

Sports Facility Report - Rushmoor Borough July 2009

Executive Summary

This Sports Facilities Report for Rushmoor Borough forms part of a Sports Facilities Project led by Sport Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to provide a sound evidence base for future Sports Facility Planning across the sub-region.

Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) has taken a strategic approach to facilities planning and is working closely with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to develop a corporate Cultural Strategy embracing sport and recreational provision within the wider cultural offer. The aim is to encourage joint working and demonstrate how investment in cultural activity can help deliver against key policy objectives of the two authorities.

Sports and recreation provision in the Borough is good and includes 3 pools (one 50m), indoor bowls, athletics and rugby stadium, 18 hole public golf course, gymnastics academy, ten-pin bowling, sports halls, skate parks, MUGA, ATP's and a wide range of clubs including Aldershot Town FC in the 2nd division. This is supplemented by a Virgin Active Health Club and a number of 3 to 5 star hotels. There are high levels of satisfaction with that provision amongst residents. RBC is not actively seeking to increase provision. The main priority for the future is to protect existing facilities, particularly playing pitches, where they may be affected by new development, and improve and maintain the quality of existing provision.

The MOD is a major provider of sports facilities including the world class facilities at Aldershot Garrison. Major investment is taking place at Aldershot Garrison in part linked with the decision of the British Olympic Association (BOA) to adopt the facility as Team GB's London 2012 Pre-Olympic Games Preparation and Processing Camp.

RBC has an impressive track record in securing external capital funding for provision of new and improved facilities. £5.9M has recently been secured from the DCSF to build an outdoor activity centre at Runways End. The local authority demonstrates best practice in delivering jointly funded projects in partnership with a number of external agencies.

A summary of the strategic issues for future provision of sports facilities are detailed in the following table:

| Strategic Issues for Rushmoor Borough |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existing provision needs continued investment across the borough to improve and maintain the quality of facilities; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protection of existing sports facility provision, particularly playing fields, within major development areas such as the Aldershot Urban Extension ; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of Aldershot Garrison by Team GB as a Pre-Olympic Games Preparation Camp; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross-boundary use of facilities, both inward and outward and the implications this has for sub-regional planning of future provision; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction of Runways End outdoor activity centre and development to an operational centre; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RBC is committed to providing an international BMX track; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Schools for the Future could provide a real opportunity to improve community sports facility provision. |

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1. Introduction

The report has been produced following a face-to-face interview with Peter Amies, Head of Community, and Ashley Sharpe and Jane Reeves representing leisure and planning at Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) to complete a questionnaire on facilities planning activity. This has been supplemented by a desk-top review of relevant documentation highlighted through the interview.

2. Facilities Planning Activity

RBC is working closely with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to develop a corporate Cultural Strategy embracing sport and recreational provision within the wider cultural offer. Research suggests that sports and recreation provision in the Borough is reported to be good, and there are high levels of satisfaction with that provision amongst residents. RBC is not actively seeking to increase the quantity of provision, but the main priority for the future will be to protect, improve and maintain existing facilities.

Aldershot and Farnborough are the two main centres for provision of facilities within Rushmoor.

The local authority has proved to be very successful in securing external funding for new and improved provision and the delivery of substantial multi-agency projects. A recent example is the opening of a new £1.1 M football pavilion for Rushmoor Community Football Club through joint funding from RBC, the Football Foundation and Sport England. As well as offering a base for the football club the pavilion has also provided a home to the local Safer Neighbourhood police office.

The Community Manager at RBC has approved capital improvement programmes, developed through local consultation for sports pitches, pavilions, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and playgrounds. These are based on quality audits and set out clear priorities for future investment.

At a strategic level, there are a number of sub-regional facility developments which are being progressed including:

- **Runways End** : a £5.9 million grant has recently been awarded to build a state of the art outdoor activity centre at Runways End, mainly aimed at people aged 8 – 19. The centre expected to open in summer 2011 will be part of a wider centre of sporting excellence being close to the preparation camp for team GB in 2012 and first-class Garrison sports facilities.

The venue will provide a sub-regional facility which will include a climbing and abseiling tower, indoor multi-activity hall for archery, shooting etc, indoor bouldering for climbing, a canoe store, BMX track and caving as well as other outdoor recreational facilities.

- **Aldershot Garrison** – Improvements and Pre-Olympic Training Camp: - The Army's world class sporting facilities and accommodation at Aldershot are being managed and further developed by Aspire Defence, as part of an £12 billion MoD PFI contract to deliver and operate improved living, working and sporting facilities for 18,700 military personnel at Aldershot. The facilities incorporate the Army Centre of Sporting Excellence as well as the Army School of Physical Training. The Olympic Swimming Pool complex is currently used as the permanent high performance training centre for Great Britain's Olympic synchronised swimming squad.

The British Olympic Association (BOA) has chosen Aldershot to host Team GB's London 2012 Pre-Olympic Games Preparation and Processing Camp. Further improvements are

planned such as a new mountain bike course, depending on which sports decide to make use of the venue.

- **Sports Academy at Aldershot Park** – Improvements including a new pavilion and floodlit artificial pitch at the local Secondary School in liaison with Aldershot Town Football Club and Aldershot & Fleet Rugby Union Football Club
- **Southwood Golf Course** – Following the recent downturn in popularity of golf further consideration will need to be given to Southwood Golf Course.
- **International BMX Track** – the local authority has committed to providing an international BMX track although the location is yet to be agreed.

3. Summary of Documentation

Information collected through three studies is of interest in identifying a Sports Facilities Planning evidence base for Rushmoor Borough Council. Further detail on the scope of the studies and their relevance to this Report is detailed in Table 1.

| Document | Date | Scope |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|
| PPG17 audit | In preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Urban Parks (not applicable to this report) ● Equipped Children’s Play Space (youth element only applicable to this report) ● Sports and Recreation Grounds |
| Cultural Strategy Research | Feb 2009 | Audit 2008; and Arts, Culture & Sports Survey 2008 |
| Playing Pitch Strategy | 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Football ● Cricket ● Rugby ● Hockey |

Table 1: Summary of Documentation

3.1 Cultural Strategy Research

RBC is in the process of developing a joint Cultural Strategy with Hampshire County Council which will set out how investment in cultural activity can help deliver against key policy objectives of the two authorities.

Sport and Recreation is one of the six categories of cultural facilities being audited which include:

- Libraries;
- Arts and Entertainment;
- Heritage and Museums;
- Parks and Countryside;
- Sports and Recreation;
- Commercial Leisure.

The research concludes that sports and recreation provision in the Borough good, and there are high levels of satisfaction with that provision amongst residents. However there was a greater perception amongst Aldershot residents that sport and recreation facilities require improvement.

3.2 PPG17 Audit

A PPG17 audit is underway and will form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) evidence base. It is expected to be completed later in 2009. The audit focuses on the three typologies of open space included within the Local Plan as listed below, but will not cover built facilities.

- Urban Parks
- Equipped Children's Play Space
- Sports and Recreation Grounds

3.3 Playing Pitch Strategy – April 2003

A playing pitch strategy (PPS) was prepared in April 2003 using the methodology set out in "The Playing Pitch Strategy 1991", published jointly by Sport England, the National Playing Fields Association and the Central Council for Physical Recreation. (This guidance has subsequently been superseded by "Towards a Level Playing Field" updated in July 2005).

The Rushmoor PPS is a 10 year strategy 2003 – 2013 which analyses the current and future use of pitches for football, cricket, rugby and hockey. The strategy contains an action plan covering short, medium and long term actions many of which have been progressed since the document was produced.

The PPS identified an under provision of MUGA's which has led to the development of a MUGA programme within the authority. MUGA's have recently been constructed at Mayfield, Pinewood Park and North Town following a successful bid for external funding.

A sport by sport breakdown of issues identified through the PPS is tabulated in section 5 of this report.

4. Standards of Provision

The Local Plan Review is the current local development plan document for Rushmoor Borough. It was adopted in August 2000 and runs to 2011.

Local Plan Review (Policy OR4) uses the minimum open space standard based upon the 1993 version of the Hampshire Structure Plan which incorporated an additional typology 'Urban Parks' over and above the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) '6 Acre Standard'. The existing standard expressed as hectares per 1000 population is as follows:

| Typology | Current Standard (ha / 000) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Urban parks / amenity open space | 1.6 ha |
| Equipped Children's Play Space | 0.2 ha |
| Sports grounds | 1.0 ha |
| Total | 2.8 ha |

PPG17 suggests that local authorities should set their own standards of open space provision. The PPG17 audit which is currently in progress will suggest quantity standards for the three categories of open space which will be reviewed as part of the LDF process. It is likely that given the constraints on open space in the borough the new standards will reflect the existing levels of provision. Quantitative standards for built facilities are not proposed.

5. Key Issues

The following issues will be of importance to Rushmoor in future sports facility planning.

- Corporate Policy Objectives - Sports facility planning in Rushmoor is very much tied into the wider cultural agenda and linked to the delivery of key corporate policy objectives including:
 - Social integration
 - Educational attainment (These are particular concerns with NEET's and children in care)
 - Community Safety
 - Healthy Lifestyles
 - Economic Development

Examples of the integration of sport with wider policy areas such as education include the 21st Century Legacy project, where young people are motivated by high achievers (particularly sports people) raise their aspirations and map out their own goals.

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) as a provider of sports facilities - While the community undoubtedly benefits from the use of high quality facilities such as Aldershot Garrison, the local authority has no control over usage.

- Cross border usage – The Cultural Strategy research identified that just over one in six of those consulted go outside of the borough for sport and recreation, the biggest numbers going to Farnham, Guildford and Camberley. Rushmoor also attracts users from outside the borough with surveys suggesting inward migration to account for approximately one third of users. Sub-regional attractions include the ski-slope, Gymnastics Academy and Aldershot Lido (25% of users are Rushmoor residents). This cross-boundary use highlights the importance of sub-regional planning for future provision.

6. Planning

6.1 Developers Contributions

RBC has adopted policies for taking developers contributions within the current local plan. The local authority have been successful in securing substantial amounts of funding through this mechanism and using it to fund new and improved sports facilities such as pavilions and sports pitches.

6.2 Aldershot Urban Extension

The Aldershot Urban Extension (AUE), in the southern part of the Military Town, is one of the largest brownfield regeneration sites in the South East of England. The development of the AUE will deliver a sustainable new community in a high quality landscape setting, providing much needed new homes and contributing to the regeneration of Aldershot Town Centre. As part of Rushmoor's emerging Local Development Framework, a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced to guide the development of the AUE .