Fact Sheet 3

Our built leisure facilities
Our Leisure Centres

Our two Leisure Centres are managed by Legacy Leisure as a Not for Profit organisation through Parkwood Leisure under a 17.5 year contract, which commenced in September 2016. The contract included the re-development of Brackley Leisure Centre under a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain contract.

Brackley Leisure Centre (BLC)

Between 2016-2018, the council invested £4.5 million on a major refurbishment of BLC to improve swimming provision within the district, as Brackley Swimming Pool on Manor Road was nearing the end of its lifespan. Completion of the project in November 2018 saw the closure of the previous Brackley Swimming Pool site.

Facilities at BLC now include:

- 110 station, fully air conditioned gym, opened in May 2018
- Group fitness and spin studios
- 6 lane, 25 m pool, teaching pool, changing village and viewing areas, which opened in November 2018
- 4x court sports hall
- 2 full sized grass pitches, 1x 9v9 size pitch, 2x 7v7 size pitches and 1x 5v5 pitch; refurbished football changing village with eight separate changing rooms and two referee rooms
- Crèche
- Dryside changing rooms
- Treatment room
- Café and pool viewing area
- Retail facilities for swimwear and equipment
- Bookable meeting room with 10-12 person capacity
- Improved facilities for car parking and school coach drop offs

Visitor numbers

Despite disruption during redevelopment, centre use has continued to grow with 167,088 visitors using the centre during September 2017 – August 2018, an increase of almost 5,500 on the previous year.

Swimming lessons

The centre delivers the Aquazone Learn to Swim programme for children and adults and a school swimming programme. The pool is available for general swimming, private hire and club use. Swimming programme attendance increased from 118,565 visitors between September 2016 and August 2017 to 130,854 visitors between September 2017 and August 2018. It is anticipated this will increase with the opening of the new pool.

Group exercise

On average, around 2,500 members used BLC’s group exercise programme per month between September 2017 and August 2018. New gym facilities and new Queenax classes were added to the timetable throughout the week at lunch times and peak times.

Sports and Clubs

Between September 2017 and September 2018, an average of 1,500 visitors per month used the Brackley sites for organised sporting activities or club sessions. BLC currently works in partnership with:


Facility quality

We have recently invested in upgrading all the facilities at BLC including the new pools and initial customer feedback has been excellent. We have seen an increase in the numbers using the centre since the work was completed.
Towcester Centre for Leisure (TCfL)

Since September 2016, TCfL has seen a number of internal improvements through investment by the Leisure Operator, including re-decoration; new flooring and equipment to the fitness room; major refurbishment of the changing rooms serving the dryside areas and conversion of the meeting room space into a bespoke spinning studio. In addition the flooring within the sports hall has been sanded, resealed and re-lined.

Facilities at the centre now include:
- 70 station fully air conditioned gym
- Group fitness and new spin studio from 2017
- 5 lane, 25 m pool
- Fun pool with wave machine and flume
- 4-court sports hall
- 3G artificial grass football pitch
- Health suite with sauna, steam and spa
- Treatment room
- Crèche
- Retail facilities for swimwear and equipment
- Café and pool viewing area
- Car parking facilities

Swimming lessons
The centre delivers the Aquazone Learn to Swim programme for children and adults and a school swimming programme. It is available for general swimming, private hire and hosts swimming and sub-aqua clubs. Swim programme attendance increased from an average of 3,900 to 4,700 people per month between September 2017 and September 2018. The total attendance for the year was 54,700. The centre plans to introduce more classes at the base of the lesson pyramid, with Parent and Toddler and Duckling classes replacing underperforming later stage classes. TCfL will continue supporting Disability Inclusive Sports Club (DISC) with funded swim sessions for the club.

Group exercise
Towcester improved its group exercise timetable, giving members the option of two classes at peak times in the morning and evenings due to a new spin studio. This increased attendance with on average, around 3,500 members using the group exercise programme per month during September 2017 and September 2018.

Sports and Clubs
In conjunction with local partners, TCfL delivers a Girls Active programme and weekly Youth Activator sessions in partnership with Grand Union Housing Group and South Northants Sports Development. An average of 3,500 visitors per month use Towcester for organised sports and clubs. TCfL currently supports:

Visitor numbers
Centre use has continued to grow with 445,851 visitors using TCfL between September 2017 and September 2018. An increase of almost 57,000 visitors on the previous year. Membership growth for September 2017 and September 2018 was 156 less than the previous 12 months, although 2016 saw a higher growth following the re-opening of the refurbished gym.
Gym usage

Following improvements at both BLC and TCfL, around 8,500 members are using the gym per month.

- Personal Training - Both of the sites have also seen a large increase in Personal Training sessions with both in house trainers and external trainers who hire the gym facilities.

- Junior Sessions - At Towcester, the Junior gym sessions continue to be very popular with on average 110 children using the gym per month.

- Exercise on Referral - Legacy Leisure has developed their Steps to Health scheme and is seeing steady attendance across the facilities each month. Both sites have created strong links with the local GPs and there has been a significant increase in GP referrals to this scheme, TCfL saw an increase from 158 in 2017 to 216 in 2018; BLC saw an increase from 62 people in 2017 to 95 people in 2018.

Quality Awards and Quality Assurance

Both TCfL and BLC achieved ‘Quest’ accreditation; the national, industry standard quality scheme.

Both centres have submitted their National Benchmarking Surveys (NBS). Both reports were generally positive but highlighted areas for continued improvement.

Facility quality

Whilst there have been recent refurbishments in some of the gym areas and a number of parts of the centre have not been upgraded for at least a decade, and there has been ongoing negative feedback from customers about the quality of the facilities, which has deterred some people from using the centre. We intend to improve the following areas:

- Poolside area including the Jacuzzi
- Wet side changing rooms
- Sauna area
- Some bathroom facilities

Opening hours

Both sites meet the agreed operating hours as specified by South Northants Council and in some cases Legacy Leisure has exceeded the agreed hours, due to special events and local election requirements.
Environmental management

Both centres operate in an environmentally sensitive manner, ensuring minimum chemical usage and where possible reduced energy consumption. This has been achieved by:

- Upgrades to the heating systems and daily use of pool covers to conserve heat evaporation
- Installation of LED lighting; new compressors for Towcester wave machine and spa; new pumps and ductwork cleaning
- Brackley Leisure Centre benefited from the installation of solar panels prior to September 2016
- Towcester Leisure Centre benefits from a Combined Heat and Power Unit to reduce electricity consumption, which was installed in 2016

Environmental notice boards display environmental policies, DEC and EPC ratings and Green Travel Plan. Audits are completed regularly to ensure the sites follow documented procedures.

The contractor has formed a partnership with Pureworld Energy Consultants who have been involved in Energy Audits and Building Management System health checks to drive efficiencies in energy management. Legacy Leisure issue monthly league tables on energy usage comparing year to date and year on year performance. Examples of good practice are shared across the Company.

Health and Safety Management

There have been improvements in Health and Safety audits at both sites with the following scores being achieved by both internal and external auditors.

- At Towcester the Internal Audit achieved 89% in March 2018; a 5% increase compared to the audit in September 2017. Towcester also received an External audit with an 85%+ score
- At Brackley the Internal Audit score was 73% in March 2018, an improvement from the previous audit

Both centres are IQL accredited training centres and continue to run NPLQ courses to train Lifeguards and Duty Managers to work in either of the contract’s sites.

Staff complete a range of on-line training and NVQs.

Future Leisure Centre Provision

The Nortoft Study 'Planning the future of open space, sport and recreation in West Northamptonshire'\(^1\) completed assessments to inform future leisure centre provision. The key findings are:

- The two council-owned leisure centres are well used, particularly Towcester, and both are ‘busy’ with limited spare capacity to meet further demand
- A new leisure centre including a pool and dry side facilities including a sports hall is required on the west side of Northampton to serve the population of the NRDA, potential solutions are a leisure centre at Kings Heath SUE or Upton or the development of a new pool at Duston Sports Centre

---

\(^1\) Nortoft ‘Planning the future of open space, sport and recreation in West Northamptonshire’, Part 2 (Sports Facilities) September 2017