



**SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
LEISURE STRATEGY 2014 - 2024**





Foreword by Councillor Ray Herring

Leader of Suffolk Coastal District Council



From left to right: **Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf**, Cabinet Member for Customers, Communities and Leisure, **Councillor Richard Kerry**, Cabinet Member for Community Health, **Councillor Andrew Nunn**, Cabinet Member for Green Environment and **Councillor Geoff Holdcroft**, Cabinet Member for Planning.

I am delighted to introduce Suffolk Coastal District Council's inaugural Leisure Strategy with Councillors Haworth-Culf, Kerry, Nunn and Holdcroft. This Leisure Strategy would not have been possible without the joint partnership of portfolios steering its collaborative focus and with this in mind it is prudent that we jointly present this strategy to local communities, highlighting our intention to start as we mean to go on.

The strategy has been developed within the context of the Council and its partners commitment to improving the health and wellbeing aspirations of our residents in an environment of change and financial constraint and in line with the vision of Suffolk Coastal District Council's business plan to "maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everybody growing up, living in, working in and visiting the area", this strategy will improve the health, well-being and fitness of communities within the Suffolk Coastal District, ensuring greater resident access and participation in sports, leisure and recreational activities.

Suffolk Coastal is a diverse landscape of rural communities, urban pockets and market towns and due to this the district is fortunate enough to have an abundance of physical activity and facility opportunities on the doorstep of many residents' homes. Within the framework of the Council's wider community, leisure, health, environment and planning aims and aspirations, the strategy focuses on the distinct aim to increase resident participation in physical activity. Many Suffolk Coastal residents already take advantage of the natural coastline, countryside, leisure centres and public rights of way network available to them and it is the role of this strategy to nurture that participation by listening to communities, understanding their needs and delivering a forward plan of leisure, planning and health practices enabling residents to take part in their preferred method of physical activity.

It is important not to underestimate the positive impact that regular physical or recreational activity can have on people's health, wellbeing, fitness and most importantly happiness. It is therefore the role of this Council to ensure the Leisure Strategy aims are embedded into everyday working practices and new partnerships are born to enable us to deliver its priorities over the next ten years.

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Leader of Suffolk Coastal District Council





Executive Summary

Physical Activity is essential to a healthy lifestyle and for many years strategies produced to combat inactivity focused mainly on preventative sporting methods. Due to the increased popularity of more recreational physical activity such as walking and cycling and the increased awareness of the benefits that this type of activity can have on people's mental health and wellbeing, this strategy recognises physical activity at all ends of the spectrum using it as a tool when looking to improve residents health, fitness and quality of life, whilst also seeking to support key pieces of work carried out by the Council's partners.

The Suffolk Coastal landscape is a diverse mix of outstanding rural, coastline and urban settings and the population age of residents is predominantly higher (23.3% 65 years +) than the regional (17.5% 65 years +) and national (16.5% 65 years +) averages. According to Sport England's Active People Survey 7, residents of Suffolk Coastal are currently the most active in the county, carrying out at least 1 x 30minutes of exercise per week. This picture may directly attribute to the rise in popularity for less formal physical activity and highlights the need for a flexible approach to the future delivery of leisure and recreation management. As such, this strategy aims to target those people who are currently inactive with the aim of increasing the Active People Survey results by 1% year on year, by supporting those already taking part in forms of physical activity.

On delivery this Leisure Strategy will increase access and availability of leisure and recreation opportunities to the wider community, enhancing and communicating the current and future offer to meet the wants and needs of local communities over the next ten years. With the understanding that leisure and recreation is 'what you do not view' a broad range of suggested improvements to facility and activity management have been identified within this strategy's action plan. These include supporting the growth of the districts many award winning clubs to work in partnership to deliver common priorities, to improve the quality of life of Suffolk Coastal's communities.

The Strategy

Suffolk Coastal's Leisure Strategy is a comprehensive overview of the opportunities available to the district's leisure development and operational partners as well as a key document for internal teams such as leisure and planning. Parish and town councils and community groups may also find this strategy and its supporting assessments valuable when considering future development of physical activity opportunities within their local communities.

Many key partners including Sport England, Suffolk Sport, the Most Active County team, the Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum and Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board have helped shape this strategy providing best practice advice and guidance throughout its creation.

It is the Council's intention to work in partnership and promote the health and well-being of all local communities therefore priorities and action plans within the leisure strategy also compliment relevant partner objectives, helping achieve a matrix of collaborative partnership working.

The scope of the Leisure Strategy comprises of a consultation document reporting on community views and three underpinning assessments that incorporate a range of indoor built facilities, together with open spaces and outdoor playing pitches. To ensure this broad scope is cohesively captured the action plan has been separated into three sections; Sports, Facilities and Health and Wellbeing. Links between the sections are evident and each section represents key emerging themes from the supporting information used to formulate this strategy.

The Leisure Strategy's action plan is a live document that will develop over time as and when actions are identified and completed in line with the suggested recommendations. During this process any risks and their mitigating actions will be documented to assist with the Leisure Strategy's success. Success will also be monitored by highlighting action plan updates in the Council's quarterly performance reports, using the annual target to increase the results of Sport England's Active People Survey for Suffolk Coastal by 1% year on year as a measured performance indicator. A review of this strategy and its influence and achievements will take place in 2020.



Leisure Strategy Recommendations

The recommendations in this action plan will be delivered by the Council's leisure development and operational partners, alongside lead officers in internal departments. These recommendations are also a valuable tool for parish and town councils when developing neighbourhood plans, community groups for identifying priorities and other partner organisations practicing unified working methods.

Suffolk Coastal District Council will give its full support to others that take up any of the recommendations detailed within this action plan.

The actions highlight work currently being carried out or work identified in a forward plan. This action plan is looked upon as a working document and will be updated over the next ten years as work is prioritised and completed.

Priority / Section	Recommendation	Action
SPORTS	Support and implement the recommendations and actions of the Suffolk Coastal Leisure Needs Analysis and Pitch Non-Pitch and Built Facilities Assessments.	
	Encourage sports clubs and community groups to be more involved in the operation of facilities and sites.	Support Felixstowe's Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey clubs in the progression of the Felixstowe Sports Hub programme of works. Support the decision and future development of Woodbridge Town Football Club and St Audry's Sports and Social Club to join forces and move to Ufford. Identify locations across the district that would benefit from the application of the 'Sports Hub' principles unifying sporting clubs or disciplines allowing clubs to grow and release financial benefits in the process.
	Introduce further sporting and physical activity opportunities for disabled and older residents.	Support the recommendations and actions of the Most Active County's emerging Disability Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Utilise and support social initiatives and information projects such as the Rural Coffee Caravan and Silver Suffolk .
	Support club development and engagement across the district, signposting clubs to relevant funding opportunities when available.	Support sports clubs to develop sporting opportunities within schools. Engage NGB's, schools, local clubs and other key partners in the delivery of Coastal Sports Alliance, the community sports network for Suffolk coastal and use this as a forum to support club development across the district.
	Increase physical and sporting activity across the district by 1% year on year using Sport England's Active People Survey as a measure.	
	Support the network of volunteers that underpin many of the districts thriving sports clubs.	Communicate the training opportunities available to new volunteers enabling the clubs to grow without stretching the good will of the capable volunteers already offering their time. Provide networking opportunities for existing volunteers facilitating an environment for them to learn from each other's experiences.

Priority / Section	Recommendation	Action
HEALTH AND WELLBEING	Support the growth of active travel methods by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouraging and promoting use of the cycle footpath networks available across the district. 2. Using a partnership working approach with officers and partner organisations identify a network of safe footpath and cycle routes that link rural communities together and advertise these networks to communities through the appropriate channels 3. Ensure key facilities such as frequently used countryside sites and leisure centres have the facilities required for ease of active travel i.e. cycle racks 4. Where possible work with public transport providers to increase uptake and usage of public transport by developing its accessibility 	Support the recommendations and actions of Suffolk County Council's Cycling Strategy . Support the recommendations and actions of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Management Plan . Support the renewal of Suffolk County Council's Right of Way Improvement Plan.
	Increase and encourage residents of the wider community including young people, older people, people with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged, to increase their physical activity levels by utilising the countryside and coastline available to them.	Support the recommendations and actions of Suffolk County Council's Nature Strategy . Continue building relationships with schools to develop the educational countryside programmes currently available. Support the recommendations and actions of Suffolk's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and subsequent projects from Suffolk's Heath and Wellbeing Board such as, Being Well in the Wild and the emerging walking strategy. Support the recommendations and actions of Natural England's National Character Area Profile: 82 Suffolk Coast & Heaths . Support the recommendations and actions of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Management Plan .
	Ensure a coordinated approach to delivery is adopted by continuing to encourage foster good relationships with partner organisations working towards shared local priorities with those involved in sport, physical activity, health, education, voluntary organisations and public services.	Support Public Health projects such as, Being Well in The Wild and the development of Green Referrals to increase resident physical activity levels across the district.
	Continue to develop the summer holiday activity programme across the district to incorporate a wide range of activities for young people.	Work with partner organisations to support similar programmes or enable communities to deliver their own programmes, eliminating duplication and offering a more comprehensive approach to delivery.
	Support and implement the recommendations and actions of the Suffolk Coastal Leisure Needs Analysis and Pitch-Non Pitch, Open Spaces and Built Facilities Assessments	



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