
Enabling more opportunities that support the importance of 'family resilience' as one of the foundations of family health and wellbeing	Providing outreach active wellbeing services in rural areas and areas of deprivation via a strong Active Communities Partnership network	Enable training and development opportunities for young people, such as apprenticeships and work experience within the active wellbeing sector	Maximising the use of green space, the Greenway and other cycling/walking routes for recreational and active wellbeing activities
Aging Well - Utilising increased participation in recreation, movement, and physical activity as a tool for improve Health and wellbeing, to reduce demands on health services in future years	Promoting active travel to connect communities through amenities like the Greenway and developing planning policy	Using recreation and physical activity as a diversionary activity to reduce anti-social behaviour	Working with Planning to ensure Active Environment principles are incorporated into all new development projects
Increasing the number of people participating in prevention and rehabilitation services through expanding existing Active for Health programmes across North Northamptonshire	Changing the language used in association with being active to make it more accessible and improve perceptions – active wellbeing is for everybody.	Celebrate competition and success across North Northamptonshire through Sports Clubs, Fitness & Wellbeing Services, NN Sports Network and events, Elite training support scheme and Active Communities Awards	Developing the North Northamptonshire leisure portfolio to be more energy efficient, environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral where possible
Developing strong partnerships and collaborative working with partners to implement the co-delivery/co-location of Health and Wellbeing services	Collaborative approach to securing S106 contributions to enhance existing and creating new or improved facilities / assets where there is an identified need	Identifying opportunities to enhance existing facilities and environments to increase accessibility to active wellbeing opportunities.	
Development of targeted concessionary and access schemes to help more people participate in activity and wellbeing services		Working in partnership with local businesses and organisations that offer activity and health services	
		Collaboratively creating healthier workforces and workplaces across North Northamptonshire	

Figure 3, Active Communities Strategic Themes and Priorities

Leisure Facilities Strategy

- 5.8 One of the key drivers for developing the new Leisure Facilities Strategy is to improve the health and wellbeing of residents within North Northamptonshire by planning for the appropriate facilities to meet the needs of the increasing population.
- 5.9 The Council needs to understand whether it is has the right facility in the right place to meet the current and future needs of its residents. Local authorities are under great pressure in terms of budgets, changing demographics and increasing demands on health services, meaning sport, physical activity and health are increasingly being seen as co-producers of local outcomes. The Leisure Facilities Strategy seeks to inform the Council on where and when to maximise investment opportunities to improve its leisure facilities.
- 5.10 The Council owns and is responsible for a range of leisure activity sites which offer a mix of wet and dry activities. These are managed by a variety of

operators. Table 2 on page 13 of the Leisure Facilities Strategy shows what level of responsibility the Council has at the listed venues.

5.11 The new Leisure Facility Strategy provides the Council with a documented assessment of current use and future needs for sports/leisure facilities within the authority; focusing on the quantity and quality issues in relation to supply and demand until 2041.

5.12 The strategy includes a prioritised infrastructure plan of facilities which is broken down into distinct projects per facility with a focus on remedying current deficiencies and provides recommendations to meet future predicted demand. It is also presented in order of priority.

5.13 The Leisure Facilities Strategy covers the following sports and facilities:

Leisure Facilities	Type of activity
Swimming pools	Pools including competition / leisure pool (including education sites identifying public access) diving, scuba diving, water polo
Sports halls	Badminton, squash courts, volleyball, indoor tennis, table tennis, netball, climbing, archery, futsal, dance
Other indoor sports facilities	Gym, health and fitness, gymnastics, indoor bowls, combat and martial arts, cycling, Urban Action Sports (including BMX/Skateboard, Scooters etc) athletics, boxing, futsal, indoor football, netball
Other outdoor sports facilities	Golf courses, bowling greens, tennis courts (free casual courts and tennis clubs or operated by a third party e.g. Passing Shots), athletics tracks and facilities, basketball, skateboard parks, treetop climbs, archery, netball, Urban Sports (including BMX, Road, link with Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans), rowing, kayaking/canoeing, sailing, equestrian activity, volleyball, archery, futsal, shooting
Countryside and natural resources	Facilities and land for a range of sports and leisure pursuits including cycling (including BMX, on-road), rowing, canoeing, equestrian, sailing, kayaking, climbing, fishing as well as accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and leisure events, and community events

5.14 For this strategy a further policy and strategic context review included the Sport England Planning guidance, North Northamptonshire's Joint Core Strategy growth assumptions, considering the planned Sustainable Urban Expansions and Neighbourhood Plans, and the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure plans, Green Infrastructure plans and Local Transportation plans.



Figure 4 Sport England Planning for Sport principles

- 5.15 A consultation has been undertaken with sports national governing bodies, sports clubs, schools and town/parish councils.
- 5.16 A facility quality audit of the main leisure facilities and sports halls was carried out which covered:
- Quality – age, date of refurbishment, general condition and ifit for purpose;
 - Accessibility – location, walking, cycling routes catchments;
 - Availability - programming and sports development policy initiatives; pay and play use, sports clubs only, private use, registered membership only use. Cost of use, patterns of use, hours of use, does design limit use by specific users e.g. disability users;
 - Identification of any forthcoming closures or enhancements which are planned.
- 5.17 The facilities were rated from one to five. Those facilities considered level one are likely to require investment to improve them.

- 5.18 Over the next five years investment into the facilities will be important to retain or improve their current rating.
- 5.19 The community survey, as referenced in paragraph 5.5 above, highlighted that providing clean, improved good quality facilities were some of the top encouragement factors for local residents. Therefore, ensuring the Councils portfolio is accessible and well maintained is an important factor in maximising usage.
- 5.20 Condition surveys were also undertaken for the Council's leisure portfolio sites. Condition surveys usually support the investment area findings but in this case some of the best quality sites require the largest amount of investment, mainly for ongoing pool maintenance and to retain high standards.
- 5.21 The significant condition survey requirements have been ranked in priority order.
- Priority 1 – Urgent Work
 - Priority 2 – Essential Work
 - Priority 3 – Desirable Work
 - Priority 4 – Long Term Aspirational Work
- 5.22 The Leisure Facilities Strategy also rated the Council's Leisure Centre portfolio as follows:

Leisure Centre	Rating	Leisure Centre	Rating
Corby East Midlands International Pool	5	Pemberton Centre	2
Lodge Park Sports Centre	3	Kettering Swimming Pool	1
Priors Hill Golf Centre	3	Desborough Leisure Centre	4
The Nene Centre	5	Waendal Leisure Centre	5
Splash Leisure Pool	2	Redwell Leisure Centre	2

* Rating: 1 – centre is compliant with legislation, but building is in need of investment/replacement, the facility is no longer meeting the needs of the local community/not fit for purpose To 5 – it for purpose, recent investment, meets need and demand of local population

- 5.23 Condition surveys also highlighted works required for the Northampton Road Pavilion (£,136k), West Glebe Sports Pavilion (£374k), Rockingham Road (James Ashworth VC memorial stand, Steel Park football stand) and Rockingham Triangle Grandstand and barriers (no costs provided).
- 5.24 As well as the current facility audit and the demand information gathered through the consultation, there are two main tools used to inform the assessment of supply and demand: Sport England's Facility Planning Model (FPM) for Sports Halls and Swimming Pools and the Sport England Facility Calculator, which is used to estimate future need of facilities from population growth:
- Planned housing growth predicts 25,000 more housing in the area.
 - It is important to consider future leisure provision up to 2041 to take into account population increases. The projected population prediction for 2041 is 411,831 residents.

- People using leisure and recreational facilities will use those that are most, accessible and / or, which meet their personal needs / preferences. Users generally do not recognise local authority administrative boundaries when making their choice, so the geographical location of provision is important to consider.

5.25 To inform the Indoor Sports Facilities Needs Assessment, the Sport England Facility Planning Models (FPM) were run in December 2022 and the key findings of these are set out below. These studies are a quantitative, accessibility and spatial assessment of the supply, demand and access. The model is a tool to help assess the strategic provision of community sports facilities in an area. It is currently applicable for use in assessing the provision of sports halls that provide three badminton courts and above and provide play and pay community use or sports club community use. It excludes smaller sports halls and those that are private use. The swimming pool FPM assesses the provision of swimming pools larger than 160m² (four lanes and above), indoor/covered swimming pools that provide pay and play community use or water-based club usage.

5.26 Supply and demand, utilising data relating to available supply, planned supply, and accessibility (by car, public transport and on foot), unmet demand, latent demand and where appropriate water space, is then considered in detail for all of the facility and sports categories.

5.27 The strategy sets out a series of recommendations which are summarised here:

Activity / Facility	Recommendation	Enhance, Protect, Provide
Sports Halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to work with education providers to increase access to existing sports halls with secured community use agreements • Consider increasing scale of a public leisure sports hall if a centre is replaced. Based on these findings the focus should be on the Corby and Kettering sub areas. • Consider new housing developments and whether sports hall provision is included in plans • Future of KLV is an important consideration / risk as largest supply of sports halls in the area • Need to ensure aging stock is refurbished • Work with Weldon Academy, Corby to secure community use agreement for new sports hall • Consider utilising sports hall at neighbourhood centre sites 	Protect, Provide and Enhance
Community Halls / Village Halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should work with education providers to increase community access to sports halls, with increased secured community access provided through formal community use agreements 	Protect, provide and enhance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the majority of sports halls based within educational sites, it is also worth looking at community spaces (particularly in areas of greatest unmet demand) where physical activities, that don't require a high sports hall ceiling, can take place e.g. yoga, Pilates and martial arts. This would free up space for activities that require larger and higher ceiling sports courts e.g. basketball, netball, volleyball and badminton 	
Swimming Pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across North Northamptonshire there are sufficient swimming pool sites to meet the projected demand to 2041 • Water space in Kettering needs to increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given age/condition of Kettering pool option to replace current pool in good location ○ FPM findings support a 25m x 17m eight-lane pool (425 sqm of water) and a 12m x 10m learner pool. This provides 545 sqm of water and could accommodate the projected demand to 2041 • Splash Leisure Pool – used capacity 86% in 2022, 93% in 2041. No need to provide more water space but to programme activities across individual pools to maximise use at peak times • Waendal Leisure Centre – used capacity 100% in both years. Increase peak hours from 50-52.5 hours. 	Protect, provide and enhance
Health & Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the potential for growth in the fitness membership base of 2,930 additional members (not including KLV), the majority of these are expected to be achieved across Pemberton Leisure Centre and Corby International Pool • Both Corby International Pool and Kettering Swimming Pool are operating at just over 30 members per station, which is at the higher end of industry benchmarks. In order to avoid capacity issues, layout of equipment, programming and extension opportunities should be considered. • However, before provision of additional fitness facilities are agreed in the future there needs to be a full needs/business case justification undertaken. 	Provide and Protect
Studios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demand is around health and fitness classes, and, in this instance, they should be considered within new builds or refurbishments to ensure sports hall activities are not occupied by fitness classes and sports halls can provide space for the groups and clubs that require the 	Provide and Protect

	<p>size of the hall e.g. basketball, volleyball and netball etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible studio space across any new builds or refurbishments will support the wider fitness offer and membership base but also to provide other services such as wellbeing initiatives, community groups etc 	
Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain UKA TrackMark accreditation at Rockingham Triangle (Corby) – track resurfacing required within five to seven years • Maintain UKA TrackMark accreditation at Kettering Athletic Track • Achieve UKA TrackMark accreditation at Oundle School • Explore the opportunity to open up the athletics facility at Oundle School for club/community use to meet demand in the north east. • Another area of demand is in the Rushden area. Consider embedding community focused, recreational ActiveTrack(s) (walk, jog, run, cycle loops) in this area, potentially as part of any existing/new areas of housing (Rushden East). 	Provide and Protect and enhance
Badminton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badminton England’s highlighted in their consultation response that they are currently seeking opportunities for more indoor facilities within Northamptonshire to enable coaches to deliver more sessions and for evening availability for clubs • Badminton England would like to expand the ‘No Strings Badminton’ offer a national participation programme offering low-cost, fun ‘pay and play sessions’ but have issues around accessing facilities due to time slots • Any funding is held centrally as an NGB, as part of the development fund • See Sports Hall recommendations 	Protect
Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tresham College, Kettering is an important venue for providing basketball provision in North Northamptonshire, continue to support this club • See Sports Hall recommendations 	Protect
Bowling	<p>Indoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Indoor Bowling Association stated that there is a sufficient supply of indoor facilities to meet the current and future demand and there are no barriers that affect the NGB clubs within the NNC area making full use of the facilities <p>Outdoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the previous PPS it identified there was spare capacity in East Northants, no increase in demand in Corby but overplay at Wellingborough 	Protect

	<p>& Irchester bowls club and in Kettering area at Geddington Sports Ground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequently, there is not sufficient demand for additional facilities, however protecting current provision and improving quality of greens will be important for clubs to maintain or increase membership and participation and support Bowls England priorities. 	
Gymnastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue is established with Kettering Gymnastics Club and British Gymnastics to further explore the potential of facilitating club-led development of additional gymnastics facilities to increase their capacity and capability • Support other clubs in securing dedicated premises through any planning processes 	Protect and Enhance
Netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan should protect all netball courts across North Northamptonshire Council for community use. Any courts proposed to be lost should be replaced with at least equivalent provision in terms of quantity and quality • Protecting and enhancing current outdoor provision - ensuring courts are well maintained. • North Northamptonshire Council and England Netball to work together to promote England Netball participation programmes in North Northamptonshire including Back to Netball, Walking Netball, Netball now and Bee Netball • When developing new Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in the future, ensure that netball courts are marked on all MUGAs to promote expansion of the game • See Sports Hall recommendations 	Protect, Provide and Enhance
Squash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing provision should be maintained and protected, however any future changes to squash provision (increase or decrease) should be subject to a feasibility assessment. • When considering refurbishment or replacement squash courts, England Squash recommend the ASB Movable Side Wall. With this innovation, a squash court becomes a flexible, multiuse area providing an answer to challenges around off-peak usage. 	Protect
Tennis	<p>Indoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lawn Tennis Association identified Wellingborough as a strategic location for a community indoor tennis centre. • Enter a dialogue with the LTA to support a collaborative approach with local partners to provide an increased number of tennis courts to those areas with demand (Wellingborough & Kettering) 	Protect, Provide and Enhance

	<p>Outdoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor tennis courts to be maintained and protected to ensure they are sustainable and available for community use • Enter a dialogue with the LTA to identify potential areas to introduce padel tennis courts as currently no courts in North Northamptonshire 	
Boxing, Combat & Martial Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on engagement and mapping of provision the existing facilities are considered to be sufficient to meet demand • However, the Council should support any club developments/initiatives e.g. through supporting funding applications, promotion etc. particularly in areas of deprivation where rates of inactivity are high 	Protect and Enhance
Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feasibility study would help determine if there is potential to add indoor climbing as part of a facility mix in and around Corby. • Protect existing facilities 	Protect
Cycling (indoor & outdoor)	<p>Indoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no demand for an indoor cycling facility within North Northamptonshire. <p>Outdoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the consultation with British Cycling they highlighted that they are keen to work with volunteers to support and develop new and existing cycling clubs and events in the region. This can be in any cycling discipline e.g. Cycle Speedway. • Cycle infrastructure should be considered at planning stage of any new housing developments and if leisure centres redeveloped e.g. cycle network to connect the leisure centre and safe cycle storage. • British Cycling is keen to develop the grassroots of cycling in a safe and control environment such as at Community cycling hubs, which include pump tracks and learn to ride areas. Consider community cycling hubs in future developments. 	Protect and Provide
Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Northamptonshire Council to continue working in partnership with schools where sports facilities or dance studios are provided for community or club use. 	Protect and Provide
Dodgeball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is sufficient sports hall space to meet the demands of Dodgeball • See Sports Hall recommendations 	Protect
Indoor Cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not sufficient demand for a bespoke indoor cricket facility, however any new sports hall developments should consider indoor cricket provision as part of the facility mix, subject to a 	Protect

	feasibility assessment	
Golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no need for additional outdoor courses but opportunities should be explored to improve the mix of facilities in the authority and offer more entry level style facilities for those who are new to the game, placing particular focus on driving ranges and shorter length courses of which there currently appears to be a relatively low level of supply • Any future development of golf facilities could consider indoor golf equipment such as simulator venues, swing studios and indoor adventure golf courses 	Protect, Provide and Enhance
Indoor Football / Futsal	<p>Indoor Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no identified need for specific indoor football venues in North Northamptonshire <p>Futsal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Northamptonshire FA to support existing futsal activities in the area • See Sports Hall recommendations 	Protect and Enhance
Lacrosse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no demand for indoor or outdoor lacrosse facilities in North Northamptonshire 	NO DEMAND
Table Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to start a dialogue with Table Tennis England about future provision of outdoor table tennis tables in schools and public places such as parks • Opportunity to work with Table Tennis England to roll out the Ping! In the community programme at community events • Potential to include outdoor tables in new housing developments 	Protect and Provide
Urban Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is already a world class urban sports facility (Adrenaline Alley) therefore no demand for additional indoor facilities, however maintenance of this venue is important to maintain quality of provision • There are 19 outdoor skateparks in North Northamptonshire. Protect and maintain these outdoor facilities • As part of the new housing developments consider including a skatepark and/or pump tracks in the outdoor facility plans 	Protect and Provide
Volleyball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettering Leisure Village is of significant importance to Volleyball nationally and locally. Protect the number of volleyball courts available • Given England Volleyball is based in Kettering this presents an opportunity for volleyball in North Northamptonshire • See Sports Hall recommendations 	Protect and Provide

Archery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council to continue dialogue with Archery GB to provide equity of access and protect shared sports facilities, or community use areas 	Protect
Equestrian	<p>Equestrian clubs have been established to meet demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility development is managed by clubs, riding schools and yards Council to continue to maintain bridleways in authority area 	NO ACTION REQUIRED
Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue partnership working with the Angling Trust to support programme of angling events Protect existing angling provision within the authority area 	Protect and Provide
Shooting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shooting / Rifle clubs have been established to meet demand Protect indoor and outdoor ranges 	Protect
Triathlon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tri clubs in the area have access to the facilities they require Protect the clubs access and the facilities they use – Corby International Pool, Corby Athletics Track, Oundle School and Sywell Country Park Open water Create a dialogue with the clubs to keep them information about greenway and cycle route developments for them to use 	Protect
Watersports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watersports clubs have been established to meet demand for the relevant watersports 	Protect
Community Use Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Northamptonshire Council to work in partnership with schools where sports facilities are provided for community or club use There is a requirement for formal community use agreements to be in place at existing sites or future school development sites This is needed to ensure continued community / sports club use of these sites. If this does not occur there will be additional pressure for provision of sports halls for community use in the North Northamptonshire Council area 	Protect and Provide

5.28 The strategy also provides a recommended action plan which is summarised here:

Action	Priority
<p>Replacement of Kettering Swimming Pool to include a new 8 lane 25m pool and additional learner pool (minimum 10m x 12m), to also include new fitness and flexible community/studio space.</p> <p>Develop existing feasibility work to RIBA Stage ½ including site options analysis</p> <p>(Potential for offsite developer contributions towards replacement facilities)</p>	1

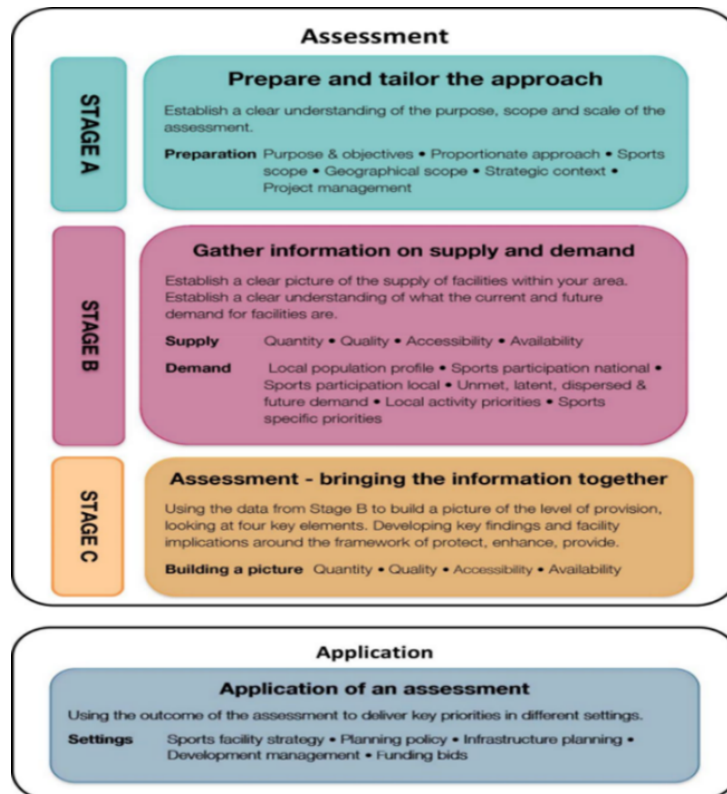
Improve community space at Lodge Park Sports Centre Progress initial feasibility work already undertaken	1
Add additional studio/community space to Redwell Leisure Centre Progress initial feasibility work already undertaken	1
Ensure Desborough Leisure Centre facilities meets needs of the local community through allocated S106 funding and sports hall floor is replaced (currently being progressed)	1
Ensure ongoing development of the fitness/gym provision at Corby International Pool and Lodge Park Sports Centre	1
Ongoing capital replacement/maintenance programme for Council's leisure portfolio, including equipment replacement (e.g. gym equipment) Develop a 10-year lifecycle plan for each centre	1
Work with Secondary Schools across NN to improve community use agreements where the LFS has identified a shortfall in provision	1
Ensure ongoing access to KLV arena sports facilities	1
Continue to secure S106 funding for on and off-site contributions, utilising the Sports Facility Calculator to identify funding requirements	1
Greater working between Planning, Public health and Leisure departments to ensure local infrastructure is supported	1
Review options to improve the leisure offer in Rushden including investigation of the existing two sites or replacing existing facilities on one site. Commission initial feasibility study to understand facility mix, site options and potential revenue/capital impact	2
Options appraisal for Rockingham Park Pavilion to confirm the future of The facility including investment and management options (options appraisal already complete)	2
Options appraisal for Northampton Road Pavilion to identify maintenance requirements, investment opportunities and future management options (external funding bid being progressed)	2
Feasibility study for Swanspool Gardens tennis Courts to understand the investment required to bring the tennis courts back into use and support discussions on the option of leasing the pavilion and park to the Wellingborough Town Council (Funding from Lawn Tennis Association secured to progress project)	2
Improve indoor offer, explore driving range opportunity and ensure delivery of ongoing maintenance and improvements to Priors Hall Golf course Undertake feasibility to understand potential demand for improved indoor facilities and financial impact of indoor and course improvements (Proposal for indoor simulators already included in Council's MTFP as income generating opportunity)	3
Implement a programme of engagement and Consultation with NGB's Sports Club Network	3
Extend community access to athletics facilities at Oundle School Extend consultation with England Athletics and the school to understand the opportunity for increased community use.	3
Identify opportunities for the provision of outdoor table tennis tables in	5

Playing Pitch Strategy

- 5.29 North Northamptonshire as a newly created unitary authority does not have a detailed evidence base for the supply and demand of playing pitches. The previous four local authorities all had individual Playing Pitch Strategies that had been adopted at different points in time, as shown below:
- Corby Playing Pitch Strategy 2017;
 - East Northants Playing Pitch Strategy 2016;
 - Kettering Playing Pitch Strategy 2020;
 - Wellingborough Playing Pitch Strategy 2019
- 5.30 The new North Northamptonshire PPS will provide an opportunity to assess the supply and demand of pitches across the new authority area and seek to identify ways that any shortfalls can be addressed to meet current and future demand.
- 5.31 The PPS will also provide an evidence base to inform and update planning policy as part of the emerging Local Plan for North Northamptonshire.
- 5.32 The strategy has been developed in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It emphasises the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity for the health and wellbeing of communities. It states that "Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities".
- 5.33 The strategy provides an important element of the evidence base to protect, as appropriate, and enhance existing provision, whilst ensuring that future demand can be catered for based on realistic assessments of the scale, quality and location of pitches and of the role public pitches, commercial provision and education-based facilities can make in delivering the Active Communities Strategy. This will help to secure developer contributions, Lottery, other Government and decarbonisation funding linking to potential developments coming forward.
- 5.34 The Playing Pitch Strategy has been developed in line with Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy', which sets out a 10 step, 5 stage approach:
- Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1);
 - Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 & 3);
 - Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 & 6);
 - Stage D: Develop the strategy (Steps 7 & 8);

- Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (Steps 9 & 10).
- 5.35 The Playing Pitch Strategy at **Appendix D** covers stages A – C of the approach.
- 5.36 Sport England’s guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field:
- **Playing pitch** – a delineated area, which is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo;
 - **Playing field** – the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch.
- 5.37 Outdoor sports facilities that are included within the strategy but are not covered by Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, have been reviewed in accordance with Sports England’s ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide’ (ANOG). The ANOG stages are shown below:

Figure 5 ANOG Stages



5.38 The data collection process included a full audit of pitches across North Northamptonshire. For each site, the following information was collected:

- Site name, location, ownership and management type;
- Number and type of pitches and outdoor sports facilities;
- Accessibility of pitches to the community;
- Overall quality of pitches and ancillary facilities;
- Level of protection and security of tenure; and
- Views of users and providers.

5.39 The quality of all sites has been captured, irrespective of their ownership type. This was achieved by completing a non-technical assessment at all sites that provide an outdoor sports pitch within the scope of the study. There may have been a small number of sites where a visit wasn't possible due to gaining access. Relevant data on pitch quality and maintenance at specific sites has also been collected from National Governing Bodies. The views of users about the pitches they use was also captured as part of the consultation process.

5.40 The assessment categorises all sites under one of the four headings below:

- **Available for community use** – the pitch is available for community use and is used regardless of its management type;
- **Available but unused** – the pitch is available but is unused by the community. This could be due to its quality or cost of hire;
- **Not available for community use** – pitches that aren't made available for community use. Professional and semi-professional pitches that have limited use also fall under this category;
- **Disused** - Any sites where pitches were once, but are no longer, marked out and remain undeveloped. These sites are still deemed to be playing fields despite not currently being used for

formal sport. Disused sites could provide an opportunity to help meet any shortfalls that are identified within the PPS.

- 5.41 The assessment report aims to capture all of the pitches within North Northamptonshire. However, there may be instances where a site is omitted. Where pitches have not been recorded, they remain as pitches and for planning purposes continue to be so. Furthermore, exclusion of a pitch does not mean that it is not required from a supply and demand point of view. The strategy document will seek to ensure that the list of sites within North Northamptonshire is kept up to date as any changes arise.
- 5.42 The following outdoor pitch sports facilities have been captured as part of the strategy:
- Football;
 - Rugby Union;
 - Gaelic Football;
 - Cricket;
 - Hockey; and
 - Other pitch sports (American Football)
- 5.43 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) relevant to the sports noted above are also captured as well as multi use games areas (MUGA).
- 5.44 In order to evaluate demand for pitches within North Northamptonshire, the following information has been collected:
- Number of sports clubs and teams including their match and training requirements;
 - Casual demand;
 - Educational demand;
 - Displaced demand (i.e. teams wishing to play within the district but unable to);
 - Latent demand (i.e., demand that exists but can't be catered for due to lack of provision);
 - Future demand (including club and team aspirations for development as well as National Governing Body priorities and targets); and
 - User views and experiences, including trends and changes in demand.
- 5.45 This information was collected via consultation with key stakeholders locally. This took the form of face-to-face consultation both in person and via MS Teams, together with an online survey. For each sport a 75% team response rate has been set as a benchmark as per the Sport England PPS Guidance, although every effort has been made to achieve a 100% response rate.
- 5.46 The Playing Pitch Strategy also assess whether there will be enough pitch provision to cater for future demand. This has been informed by using proposed housing growth, Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and any significant growth identified by clubs or NGB's who are part of the consultation process.

- 5.47 Team Generation Rates are used to provide an indication of the number of residents required to generate a team. This is considered for each age group and for both males and females. This is used to estimate what future demand will look like for each pitch type.
- 5.48 The supply and demand information gathered looks at the quantity and quality of pitch provision within North Northamptonshire. It looks at how much use is currently taking place at a site and what level of use it can actually accommodate.
- 5.49 The qualitative pitch ratings are cross referenced with guidance provided by each NGB to determine the quality of pitches on each site. The quality of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to determine how many match sessions a pitch can accommodate. This is then compared to the number of matches that actually take place on the site to determine if there is:
- Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain;
 - At capacity: Play is at the level the site can sustain;
 - Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.
- 5.50 Capacity is calculated on a site-by-site basis to identify where any spare capacity exists. Capacity is recorded during peak times for each pitch sport to provide a more accurate reflection of where spare capacity exists in relation to demand.
- 5.51 The Playing Pitch Strategy action plan has been developed in conjunction with the project steering group, which includes representatives from each of the following organisations:
- North Northamptonshire Council;
 - Sport England;
 - Northamptonshire Sport;
 - Northamptonshire FA (NFA);
 - The Football Foundation;
 - The Rugby Football Union (RFU);
 - The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB);
 - Northamptonshire County Cricket Club (NCCC);
 - England Hockey; and
 - Provincial Council of Britain Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).
- 5.52 The action plan provides a clear set of recommendations that are prioritised for each sport and site. This action plan should be used by all stakeholders involved in its development, when looking at the future provision of outdoor sports facilities. It should be used to identify where investment needs to be prioritised for each sport in order to meet any of the shortfalls that have been identified. This should also be the case when new provision is being proposed, linked to any housing growth. This will help to ensure that provision is always provided in the right locations to meet demand. This should always be done in conjunction with the relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and Sport England.
- 5.53 Although the strategy identifies that there is spare capacity of pitches, the management, quality and availability of them i.e. schools or private clubs may

not mean that they are available for use – in practical terms there is a shortage of pitches for the number of teams that require access.

5.54 The Playing Pitch Strategy also identifies the key issues and findings regarding the supply and demand of outdoor pitches within North Northamptonshire. These are presented for each sport in the Strategy.

Sport	Pitch Type	Current Capacity 2023	Future Capacity 2041
Football - Grass Pitches	Adult pitches	spare capacity of 19 MES	Spare capacity of 13.5 MES
	Youth Football 11v11	Spare capacity of 11.5 MES	Spare capacity of 11.5 MES
	Youth Football 9v9	Spare capacity of 13.5 MES	Spare capacity of 13.5 MES
	Mini Soccer 7v7	Shortfall of 3 MES	Shortfalls of 3 MES
	Mini Soccer 5v5	Shortfall of 7.5 MES	Shortfalls 7.5 MES
3G AGPs	Full size with sports lighting	Shortfall of 8.25 pitches	Shortfall of 8.25 pitches
Rugby Union	Senior	Shortfall of 17.25 MES	Shortfall of 17.75 MES
Hockey AGPs	Full size with sports lighting	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
Cricket - Saturday	Senior grass wickets	Shortfalls of 192 MES per season	Shortfalls of 282 MES per season
Cricket - Sunday		Shortfalls of 12 MES per season	Shortfalls of 112 MES per season
Cricket - Mid-week		Spare capacity of 104MES per season	Spare capacity of 104MES per season
Gaelic Football	Full size	Demand is being met	Demand is being met
American Football	Full size	Demand is being met	Demand is being met

Figure 6 Current and Future capacity of Playing Pitches in North Northamptonshire


Enablers and Considerations

- 5.54 There are a number of critical success factors identified if the Council and its partners are to successfully deliver the Active Communities Strategy:
- Collaboration: effective partnership working is critical to ensure everyone understands and plays their part in delivering the agreed outcomes;
 - Place-Based: a commitment to focussing collective resources where they are most needed
 - People-centred: putting our residents and our communities at the heart of what we do;
 - Monitoring performance: measuring the success and impacts of the strategy and the changes it influences at a systemic level;
 - Sustainability: delivery needs to financially and environmentally sustainable

- 5.55 A key enabler is the effectiveness of the new Active Communities Partnership which has recently been established for North Northamptonshire. The purpose of the Active Communities Partnership is to have a strategic overview and support the delivery of the Active Communities Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing board, Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority for “Keeping Active”.
- 5.56 This work will provide opportunities enabling active lifestyles for people who live, work and visit North Northamptonshire. The Partnership is chaired by the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire Sport and includes representatives the Voluntary and Community Sector, Health providers and the ICB, Leisure providers, NGBs, the Children’s Trust as well as a range of Council services. Work has already begun to co-produce a detailed action plan to deliver the priority themes and outcomes identified in the strategy.
- 5.57 As Planning documents under the Strategic Planning framework the Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch strategies require reviewing annually by the Council.
- 5.58 In determining how to deliver the recommendations within the Leisure Facilities strategy and in developing a prioritised investment plan for the Council’s leisure estate there are a number of factors to be considered. These include:
- Urgent investment required for health and safety reasons
 - How does any investment contribute to the outcomes within the Active Communities strategy?
 - How will any invest affect income opportunities?
 - Has any feasibility or options appraisal work already been undertaken?
 - Has external funding already been secured e.g. Decarbonisation funding?
 - Or are external funding opportunities already being pursued and / or are they likely to be supported as they meet the funders’ strategic objectives e.g. Sport England Place Expansion programme; Lawn Tennis Association.
 - The availability of external funding e.g Developer contributions have to be linked to the proximate development and be viable in Planning terms.
 - The revenue costs associated with any new borrowing the Council seeks to undertake.
 - Officer capacity to deliver large scale projects simultaneously
- 5.59 The Council is committed to working towards high quality, sustainable leisure facilities that support the delivery of the Active Communities Strategic framework and the health and wellbeing of our communities.

6. Next Steps

6.1 To finalise action plans for each of the strategies to include key activities. Key Performance Indicators are being co-produced by the new Active Communities Strategic Partnership for the Active Communities strategy. An example of this emerging work is shown below:

Theme	Actions	Key Performance Indicators
 <p data-bbox="156 533 341 555">Healthy Communities</p> <p data-bbox="140 600 357 784">To improve health and wellbeing by increasing participation in active wellbeing, movement and physical activity through the development and delivery of opportunities that provide better access to healthy lifestyle options.</p>	<p data-bbox="387 365 834 448">Start well - Increase early years offer to support increased participation in physical activity including pre-natal, post-natal and 0-5 years to ensure the best start and increase physical literacy in young children</p> <p data-bbox="387 465 834 528">Enabling more opportunities that support the importance of 'family resilience' as one of the foundations of family health and wellbeing</p> <p data-bbox="387 546 834 629">Aging Well - Utilising increased participation in recreation, movement, and physical activity as a tool for improve health and wellbeing, to reduce demands on health services in future years</p> <p data-bbox="387 647 834 710">Increasing the number of people participating in prevention and rehabilitation services through expanding existing Active for Health programmes across North Northamptonshire</p> <p data-bbox="387 728 834 790">Developing strong partnerships and collaborative working with partners to implement the co-delivery/co-location of Health and Wellbeing services</p> <p data-bbox="387 808 834 871">Development of targeted concessionary and access schemes to help more people participate in activity and wellbeing services</p>	<ul data-bbox="874 365 1493 784" style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates of physical inactivity across North Northamptonshire (Active Lives data) • Rates of physical inactivity within LAPs • Life expectancy gap between most and least deprived areas • Participation rates in activities and programmes delivered within targeted communities, broken down by age, gender, ethnicity • Percentage of children in Year 6 who are overweight or obese • Percentage of adults who are classed as overweight or obese • Mental health index score • Percentage reporting a long term MSK problem • Emergency admissions due to falls • Number of referrals • Attendance of health and wellbeing programmes, including monitoring those from areas of deprivation • Participant surveys to be completed at the end of each targeted programme/initiative to monitor qualitative feedback • Number of co-delivery services/programmes in place • Partnership maturity matrix

6.2 To develop a Leisure facility investment plan for the Council's own leisure facilities, based on the considerations set out in paragraph 5.58 above. These strategies provide the evidence base for the Council to develop prioritised and comprehensive action and investment plans, and to seek external funding. They are the beginning not the end of a programme of activity for the coming years.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

7.1.1. The strategy development has been funded through external funding from the Covid Outbreak Management Fund and from Public Health Reinvestment funding. It does not include specific saving targets or future expenditure proposals at this stage. However, the strategies will inform future capital investment in the North Northamptonshire leisure and other open and green space assets through developer contributions, external funding bids and any capital investment the Council may or may not choose to consider.

7.2 Legal and Governance

7.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposals. However, all prior internal approvals must be obtained before implementation of these strategies.

7.2.2. The Procurement of services providers and/or third-party partners for the delivery of the services will be done so in compliance with all applicable legislation including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended)..

7.2.3 The Council, in compliance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework must produce a Leisure Facilities and a Playing Pitch Strategy and review these strategies on an annual basis.

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The North Northamptonshire Council's Corporate plan adopted in 2021 has key commitments which are key to this project. These include:

- Active, fulfilled lives :- supporting people to live healthier more active lives. Active travel schemes and use of our green spaces supports commitment.
- Safe and thriving places:- thriving economy that shapes great places to live, learn work and visit which can be achieved within this scheme.
- Green, sustainable environment:- the vision is to develop a green infrastructure for walking, cycling and use of our waterways.

[Corporate plan | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/corporate-plan)

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 The evidence base and recommendations made in the Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch strategies provide the Council with the basis for future feasibility studies and funding applications for the Council's leisure assets. Without such evidence and studies the risk is future funding applications or negotiations with Developers with will be unsuccessful.

7.4.2 The Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch strategies are statutory requirements under the National Planning Policy Framework. Failure to produce them puts the Council at risk of non-compliance with its obligations under that framework.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1. The strategy has been co-produced with a range of stakeholders and has been informed by a series of targeted stakeholder surveys and a public survey.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This Active Communities Executive Advisory Panel participated in the consultation which has informed the strategies and the draft Active Communities Strategy was considered by the same Executive Advisory Panel on 29th November 2024.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. This report has not been considered by Scrutiny, but future Scrutiny committees can be involved in the development of the action and investment plans as required.

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1. The proposals set out in the strategy respond to the need to ensure that equitable access to services, leisure facilities, open spaces and other opportunities to be physically active are provided for all North Northamptonshire residents, workers and visitors.

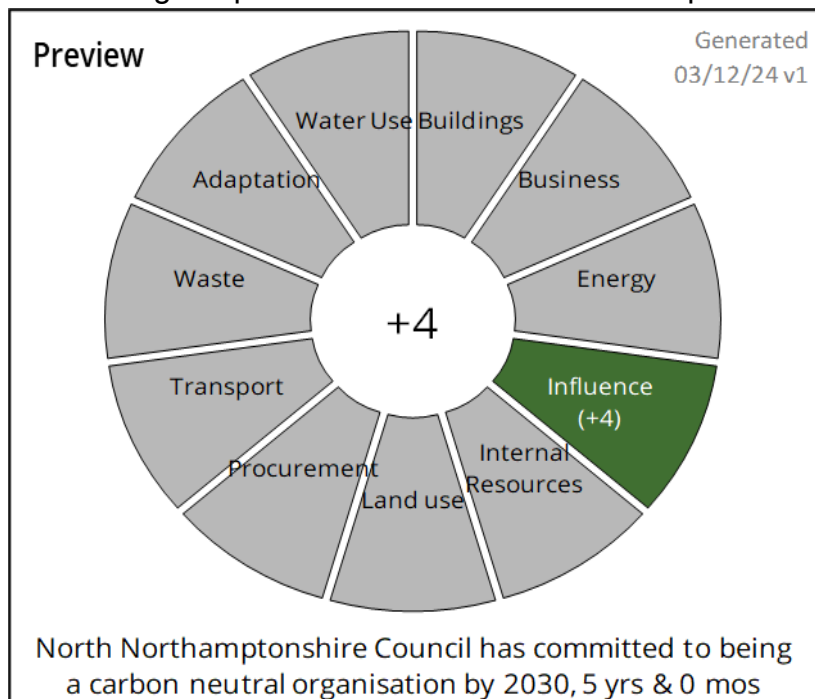
7.8.2. The development of the strategy followed national best practice and guidance relating to leisure facilities and playing pitch modelling including accessibility considerations.

7.8.3. The approach is to continue to develop a leisure provision that is fair and inclusive:

- Creating the opportunity to challenge gender and age stereotyping and to promote and encourage an inclusive culture for all in our active environments and provision, especially where gaps in representation are identified.
- Any new build or refurbishment will consider protected spaces for females and for gender neutral facilities and inclusive and signage.

7.9 Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1. A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed:



Building construction	<p>Any future development or improvements to leisure facilities will be informed by the Leisure Facilities strategy which forms part of the framework - it is recommended that facilities are designed and built to reduce energy use and to be carbon neutral ensuring that new technologies are used where possible.</p>	
Building use	<p>Management of leisure facilities will encourage customers and staff to be energy efficient and communicate how facilities are reducing the amount of energy consumption i.e. installation of light sensors, reduction in temperatures, reduction in hair drying facilities etc</p>	
Energy efficiency	<p>Installation of technologies such as LED lighting, light sensors, air source heat pumps, solar panels, low flow taps and showers, dual flush sanitaryware & TRV's where applicable, kitchen appliances with A rating. All of these will impact on a positive customer experience.</p>	
Reducing energy demand	<p>Design of plant and buildings will support the reduction of energy and water consumption</p>	
Switching to low-carbon energy supply	<p>Installation of air source heat pumps within new developments will be encouraged examples already underway at Corby Pool and Desborough Leisure Centre</p>	
Communication & engagement	<p>Communication with users and staff around what has been installed within facilities to reduce energy and water consumption through notices in facilities, social comms, newsletter, staff meetings. This framework and improving leisure assets increases awareness of climate change and will impact on a positive customer experience. The Council will be ensuring positive communication is provided throughout any project to demonstrate its intentions to address climate change and work to reduce its carbon output across its leisure assets.</p>	+1
Wider influence	<p>Development of leisure assets and infrastructure will be able to be shared as good practice across North Northants and the wider area - the implementation of the strategies and investment will support quality assessment processes with Sport England and Quest for facility accreditation</p>	+1
Working with communities	<p>Ensure communication with customers continues notifying and informing them of new installations, technologies and impact - keep informed of successes of reducing energy and water</p>	+1
Working with partners	<p>Ensure that external leisure contractors are aware of the Council strategies and work together to reduce usage and keep the topic as a priority in contract meetings and to ensure their users are</p>	+1

	<p>kept in formed through NNC communications but also through the contractor</p>
Material / infrastructure requirement	<p>Ensuring that energy efficient materials and plant are used in facilities will support reduction in usage and impact on the environment. Cycling and walking routes will be encouraged through new housing developments and the greenway encouraging reduced car usage</p>
External funding	<p>External funding opportunities will be explored to support the development and installation of new technologies as already seen through Sport England and the governments Decarbonisation funding streams</p>
Food & Drink	<p>Contractors or in house services will be encouraged to use locally businesses and suppliers where possible who are able to offer sustainable supplies</p>
Products	<p>To be sustainable and following guidelines to be environmentally friendly ie alternative supplies and products to be researched prior to procurement process</p>
Single-use plastic	<p>Single use plastic materials and products to be reduced where possible</p>
Services	<p>Any building works that are undertaken will procure contractors through the Councils procurement process. As part of the process it will be requested that any supplier operates in a responsible manner in relation to the environment and the potential impact of a project</p>
Improving infrastructure	<p>There are a number of projects identified through the strategies that will see a refurbishment or new build developed that will be delivered to improve or enhance existing provision of the leisure infrastructure across North Northants ensuring access is a priority</p>
Demand reduction	<p>Improved facilities and plant will ensure the community are able to access local facilities that are of a high standard to reduce the need to travel further afield</p>
Supporting people to use public transport	<p>Links to public transport will be managed through planning policy and supporting active travel</p>
Supporting people to use active travel	<p>Through priorities identified through the strategies planning policy will influence the development of walking and cycling routes throughout new housing developments and ensure linkages are made to the existing infrastructure.</p>
	<p>Through priorities identified through the strategies planning policy will influence the development of walking and cycling routes throughout new housing</p>

	developments and ensure linkages are made to the existing infrastructure.
End of life disposal / recycling	Some refurbishments or new build will generate a proportion of waste material that will be handled by the relevant specialist contactors and recycled where possible. Projects identified will generate a proportion of waste material that will be handled by the relevant specialist contractors and recycled where possible.
Waste volume	This would be dependent on the scope of each project identified by the strategy - any works will follow the Councils reporting processes and CCIA's will be developed for projects as they follow the process
Improving water-use efficiency	Leisure Centres - Improvements to plant, installation of pool covers, UV filtration will ensure both heat and water loss via evaporation is reduced especially during times that facilities are closed for use

7.10 Community Impact

7.10.1 The health and wellbeing benefits of being physically active are well documented in this report and within the strategies. The purpose of the Active Communities Strategic Framework is to support the Council and its partners to prioritise activities which will increase physical activity levels, which in turn will help to improve health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, improve community connectedness and cohesion and promote a sense of pride in place.

7.10.2 The strategic framework seeks to ensure that leisure provision across North Northamptonshire considers communities most in need from deprivation, social isolation and health inequalities. Provision will address barriers for communities to support inclusivity for all sections of the community and protected characteristics.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 None specifically identified, however participation in sport, leisure and physical activity has positive outcomes for community cohesion and a sense of belonging and place.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Equalities Impact Assessment

8.2 Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment report