



## RACHEL FOWLER MANAGING DIRECTOR



Eardington Mill, Eardington  
Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 5LA



01925 438064  
07825139151



rachelfowler@strategicleisure.co.uk



[www.strategicleisure.co.uk](http://www.strategicleisure.co.uk)

### PROFILE

Following her first degree in English, Rachel studied sport and leisure management at post-graduate level at Loughborough University. She moved into consultancy in 1997 after a ten year career in leisure management with six different local authorities. She has over twenty eight years' experience in sports and leisure management in both the public and private sectors.

In addition to her management responsibilities, Rachel retains an active role in delivery of consultancy services to a range of clients across the UK, and internationally, and is now one of the UK's most experienced leisure consultants.

Rachel has completed over 800 consultancy projects; her experience covers the whole range of Strategic Leisure services and sectors but she has particular experience in strategic planning for indoor and outdoor facilities, green space and cultural provision, feasibility studies, facility development, funding, procurement, planning policy, evaluation, stadia and arena planning and operation, funding and major events. She has worked with many clients to address the challenges of strategic planning for facility provision, involving rationalisation, partnership and planning across boundaries.

Much of Rachel's current work involves identifying and assessing options for the future delivery of cultural and leisure services, including libraries, heritage, the arts, theatres, sports and leisure facilities, and sport and arts development.

She is also developing a significant number of strategic plans for facilities with local authorities. Her appreciation of the current public sector funding context, together with a detailed understanding of local authorities makes her ideally placed to advise on options for future delivery, their impact and implications, and what alternatives might be appropriate to ensure long term service sustainability.

Rachel is also currently working with a number of clients on major facility developments, involving a wide range of different partnerships, and other strategic planning projects.

Passionate about client care and delivery of quality outputs, Rachel has contributed significantly to the development of Strategic Leisure's consultancy approach and team ethos.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- MSc Recreation Management: Loughborough University of Technology (1987)
- MA General Honours: Edinburgh University (1985)
- Chartered Institute of Marketing

### KEY SKILLS

- Project Management
- Consultation
- Analysis

## FACILITY STRATEGIES

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ASSESSING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES (ANOG) COMPLIANT SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY	
Ashford Borough Council	North Warwickshire Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Northumberland County Council
Cheshire West and Chester	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
City of Cambridge and South Cambridge District Councils	Orkney Islands Council
Craven District Council	Portsmouth City Council
Exeter City Council	Sandwell Council
Fenland District Council	Sevenoaks District Council
Hambleton District Council	Shropshire Council
Hertsmere Borough Council	South Bucks and Chiltern District Councils
Horsham District Council	Southampton City Council
Ipswich Borough Council	Sport Strategy for Northern Ireland
London Borough of Hackney	Stratford upon Avon District Council
London Borough of Newham	Swale Council
London Borough of Merton	Thanet District Council
Melton District Council	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils	Welwyn Hatfield Council

These projects have involved the development of sports facilities strategies following the Sport England ANOG guidance. Strategy development has involved quantitative and qualitative site assessments, stakeholder consultation, assessment of need using a range of tools including the FPM, SFC, Market Segmentation, AP Surveys, GIS Mapping, accessibility analysis, application of analysis findings and development of Action Plans. Applying the analysis of the supply and demand in each area has resulted in the identification of overall facility need, by type, location and scale, and options for investment and funding.

## OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES

DEVELOPMENT OF PPS USING THE NEW SPORT ENGLAND METHODOLOGY	
Ashford Borough Council	Melton District Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils
City of Cambridge and South Cambridge District Councils	North East Lincolnshire Council
Craven District Council	North Warwickshire Council
Daventry District Council	Northumberland County Council
Fenland District Council	Orkney Islands Council
Hambleton District Council	Portsmouth City Council
Hastings Council	Reading Borough Council
Hertsmere Borough Council	Rother District Council
Horsham District Council	South Bucks and Chiltern District Councils
Ipswich Borough Council	South Northamptonshire Borough Council
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Southampton City Council
London Borough of Barnet	Stratford upon Avon District Council
London Borough of Brent	Swale Council
London Borough of Croydon	Test Valley Borough Council
London Borough of Enfield	Thanet District Council
London Borough of Hackney	Tunbridge Wells District Council
London Borough of Newham	Vale of Glamorgan Council
London Borough of Redbridge	West Suffolk Council
London Borough of Southwark	Wokingham Borough Council

*The development of the strategies has involved site assessment, qualitative assessments, stakeholder consultation, analysis of the finding and application of the PPS model, and development of Action Plans.*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING: PLANNING

- ***Pembrokeshire Leisure Strategy*** - Development of a second 10 year Leisure Strategy for Leisure Services, setting out analysis of operational management options, financial savings and establishing a strategic direction for invest to generate across the authority's facilities and leisure services.
- ***University of York*** - Development of a 5-year Leisure Strategy for Sport at the University, focusing on its role, benefits and contribution to corporate priorities, through the provision of facilities, mental and physical health services and co-ordinated working between the Students Union, facility operators and a range of University on-campus services.
- ***Arnagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council*** - Development of a 5-year Aquatics Strategy across three former legacy councils, to establish a consistent aquatics offer including programming, pricing, Learn to Swim etc and a development pathway working with the local aquatics clubs, to increase participation in a range of activities and optimise use of two new facilities.
- ***Royal Holloway College*** - Development of a five year strategy for facility investment and development across the University campus, including new halls of residence. The strategy includes a needs assessment based on extensive stakeholder consultation, site options, capital costs, revenue implications, partnership and funding opportunities.
- ***Wirral Borough Council*** - Development of a 5 year Forward Plan for leisure and cultural provision in the Borough, based on a comprehensive and strategic review of existing services and facilities for sport, arts, heritage, community centres, and libraries.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING: SERVICES

- ***Active Luton*** - Development of a Community Activation Fund bid on behalf of Active Luton, Luton Council and Bedfordshire University. The bid was successful.
- ***Cambridge City Council*** - Development of a Cultural Framework for the City to inform future cultural provision and promote the value of culture and leisure provision to internal and external partners.
- ***Department of Health*** - Research to assess and evaluate the extent of existing physical activity provision in the East region, identify gaps and needs, and make recommendations on priorities for investment to inform the regional physical activity strategy update.
- ***North East Derbyshire Council*** - Development of local Insight to inform the re-development of a community leisure centre. The Insight focused on identifying local needs based on localised consultation, stakeholder and community engagement.
- ***Plymouth City Council*** - Development of the Aquatics Strategy for the new Life Centre; developing the strategy involved consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, close liaison with the ASA as a funding and delivery.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGIES

- **Ashfield District Council** - A review and re-development of the 5-year Vision and Strategy for Active Ashfield. We worked with them to develop an agreed 5-year Vision, which reflected shared priorities. We also developed shared aims and objectives and critically, an Action Plan, which clearly sets out the input and commitment of all partners and stakeholders. The outcome is a refreshed 5-year Strategy for Active Ashfield, with a clear Vision, aims and objectives for collaborative and collective working. The Strategy has been recognised for its examples of good practice by CIMSPA.
- **Denbighshire Borough Council** - Development of a Leisure and Active Lifestyles Strategy for the Borough. We undertook an extensive programme of consultation. The consultation identified both opportunities and challenges for future provision, which we reflected in a number of draft policy objectives and priorities. Once agreed, these priorities were developed into a strategic framework, setting out what the Council and its partners had achieved so far, how and why, and what its future approach and objectives would be to address the agreed health and active participation needs of the local community.
- **Derby City Council** - Development of a Physical Activity Strategy for the City. A Project Group was established to steer the development of the Strategy, and provide a 'sounding board' for its findings. The consultation process identified a series of 'messages' about physical activity, and potential approaches to increasing levels of activity within the City. We developed these into key priorities and objectives to provide a strategic framework for increasing physical activity in the City. The Strategy itself was aligned to the Council's corporate priorities for the City, the health and well-being of its community. The outcome of the project was the 'Get Derby Active' Strategy.
- **London Borough of Southwark** - A Physical Activity Strategy to set out a future direction for partnership to secure external funding. SLL developed a framework of priorities for increasing physical activity amongst the Borough's communities. Critically, the framework provided a co-ordinated way forward, but one that required commitment from all partners to be successful. We built in a regular review process to ensure activity and outcomes could be monitored.
- **Wakefield Metropolitan District Council** - Development of a Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy for Wakefield MDC, alongside a Facility Strategy. These two separate, but linked projects, were commissioned at the time that the Council was seeking to rationalise its existing formal sports facilities. We then undertook an extensive programme of consultation which helped to identify 'gaps' in provision for certain target/vulnerable groups. Based on the gap analysis, we were also able to identify specific types of intervention. We developed a Strategy, based on a number of key principles and priorities to increase participation in physical activity in the District.

## FEASIBILITY AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Ards and North Down Borough Council** - Development of a feasibility study exploring the optimum facility mix for a family entertainment centre incorporated into a new leisure facility. The study evaluated activity options for inclusion, their ability to attract priority markets e.g. families, and their capital and revenue impact. An activity mix was recommended that met budget requirements and demonstrated operational sustainability, long-term.
- **Exeter City Council** - Feasibility study into the development of a major new wet and dry, city centre leisure facility, to establish the need, minimum facility mix, likely capital costs and revenue implications.

- **Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre** - Production of a range of options to re-develop the existing facility and attract a wider range of users, plus provide more efficiently for hockey, given the change in the competitive structure of the game, and forthcoming major events. The development options were identified based on stakeholder consultation, analysis of supply and demand, evaluation of capital costs and revenue impact plus site suitability.
- **Lisburn City Council** - Feasibility study into the re-development of an existing regional leisure centre (wet and dry), and the potential for the development of additional health and fitness, and outdoor pitch provision and indoor play provision.
- **Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council** - Four feasibility studies to explore the potential for the extension of swimming provision at the main leisure centre, plus the development/refurbishment of two other sites and the development of one new wet and dry facility, possibly on an education campus. The studies involved re-confirming the needs assessment to inform the facility mix, site surveys, development of RIBA Stage 3 designs and plans, development of capital costs and detailed revenue modelling to demonstrate long term operational viability and sustainability.
- **Poole Borough Council** - Development of three separate feasibility studies for the Council looking at the various options for the re-development of their town centre leisure facility. The swimming provision was explored in detail to assess the future need for a diving pool, and the opportunity to include extended fitness provision and a café was considered. Detailed revenue modelling for all options was developed, which included looking at risk, capital cost impact and contingency. Recommendations were made for the facility mix to be re-developed as part of an overall town centre MasterPlan.
- **Reading Borough Council** - Feasibility Study for the development of a new 50m pool. The study identified the case for a 50m pool, on the basis of both community and club need, and assessed the options for its provision, concluding that a refurbishment of an existing facility would be the optimum way to proceed, given that the location of the existing ageing facility is in the town centre, on public transport routes.
- **Surrey Heath Council** - Feasibility study into the redevelopment options for the district's major wet and dry leisure centre, together with an assessment of the capital costs involved, timescales and the impact on revenue generation, service continuity etc.

## FUNDING APPRAISALS AND DEVELOPMENT OF FUNDING APPLICATIONS

- **Funding** - Development and submission of a wide range of funding applications including ERDF, NR, New Deal, Lottery, Active England, CIF, NOF3, BSF, Sportmatch, Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF) etc. Responsibility for several successful facility developments through this work. Successful funding bids resulting in development of school/community sports facilities to increase participation, address social inclusion and community safety.
- **Wyre Forest District Council** - Successful application to the Sport England Strategic Investment Fund.

## STADIA DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISALS

- **Castleford Tigers** - A feasibility study for a new 10-15,000 seat stadium for the Super League team. The study included site analysis, design, funding, business planning and operation.
- **Hong Kong Jockey Club** - Feasibility Study for the development of the new National Football Training Centre. The study included site analysis, design, funding, business planning and operation.
- **London 2012** - White Water Centre - Feasibility Study, Business Plan and Legacy Strategy for one of the new build venues to host the Olympic Games.
- **National Stadium, Kiev** - A design review, commercial strategy, operational strategy, business plan and assessment against FIFA, UEFA, IAAF requirements for the Euro 300m reconstruction of the stadium due to host the final of the European Football Championships 2012.
- **SAFRA Tampines Sports Hub Singapore** - Feasibility Study and Development Strategy incorporating designs for the transformation of the existing facilities into a major academy including football facilities.
- **Southampton Football Club** - Business plan, operational strategy and National Lottery application for a new community sports stadium.
- **Wakefield Wildcats** - Feasibility Study, Designs, Capital Costs and Management Plan in partnership with Drivers Jonas for a new Rugby League stadium.

## PROCUREMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **Bath and North East Somerset Council** - Options appraisal of the existing contract and arrangements, to inform the future outsourcing of leisure facility management, and service delivery.
- **Borough of Poole** - Assisting the Council with identifying the optimum way forward in terms of extending their existing operating contract, and negotiating with the incumbent contractor.
- **Cambridge City Council** - Project management of the procurement process to appoint an operator for the new leisure centre and the existing athletics track. This involved provision of support and advice throughout the advertising and PQQ process, development of ITT documentation and the evaluation model, plus the evaluation of submissions.
- **Elmbridge Borough Council** - Appraisal of the options for future operational management of the Council's leisure facilities, public halls and development services (arts, sport, play, health). The incumbent operator's long term contract is coming to an end; the Council required advice on the best way forward, what should be included in any new contract and the options for the procurement process.
- **London Borough of Hackney** - Review of existing proposals and revenue funding to inform decisions on future operational management and development of a number of facilities.
- **Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council** - Management of the leisure centre and sports development procurement processes, including production of all documentation, evaluation of submissions, and recommendations for award of contract.



- **Rugby Borough Council** - Project management of the procurement process to appoint an operator for the new leisure centre and the existing athletics track. This involved provision of support and advice throughout the advertising and PQQ process, development of ITT documentation and the evaluation model, plus the evaluation of submissions.
- **Shropshire Council** - Options Appraisal - A whole service review and options appraisal to identify a range of potential and future delivery mechanisms; a detailed assessment (financial, legal, HR, service sustainability, revenue and capital funding) of identified options and recommendations for the way forward. Project management of the procurement process for the externalisation of four of the Council's leisure centres. The process has involved a detailed options appraisal to scope the way forward and nature of the contract. We developed the advert, and PQQ, and managed this process. Following PQQ submissions in early October 2011, we evaluated the responses and produced a short list of tenderers. We evaluated the ITT in early 2012, and then assisted the Council in appointing the preferred contractor, and mobilising the contract. The Contract was awarded in April 2012.
- **Vale of Glamorgan Council** - Management of the leisure centre procurement process, including production of all documentation, evaluation of submissions, and recommendations for award of contract.
- **Wigan Council** - Review of the existing arrangement and agreement with the incumbent Trust, to assess the options in terms of the contract moving forward, identify opportunities for partnership development, increased efficiencies, and a re-aligning of the Council's strategic priorities and the leisure and cultural services procured by them through the Trust.
- **Wyre Forest District Council** - Preparation of all procurement documentation i.e. PQQ, ITT, and Soft Market Testing, for the DBOM development of a major new wet and dry leisure centre for the district.

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Aberdeen City Council** - Review of the Access to Leisure Scheme and development of recommendations to improve its approach and eligibility criteria. Review of the Bookings and Lettings Scheme, identification of the challenges to be addressed with the current system and processes, and development of recommendations to improve its approach and eligibility criteria.
- **Carlisle Leisure Trust** - Facilitation of a business and strategic planning workshop for senior managers, to inform and develop the next 5 year business plan.
- **East Lindsay District Council** - Review of the current operation of leisure services to identify areas for operational improvement, capital investment, potential reductions in revenue costs, and the appropriate form of management for the future.
- **Hyndburn Leisure Trust** - Facilitation of a business and strategic planning workshop for senior managers, to inform and develop the next 5 year business plan.
- **London Borough of Bexley** - Interim project management of the development of the Europa Gymnastics Centre (London 2012 training venue), development of sport development plans, and ongoing developmental and mentoring support to the gymnastics club in their first three years of operational management.



- **Mid Ulster District Council** - Review of options for the future operational management of the new Council's leisure facilities. Of the three legacy councils, one had a commercial operator in place, whilst the other two are in -house operations. The review looked at the equity, legal, participation and financial issues for the future service, and the impact of bringing the one contract back in-house or externalising the overall management of facilities. The Council bought the one contract back in house and undertook a review of leisure services to improve operational delivery, efficiency and identify opportunities for revenue reductions.
- **Reading University** - Value for money review and assessment of the current sports and leisure operation, plus a review of proposals for facility development.
- **Southampton City Council** - Review of a business plan prepared by a community group to support the asset transfer of a community swimming pool. Provision of support and advice to a community organisation developing proposals for the asset transfer of a swimming pool in the City.
- **University of Surrey** - Review of existing staffing structure, roles and responsibilities; development of new organisational structure, job descriptions and implementation costs for the new 50m pool and facilities being developed as the Surrey Sports Park.