

Active Communities Malvern Hills District: A Vision for the Future

Malvern Hills District Sport and Leisure Strategy 2014 - 2024

Chapter II:
Active Communities Malvern Hills district –
A vision for the future



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

11.1 Introduction

The strategy confirms the council's future vision for sport and leisure provision across the district as:

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

The council's activity and deployment of resources in the delivery of this vision will be guided by a 3 pronged approach to the delivery of sport and leisure provision linked to the decreasing availability of limited resources in the future:

- **What it will continue to do** – building on success of the past
- **What it will support and enable** – new ways of working
- **What it will no longer do** – promoting self-reliance

11.2 Public Health opportunities

The move of public health from central to local government in 2012 (in this case Worcestershire County Council) and the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups create a long term opportunity based on prevention and early intervention. The role that regular physical activity can play in reducing the impact of health inequalities is well evidenced. The contribution that Malvern Hills district can make towards county wide policies cannot be underestimated through its commitment to sport and leisure.

The Malvern Hills Health and Wellbeing Plan (2013-16) identifies the opportunities and direction of travel for the council and its partners.

11.3 Sport and physical activity opportunities

Given the range of voluntary clubs and groups, schools, and organisations providing the sport and leisure landscape, it is important to identify where additional participation could be encouraged through some key drivers. These include sports events, developing sport and physical activity leadership at a local level, empowering sports clubs to develop their membership and activity, improving community access to schools and recognising and celebrating success.

The council has played a proactive role in all of the above elements to date, but looking ahead, given the likely resources available to directly support some of these key opportunities, a different approach may be required, one that is more dependent on empowered local organisations taking on a leadership role.

Community sport and physical activity leadership is vitally important in mobilising interest at a local level. By enabling local people to develop their skills and qualifications in coaching, sports leadership, healthy lifestyles etc, this will be a knock on effect in participation. Tapping into the existing support infrastructures available, through for example, the Sports Partnership - Herefordshire and Worcestershire, will be key.

Empowering sports clubs to improve their resilience and sustainability is key to supporting the good levels of participation in the district, particularly in rural areas. As with community sport and physical activity leadership, use of existing support infrastructures available in the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire will be essential.

Improving community access to school facilities to unlock existing provision will continue to be a key feature of the Sport and Leisure Strategy. However, community use is not easy to implement effectively and to achieve sustainability requires real commitment and engagement from Heads and their Governing Bodies along with their partners. There are a number of national initiatives supported by Sport England to encourage wider and better quality community use of school facilities and this should be supported.

Creating a sense of achievement and pride amongst the sports and physical activity community in the district has always been a positive way to recognise and champion local volunteers and clubs. The council supports the annual Sports Awards which recognises and celebrates successes and contributions from the voluntary sector. This element of recognition and reward will be vitally important as the shift of emphasis towards communities taking more responsibility for their own area and opportunities within it continue to develop.

11.4 Local opportunities for rural locations

For those residents in rural locations, social networks and flexible use local facilities will be fundamental to quality of life of many residents, who may not be in a position to travel to purpose built sport and leisure facilities. The role of town and parish councils in acting strategically in prioritising investment from grant aid and planning gain is vitally important to maximise local opportunities for residents to stay active.

11.5 Summary

The council's future role in sport and leisure is summarised in three key statements developed as a policy position by elected members:

- **What it will continue to do** - building on success of past
- **What it will support and enable** - new ways of working linked to recent examples
- **What it will no longer do** - promoting self-reliance

What it 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 it 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 it 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.

11.6 Capital funding

The following sources of capital funding may support the council in identifying where to fund future developments and in particular, any re-provision of Malvern Splash in circa 10 years' time.

11.7 Planning contributions

Planning contributions relate to the amount of capital that can be raised through planning development contributions through the CIL.

11.8 Capital contributions through site disposals

Land held by the council may be sold for development and the proceeds used to fund improvements. This would need to be a political decision and would require a long lead in period.

11.9 External grant funding

Between 2011 and 2014, Sport England is investing £30 million of National Lottery Funding into innovative, large scale, multi-sport facility budget. Funding is delivered against Local Authority budget and NGB facility priorities whilst also demonstrating long-term financial viability. The iconic Facilities Fund is distributing this funding via three funding rounds, with applications being invited both on solicited and open basis. £10 million is available in the third round of funding and applicants can apply for grants of between £500,000 and £3 million.

The fund will focus only on multi-sport projects that will significantly contribute to creating a lifelong sporting habit for many more people. Therefore any application must meet all demands set out as follows by the Iconic facilities criteria:

- Strategic facilities in England for at least two National Governing Bodies of Sport
- Large scale capital developments delivering key priorities identified in local authority sports facility plans
- A regionally significant facility for two sports or more supported by the National Governing Bodies of Sport. (At least one facility of regional significance for two sports will be supported in this round of funding)
- Multi-sport facilities, but with a focus on sporting activities that will drive high participant numbers
- A mix of facility provision to encourage regular & sustained use by a large number of people
- Indoor and/or outdoor facilities
- An enhancement, through modernisation, to existing provision and/or new build
- Confidence in their ability to deliver with detailed designs and planning permission secured
- A strong project team, led ideally by a Local Authority (providing capital funding)
- A long-term sustainable business plan attracting public and private investment
- Quality in design, but are fit for purpose to serve the community need
- Operating models, which may include an emphasis on community ownership (e.g. social enterprises, trusts).

This funding scheme is highly competitive and is therefore important that the application criteria are met in full. Round 2 of Iconic Facilities (October – December 2011) received 28 applications requesting £40m in grants from Sport England. Only six gained funding.

Applications must also show clearly how the proposed investment will contribute to future growth in participation of sport for people from all different backgrounds and abilities. Whilst also demonstrating their ability to deliver their project by clearly showing, detailed project plans for delivery of the facilities from inception to completion, with realistic milestones, and that they are in a position to undertake the capital build and draw down funding in a specified period between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The current funding streams for supporting the refurbishing/re-provision of major Malvern Hills district facilities may struggle to qualify for support. However, more locally based provision may still qualify.

As of yet no future funding plans have been announced by Sport England. It is recommended that the council monitors opportunities from Sport England and stays close to their regional officers to position the district for access to funding in the future.

11.10 Capital Funding through National Governing Bodies of Sport

There are limited funding opportunities available directly from National Governing Bodies of Sport, as these funds are now distributed centrally through Sport England.

11.11 Capital Funding through the Football Foundation

The Football Foundation continues to be a good source of capital funding for local football clubs looking to improve their facilities. The Premier League and The FA Facilities Fund provides grants for building or refurbishing grassroots facilities, such as changing pavilions and playing surfaces for community benefit, with money provided by the Premier League, The FA and the Government (via Sport England) and delivered by the Foundation. It will begin to provide this investment from 2014.

The Foundation's Facilities Scheme provides grants over £100,000 for building or refurbishing large-scale grassroots facilities, such as changing pavilions and playing surfaces for community benefit, with money provided by The FA and the Government (via Sport England) and delivered by the Foundation.

The Foundation's Build the Game provides grants up to £100,000 for smaller-scale facility improvements, such as pitch improvement works and refurbished changing areas for community benefit, with money provided by The FA and the Government (via Sport England) and delivered by the Foundation.

Barclays Spaces for Sports is a community sports programme which has developed over 200 sports sites around the UK in partnership with the Foundation, but no longer provides grants for the local site or flagship element of the programme. The Flagship element of the programme is equally funded by Barclays and the Foundation, whilst the UK programme itself is delivered by the Foundation.

11.12 Prudential borrowing

The council has access to cheap capital available through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). Subject to a business case and the ability of the council to demonstrate longer term savings as

a result of 'investing to save', prudential borrowing is often a popular method of funding leisure improvements.

Many authorities have undertaken prudential borrowing to fund leisure projects, particularly when linked to an established operational partnership, where third party income risk is reduced. This approach also has the advantages of being exempt from VAT.

Improvements on the management fee contributions from an operator combined with revenue savings from reduced capital repairs and maintenance post construction could support the raising of capital through prudential borrowing.

This is not the preferred method of the council.

11.13 Third Party Funding

There are a number of third party funders linked to the major banks which offer leisure investment funding packages. These funding packages need to be underwritten by the council (e.g. guaranteed) and interest rates are significantly higher than those accessible through the Public Loans Works Board. However, many of these funders provide project management and service improvement support to reduce the risk of under performance of the new facility, so provide an element of added value.

Leisure operators do have some access to capital from their own reserves and invest in projects based on levels of confidence of delivering a return linked to a long term contract with certain guarantees as regards management fees and other contract conditions.

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