

Sports Strategy 2025-2030.



Version 1

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Foreword

As the Cabinet Member for Sport and Leisure, I am delighted to introduce the new sports strategy for Milton Keynes.

This plan is centred around our residents, aiming to provide every individual, regardless of age, background, or ability, with the opportunity to lead an active, healthy, and fulfilling life.

Milton Keynes is a vibrant, growing, and diverse city. Our communities are passionate about sport and this strategy acknowledges the significant role these activities play in enhancing health, strengthening local areas, raising aspirations, and fostering enjoyment at all levels.



Whether it's a child gaining confidence by joining a club, an older adult (like myself) completing half marathons, or a group of residents enjoying the social benefits of a walking group. We want Milton Keynes to be a place where everyone is included, no one is excluded and participation is encouraged, so that everyone can thrive.

This strategy is the result of extensive listening to local clubs, user groups, parish councils, volunteers, leisure centre operators, and governing bodies. It sets out clear goals: supporting access, improving facilities, inspiring talent and building stronger partnerships, all while recognising the current challenges faced by local authorities.

I look forward to collaborating with communities and partners across the city to bring this strategy to life. Together, we can make Milton Keynes one of the most active, inclusive, and healthiest cities in the UK.

Cllr Mick Legg, Cabinet Member for Sport and Leisure



Milton Keynes
Rowing Club
Women's Coxed
Four, celebrating
their win at the
World Rowing
Masters'
Championships.

Introduction

Milton Keynes City Council is proud to present the Sports Strategy 2025-2030. This strategy addresses the current challenges faced by our city's sports clubs and provides a comprehensive plan to support grassroots organisations that offer opportunities for the people of Milton Keynes to stay active through sport.

This document outlines a framework for our sports clubs, considering both present challenges and the significant population changes projected for Milton Keynes in line with the City Plan 2050. This framework will also serve as a catalyst for engaging with and attracting investment from a range of external sources, including lottery funds, planning agreements, non-profit organisations, and private sector partners. The strategy's outcomes will inform local planning policies, such as the Local Plan and any supplementary Planning Guidance.

“Together we will inspire a healthy, happy community by fostering inclusive, accessible, and sustainable sporting opportunities across our city.”

We aim to ensure that our residents benefit from the physical and mental health advantages of an active lifestyle. We will do this by developing and promoting inclusive, accessible, and sustainable clubs that welcome people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, genders and socioeconomic backgrounds to encourage lifelong engagement with sport. We recognise the significant social and economic benefits that a thriving sports economy can bring to our city. Through consultations with local communities and partners, we have identified four interconnected themes that will direct our initiatives. This strategy will support the 'Milton Keynes on the Move' Physical Activity Strategy and contribute to the wider Milton Keynes Council Plan 2022-26 Delivery Plan. The strategy will undergo an annual review to ensure it addresses the evolving needs of our diverse community and take account of opportunities at both local and national levels.

Our strategy is built on the valuable feedback and insights gathered from a range of stakeholders, including sports clubs, Local Councils, leisure centres, facility operators and National Governing Bodies. The themes highlighted in this strategy will serve as a reference tool to address the challenges faced by sports club stakeholders. Together, we are committed to creating an environment where sports clubs can thrive, offering opportunities for everyone to participate in and enjoy sport.

We are excited about the future of sport in Milton Keynes and the positive impact this strategy will have on our community.

1. Current strategic position



MK BMX
Racing Club
hosting and
competing in
a regional
competition
at their home
venue,
Pineham
BMX Track.

Milton Keynes is an exciting city that serves a relatively young and diverse population of 287,060 people. It is the most ethnically diverse city in the Southeast of England.

The council's priorities are outlined in the Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050, which was published in 2021 and then refreshed in January 2025. The ambitious strategy sets out the long-term vision for the city, what the priorities are and how opportunities can be created for residents.

In common with councils across the local government sector, significant challenges remain. Milton Keynes City Council faces increasing cost pressures and rising demands. Like many councils, the most significant service pressure within the budget is the rising costs of, and greater demand for some highly complex and expensive services. More than two thirds of our budget is spent on care and support for vulnerable adults and children. Despite facing these challenges, the council is not complacent, it has a well-earned reputation for delivering balanced budgets and effective financial modelling ([MKCC LGA Peer Challenge](#)).

The council must prioritise realistic and achievable goals by focusing on essential services and exploring innovative solutions to maximise efficiency. By maintaining a clear focus on the most critical needs, Milton Keynes City Council can continue to make meaningful progress towards its long-term vision, even in the face of fiscal challenges to make a positive impact on grassroots sport within the city.

2. Our priorities

Thriving community clubs

The Council will encourage and support community clubs to be accessible, inclusive and enjoyable for all, providing guidance and support through partnership working to ensure we have thriving and sustainable communities for residents to be a part of, adding social value to our city.

Developing facilities

We are committed to developing facilities with partners and will influence the upgrade of existing provisions into modern and fit for purpose facilities where people from across the city are welcome. Ensuring we embed a holistic approach to new proposals to ensure suitability and viability for future sport growth and demand.

City-wide collaboration

The Council will establish more integrated partnerships to ensure sport and our clubs share information, best practise, and impact the wider health and wellbeing agenda as part of a whole system approach.

Inspiring success

We will seek to host sporting events to attract investment and deliver social and economic benefits to the city, alongside lasting legacies that benefits the community. We will champion achievements and successes and celebrate what our residents are achieving through sport.



Thriving community clubs

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What you told us

- There is a need for a sports forum to link city's sports stakeholders, to engage with each other, consult on challenges and for the council to share information, highlight issues and share best practice.
- It is becoming more challenging and time-consuming and costly to run community, grassroots clubs and more support, expertise and guidance is needed.
- Committee members are taking on more responsibilities over time, additional training opportunities are needed to obtain more volunteers.

The challenge

- Restoring relationships and rebuilding trust within the sports ecosystem where staffing resources have not been previously allocated.
- Not all clubs have access to resources to support their day-to-day admin or future development, subsequently feeling isolated.
- Clubs are getting bigger and do not have the infrastructure to support the organisational development and growth of the club.

What we will do

- Work with clubs and sites facilitating sport to build trust and deliver outcomes that benefit the sport community, by facilitating a sports forum and sharing best practise opportunities.
- Act as a consulting resource for sport in collaboration with local and national governing bodies to provide support, training, development opportunities to clubs, committee members and those who work with our clubs.
- Be more visible in the community through hosting forums, club/ site/ event visits and being contactable.

Top three points highlighted by clubs

- A sense of community is what members value most about being a part of a club.
- Facilities and volunteer/ coach recruitment are impacting clubs the most.
- Clubs want to be able to talk to each other and share information.

“I’d like to attend future events. It was a good way to meet and engage with different grassroots sports clubs – a very useful evening.”



Developing facilities

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What you told us

- There is a general perception of limited availability and a shortage of high-quality facilities throughout the city, resulting in increased competition for space.
- The cost of local facilities is unsustainable for clubs, increased costs are passed on to members and is an increasing participation barrier.
- Milton Keynes needs more hubs for sport and leisure within the city, including modern and fit for purpose centralised venues.

The challenge

- New city developments were planned for some time ago, therefore do not necessarily meet the current demands and challenges facing our clubs today.
- We have an aging portfolio of facilities in the city, which require varying degrees of support and financial investment.
- Nationally, the second highest sports facility stock lies within education sites, not all of which are open for community use, not all in Milton Keynes are open for community use.

“A collaborative and communicative approach would make a big difference - there is a mass of knowledge and experience based around the clubs and facility owners who want to input into facilities being better that benefit the wider community.”

What we will do

- Publish outcomes from Playing Pitch Strategy, Leisure Needs Assessment and other relevant Council strategies, alongside working to deliver the outcomes from document action plans.
- Seek to improve existing facilities, by raising awareness of opportunities and supporting funding applications.
- Work with developers to ensure city expansion reflects the need for sport and leisure in publicly accessible spaces that clubs can access through a fair and transparent processes.. We will continue to make this priority and can be identified in the new City Plan.

“Did you know MKCC have transferred and given long leases at over 20 sites, to Local Councils and sports clubs over the last 4 years and we continue to monitor and support those sites.”

City-wide collaboration

The Council will establish more integrated partnerships to ensure sport and our clubs share information, best practise, and impact the wider health and wellbeing agenda as part of a whole system approach.




What you told us

- The education sector is vital for promoting sport and physical activity. More links are needed with education providers into clubs to improve lifelong engagement for children and young people, beyond curricular activity.
- Better information is needed for clubs to create new partnerships and take advantages of opportunities.
- Clubs need to provide opportunities to try new sports and opportunities without having to commit to a club and regular training.

The challenge

- Making clubs and stakeholders aware of the collaboration opportunities within sport – raising the profile of sport across the city.
- Adopting a ‘whole system approach’ to supporting health and wellbeing with local organisations playing their part.
- Using connections and partnerships to improve engagement across the city.

“We would like more opportunities to meet and/or have a drop in with the Leisure & Communities team to focus on specific club matters.”



What we will do

- Support pathways between the school setting and community clubs allowing young people to participate and reach their potential, including working with schools to encourage them to open their facilities to the community.
- Work with key partners to push sport higher across the wider agenda internally and across the city.
- Support clubs to provide a variety of opportunities from casual ‘turn and up play’ style sessions, with the option to progress to weekly sessions engagement.



Inspiring success

We will seek to host sporting events to attract investment and deliver social and economic benefits to the city, alongside lasting legacies that benefits the community. We will champion achievements and successes and celebrate what our residents are achieving through sport.

What you told us

- Host more sports events in the city, making Milton Keynes a destination for sport to inspire future generations and boosting the local ecosystem, both economically and socially.
- Ensure that sport is embedded into events city wide to utilise footfall at events and raise the profile of sport in the area with a diverse range of people.
- Celebrate the successes of sport across the city – share what is going on from team and individual successes to events and those successful in applying for grants.

The challenge

- Establishing the city as a host destination with event organisers and having enough financial and staff resource to be able to action requirements to facilitate major events or competitions.
- Getting information out to residents through the correct channels, reaching those who may not already be engaged with sport.
- Seeking a meaningful method of sharing success stories that people will be aware of and want to contribute to.

What we will do

- Build relationships with event organisers, seeking to host more sports events, contributing to the local ecosystem and social value.
- Seek external funding opportunities to develop sporting facilities in the city, alongside working to overcome current restrictions.
- Utilise existing communication channels to share and gather information with our sports stakeholders.



Olney Town
Rugby
Football Club
in action at
the RFU
U18's Boys
National
Colts Final.

3. What we will achieve

By 2030 the strategy will have achieved the following core objectives:

A Thriving community clubs		
1	Provide a hub of information for clubs and residents around sport	
2	Create and maintain a central directory of affiliated sports clubs	
3	Establish a Sports Forum to inform stakeholders and share information and network	
4	Work with partners to provide club development opportunities	
B Developing facilities		
5	Complete Playing Pitch Strategy and actions, reviewing annually	
6	Ensure MKCC leased sites are well run and are maximising assets	
7	Work with Parish Councils to help build active communities	
8	Pro-actively seek opportunities for new and enhanced facilities	
9	Maximise the use of S106 and any other funding for leisure provision	
C City-wide collaboration		
10	Improve links between clubs and education providers	
11	Raise the profile of clubs and general awareness of sport for collaboration opportunities	
12	Ensure sport and the Leisure & Communities team are embedded throughout planning process	
13	Work with internal partners to deliver a holistic approach to sport and physical activity to impact wider health agendas	
D Inspiring success		
14	Seek external funding opportunities	
15	Work with partners to attract national and international sporting events in the city	
16	Improve communication with sports clubs to share information and success stories	

The above framework will underpin a delivery plan, which will incorporate clearly defined and measurable performance metrics.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to residents, community and sports representatives who attended and gave us honest feedback at our consultation events, this information created the document we have today.

We are grateful to all those colleagues and partners that shared insight and supported the development of the strategy through the document we have today.

We look forward to your continued support and engagement as we implement this strategy and strive towards achieving our shared goals.

If you require a copy of this document in an alternative format, please get in touch.

For more information or questions, please contact
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 **Milton Keynes**
City Council

