



Active Harbourough

Physical Activity Strategy 2018 -2023

Active Harborough

Foreword (by Cllr Janette Ackerley)

Welcome to Harborough District Council's Physical Activity Strategy 2018-2023. We live in an age where there is a mass of evidence to show the benefits to both physical and mental wellbeing of exercise. However, we are also in an age where people communicate by social media rather than going out and visiting and machines are replacing many of the physical jobs.

The aim of this strategy is to get the message out to all residents that physical activity is good for us and can be fun. Many of us have busy lives and we can always find an excuse not to exercise but for our wellbeing we need to spend more time moving and less time sitting.

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with Leicestershire and Rutland Sport, Harborough District Council the surrounding Parishes and the community. The recent survey completed by very many of our residents has enabled us to identify the groups that need particular help and support. The problem goes across all ages so we need to find different ways of bringing more people on board to take an active part in improving their fitness and health.

There are many of our residents who regularly play sports and belong to teams across the district. These will often have several junior teams and often if youngsters start early they will continue for many years. There are many people who regularly use the leisure facilities in the District and others that take advantage of our wonderful countryside for walks.

There are financial constraints in all public services and we are so grateful to the many volunteers that work across the district. There are too many to mention them all but cover a range from coaching at sports clubs to leading walking groups.

The strategy is about encouraging those who are active to continue but the main challenge is to reach out to those who need that little bit of encouragement to get started.

The Strategy has been developed because the Council and its partners are committed to improving the health, wellbeing and aspirations of our residents within an environment of change and financial constraint. It is now more important than ever that we make the most of the resources we have together to provide services in new ways. The strategy provides an essential background for officers, members and stakeholders to work together to reach out to all of our residents.



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1. Introduction

We want to make Harborough a great place to live and work in; a place where people feel that they have real opportunities to change their lives for the better, to pursue new experiences and enjoy plentiful access to leisure and cultural activities.

Being involved in physical activity and sport can deliver wide-ranging benefits for health, education and social wellbeing. Regular participation provides a truly system-wide response to ill health and helps reduce the need for reactive and acute health services in the district. It also yields further universal benefits by encouraging social cohesion, happiness and economic development within communities.

Our strategy for an active Harborough aims to capture these universal benefits for all and this will require us to target areas and social groups with the highest levels of inequality. Research by Sport England shows that certain demographic groups have participation levels far below the national average, namely women and girls, people living with a disability, people in lower socio-economic groups and the older population, and we must begin to do more to increase participation among these specific groups.

We recognise that we do not have the financial resources to unilaterally deliver the full range of needs and ambitions of all local groups and residents. However, the public response to our consultation (outlined in section 3) has shown that respondents believe that the Council's role in promoting activity is central. We are a key player in the delivery of sports and physical activity services, and residents and local sports providers place a high value on our services.

In light of the above we have identified a number of key priorities that we must deliver on and have therefore positioned ourselves as an enabling council. This strategy details how we will guide the design and development of future opportunities in the district in partnership with residents, volunteers, local organisations and clubs, as well as with prospective service providers.

This strategy is a framework for bringing a number of related local agendas together under one coherent plan for the district. It is a roadmap for the future and ensures that opportunities for physical activity keep pace with change and reflect the needs of a growing and ageing population.

Our plan for the future focuses upon six key themes:

- Increasing participation
- Targeting specific groups
- Building effective partnerships
- Developing active environments
- Improving our leisure centres
- Exploring new ways to better utilise our existing sport and leisure infrastructure.

Our themes have been arrived at via an internal assessment of the specific opportunities and challenges that exist within the district (see section 2), whilst also being informed by the comments that we have received from residents during our public consultation (see section 3). They have also been influenced by the current national and regional policy environment; key documentation is reviewed in section 7.

The challenge is to use our limited resources effectively to continue to ensure that opportunities for participation are accessible so that individuals and organisations are able to pursue new experiences and fulfil their potential. Collaborative working with key stakeholders in the district is required to maximise the number of opportunities in the district.

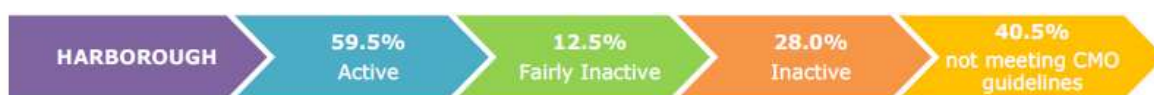
2. Opportunities and challenges in the district

As a district we face a number of challenges. Some of these are universal challenges observable on a national level that all local authorities must tackle, such as the rising incidence of inactivity, an ageing population and reduced central government funding, whilst others are more local, such as the limitations in our transport infrastructure and the rural isolation experienced by some of our communities.

It is also important to note that whilst there are indeed challenges, there is also much to be positive about in our district. This strategy celebrates the good work that is already being done by the large number of organisations, clubs, instructors, volunteers and individuals that operate across the district, whilst also setting out ways that we can increase our support for them.

2.1 Inactivity

Our district has above average rates of adult participation in physical activity and this is reflected in the average life expectancies for men and women, which are slightly higher than national averages. Yet despite our relative success this is no time to rest on our laurels, especially when we consider the following information concerning inactivity in our district:



(Active Lives Adult Survey 2016-2017)

- Over half of adults are overweight and 15% of children are obese.
- 20% of adults are considered to be physically inactive (according to Public Health England's definition of undertaking less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week).
- The burden of inactivity on the NHS by Harborough residents is estimated to be £1.7m.
- 37 deaths could be prevented per year if 75% of Harborough residents aged over 40 undertook the recommended levels of physical activity (Public Health England recommends 150 mins of moderate physical activity per week)¹.

Research by Sport England suggests that half of inactive individuals in our district want to become active and to begin to take part in sport. This equates to approximately 8,000 people. Engaging with these aspirational, yet currently inactive residents, must be our most central priority.

2.2 A growing and ageing population

Harborough currently has a total population of 85,382² and like many of our neighbouring districts, is set to grow significantly over the next 20 years. Recent projections suggest that our population will exceed 100,000 by 2036³.

Crucially, Harborough is also ageing and differs from national averages in the following key areas:

- A much higher number of residents are aged 45 and over (particularly aged 45 to 64)
- A substantially lower number of residents are aged 20 to 34 years old⁴

¹ Sport England. 2016: Harborough Local Sports Profile: Health.

² Office for National Statistics. 2011: Census Data.

³ Office for National Statistics. 2014: 2012-based Subnational Population Projections.

Taking this local demographic feature with the population growth forecasted for the district presents specific challenges. Statistics show that more elderly residents, particularly those aged over 65, are most likely to be inactive and are also most likely to require additional support if they are to live an active life. Due consideration will be given to how to focus our limited resources on catering for these inactive, elderly residents.

At the same time, our strategy must not overlook young people. There are also low levels of physical activity, high levels of impaired physical development and sedentary behaviour among young people in our district. Promoting physical activity is essential to establish adequate physical literacy and development among younger ages at a crucial phase in their development.

2.3 Rural isolation and limited public transport infrastructure

Rural isolation is a persistent issue in the district. 25 percent of our residents live in small rural settlements and over 80 villages have a population of less than 500 people, also:

- Residents aged over 45 are more likely to live in rurally isolated locations
- Residents aged 20 to 34 are more likely to live in larger settlements such as Market Harborough or Lutterworth⁵

The limited public transport network that serves our rural settlements means that those living in rural locations wishing to travel have few, if any, alternatives than the use of a private car and this is especially true for evening travel. These rurally isolated communities are more likely to have above average numbers of elderly residents, who as established earlier, are more likely to be inactive.

2.4 A challenging fiscal environment

Overcoming these challenges requires public investment. We have already made repeated savings in recent years in response to central government funding reductions and a financially challenging operating environment will continue in the foreseeable future.

By 2018/2019, the external funding that we receive from Public Health will have been significantly reduced. This will generate a fundamental change in the way our services are commissioned and delivered. Our strategy must be able to do more with less.

2.5 Sports clubs, local instructors and the private sector

There is a huge array of activities available to residents that the Council helps support through our Sports and Activity Team, Active Together. This ranges from Archery right through to Zumba and are provided by the many independent clubs and private instructors that operate throughout the district.

The number of private facilities in the area is also increasing, especially with private gyms such as Snap Fitness and The Training Shed.

We have also been involved in setting up and supporting a number of free popular participation events. Notable would be the successful weekly parkrun held at Welland Park (see case study 1).

We continue to look for effective ways to support and promote the use of our parks and open spaces for organised informal sport and active recreation and this is reflected in the

⁴ Office for National Statistics. 2011: Census Data.

⁵ Harborough District Council. 2016: Open Spaces Strategy 2016 – 2021.

introduction of a 'junior parkrun' and the implementation of Exercise Referral and Cardiac Rehabilitation groups this year.

2.6 Leisure Centres

Currently, our district has no large private leisure facility that is available for all residents to use; the vast majority of our local clubs rely on public facilities leased from the Council such as Market Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre.

This means there is an opportunity for the Council to lead the provision of affordable physical activity opportunities through our involvement in the procurement of a new leisure centre contract for Market Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre, which will begin 2019. We have earmarked up to £20m for this project.

Nationally, local authority owned leisure centres remain popular and continue to attract new membership due to their focus on affordability and public health. This is especially the case in our district due to the absence of a large commercial provider.

We feel strongly that there is a role for local authority leisure provision that offers a large array of facilities and gym equipment at affordable prices. We have consulted widely with the public to understand the specific needs of the district (see section 3).

2.7 Community spaces and schools

Community halls and other spaces can assist rural communities in their pursuit of an active lifestyle without the need for travel. They can also be configured to host a variety of activities.

We have numerous community halls in our district and many are underutilized⁶. We must develop ways to increase the usage of these significant assets in partnership with residents, local committees and parish councils. Unused community halls, especially those in rural settlements, represent a forgone opportunity for rurally isolated residents to be physically active.

Similarly, there are a number of sports halls, artificial grass pitches and fitness stations located in our schools. Increasing usage of school sites alleviates overcapacity elsewhere (such as at leisure centres) and we must consider how we can overcome the current availability issues with certain school facilities⁷.

2.8 Active Together

Public Health England is increasingly focusing its efforts on the use of physical activity as part of rehabilitation from numerous long-term conditions (such as cardiac, respiratory, cancer, pain management and falls), in the hope to manage and reduce health welfare costs, maintain independence among the older population and reduce the burden on the NHS.

One of the most important functions of the Council is to facilitate and support effective partnerships with and between providers and this is the role of our Active Together Team. Predominately funded by Public Health England and employed by the Council, Active Together coordinate and deliver opportunities across the district. Regardless of age, location

⁶ Harborough District Council. 2016: Harborough District Community Infrastructure Assessment.

⁷ Leicestershire and Rutland Sport. 2016: Harborough District Indoor and Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment 2016 – 2020.

or ability, they help individuals and groups to fulfil their maximum potential in sport and physical activities.

Active Together focus on the vulnerable, the inactive and the elderly – meaning their activities are very closely aligned with our strategic aims as well as national policy objectives (see section 8). Yet due to budget reductions to Public Health Leicestershire, the amount of funding available for us to distribute to Active Together has been reduced by 40%.

Active Together activities may not always be commercially viable and therefore cannot always be delivered by other organisations. For example, the services provided to those that live in rural and isolated areas are vital for the individuals that attend, yet the total numbers of attendees are relatively small and not large enough for a private provider to break even. The cuts to funding for Active Together present a number of issues concerning the sustainability of their operations.

Active Together help reduce health vulnerabilities in the district and provide support to instil a sense of self-determination and confidence in individuals. Their campaigns have a large impact on changing behaviour at relatively low cost and should form a key part of our strategy. The continuation and development of these activities, and the nature of their future delivery, will be a central concern going forward.

2.9 Housing growth

It is estimated that from 2011 to 2036 there will be 4660 new houses in the district.

Future development in the district will favour larger sites concentrated in one location rather than the small and dispersed sites as previously experienced. This presents us with an excellent opportunity to embed physical activity within the design of these new developments.

Our ambition is to ensure that we help to unify health, design and planning by promoting the right conditions and environments for individuals and communities to lead active and healthy lifestyles. To achieve this, due consideration must be given to outdoor and public spaces, urban planning and design, transport and facilities whenever new housing developments are proposed.

3. Consultation findings

We carried out a public consultation to establish what was important to residents. It opened on June 2017 for 8 weeks and closed in August.

The consultation primarily consisted of an online survey, supported by a range of specific engagement activities with different residents and groups across the district (a full list of these activities is provided in appendix A Page 1).

The online survey was split into four main sections:

- About the respondents (if, how, where, why and when they may participate in sport or physical activity)
- Market Harborough Leisure Centre
- Lutterworth Sports Centre
- Equalities Monitoring

Some key findings are presented below (note that a full report on the consultation is provided in appendix A):

- A total of 2,321 people completed the survey and we received responses from people who lived across the entirety of the district
- The ratio of males to females among respondents was 40:60 respectively; therefore the views of females were over-represented in the consultation
- Those aged 30 and above were very well represented, particularly residents aged over 65. The views of those aged between 14 and 30 were under-represented
- Most people considered themselves to be active: almost half of those surveyed completed over 2 and half hours of activity per week with only 15% stating that they do less than 30 minutes
- A lack of local facilities and time constraints were key factors to why people were not as active as they would like to be
- Just over a quarter of respondents thought that the introduction of more facilities would help them to become more active

The majority of respondents lived in the district although there were some responses from the surrounding areas.

Activities at home, walking, jogging, outdoor/indoor sport (using public facilities) and visits to public gyms ranked among the most popular activities that respondent already participated in.

Swimming, exercise classes (in public and private facilities), outdoor group classes and outdoor gym use were activities that respondents would like to begin to do more often.

A third of respondents felt a lack of local facilities prevented them from being as active as they would like to be and many wanted to see more activities being offered in their local community or village hall. This was especially true for those living outside of Market Harborough and Lutterworth.

Availability of facilities and opportunities within rural communities became a recurrent theme throughout the consultation, mentioned most often by respondents living in rural communities.

When asked what local services could do to help respondents to become more active, over a quarter felt more local facilities would help. Some suggestions included increased provision in villages as well as schemes to increase transport to leisure centres and swimming pools for those in rural areas.

The consultation also devoted much time to the issue of leisure centres: we asked respondents for their current opinion of both Market Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre, which specific facilities they used, when they visited and what new facilities they would like to see offered at both sites in the future.

We received a wide range of responses that have been captured and will be used to inform the future procurement of both centres (see appendix A Pages 7-14).

4. Key Themes

The six key themes of our strategy for an active Harborough have been arrived at via an assessment of the specific opportunities and challenges that exist within the district (see section 2), whilst also being informed by the comments that we have received from residents during our public consultation detailed in section 3.

They have also been influenced by the current national and regional policy environment. A review of the relevant strategic documentation on a national and local level is presented in section 8.

1. Increasing participation

Harborough District has equivalent participation rates to other similar boroughs and districts in Leicestershire – if not slightly higher in some cases. Yet we should be striving to do better: over half of our adult population are overweight and approximately 16,000 residents are not managing to do more than 30 minutes of exercise per week.

According to Sport England, 8,000 residents have said they would like to become more active. There is clearly scope for increasing participation levels across the district.

A general increase in sports and physical activity participation across the board will contribute toward the delivery of many broader strategic outcomes in the district and therefore forms a central pillar of our strategy.

If we could persuade these aspirational, yet currently inactive people to participate in physical activity and sport, we could prevent one in ten cases of stroke and heart disease and reduce the risk of residents developing type 2 diabetes by 30 to 40%. Increasing participation is also very important for mental health; inactive people have three times the rate of moderate to severe depression compared to active people.

As well as improvements in general health and wellbeing, increasing participation in sport and physical activity enhances economic development, community cohesion and individual educational attainment and can reduce incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Being active offers numerous opportunities for personal development and social engagement whilst also providing additional employment. An active Harborough will be a healthy and achieving one.

2. Targeting specific groups

Those who would benefit most from participating in sport and physical activity often those who are least likely to participate for cultural, personal, practical, geographical and economic reasons.

Helping groups to overcome these barriers is a key prerequisite for increasing participation in sport and physical activity.

Communities that we need to offer focused support to are in line with Sport England guidance:

- Women and girls
- Children and young people
- Older people

- Disadvantaged families
- People living with a disability.

3. Building effective partnerships

The links between health and physical activity are well established, both health and sports professionals are increasingly working together to achieve the same aim of encouraging people to be more active.

Since 2013, we now have a greater obligation to demonstrate that we are leading the drive for health improvements in the district. To ensure that resources are effectively deployed and appropriately focused toward this aim, we must continue to develop and nurture close working partnerships with a number of important stakeholders.

Some of these key stakeholders include schools, clubs, volunteers, and other private operators, who together make an important contribution to the sport and physical activity opportunities available in the district. Our Active Together Team play a vital role in facilitating and supporting partnerships with and between providers; the success of our strategy hinges on our ability to further develop the vibrancy and variety in the relationships and networks they currently manage.

Effective partnerships are undoubtedly the success of our strategy. A great deal of progress has been made over recent years to encourage and support sport instructors and other providers of opportunities for physical activity across the district – we pledge to continue to work together to deliver our common objectives.

4. Developing active environments

Our surroundings should make physical activity the easiest and most practical option in everyday life for people and communities. Planning is a major function of the Council and this strategy signals our intent to encourage physical activity and sport through the design and layout of our built environment.

The creation of healthy places that promote and enable participation in physical activity and sport requires the collaborative input of many partners and disciplines such as planning, design, transport health. Developers must also work with local communities. Sport England prescribes the following for building active environments:

- Walkable communities with key facilities within easy reach of each other
- Active travel (walking, cycling, and running) to be prioritised over other modes of transport
- Destinations to be connected by integrated pathways that are safe and well-maintained
- Creation of multifunctional open space to support a range of activities
- Local champions to be used to inspire participation in physical activity and sport across the district

We will have to ensure that future housing development in the district, and its subsequent management after completion, takes account of these guidelines.

5. Improving our leisure centres

On a national level local authority owned leisure centres remain popular. They continue to attract new membership due to their perceived focus on affordability and public health and this is especially the case in our district due to the absence of a large commercial provider.

Public responses to our consultation have clearly identified some of the areas for improvement in our current facility provision whilst also signalling high levels of support for local authority-led leisure facilities. Developing a vision of our future offering at Market Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre is a key objective of the Council.

6. Better utilising our other sport and leisure infrastructure

Our leisure centres are certainly important, but they are not the only destinations for sport and physical activity in the district. Responses to our survey have indicated that residents want to see more opportunities being offered at the many other locations we have in the district.

In particular, schools and village (or community) halls make for excellent destinations for activities. If we can make our existing facilities more accessible to new users, and available for a wider range of uses, we can ensure that they become a greater resource toward the improvement of public health in the district.

5. Vision and priorities

5.1 Our vision

“By 2021 more people in Harborough will be active and there will be improved health and wellbeing throughout the district. This will be achieved by establishing physical activity as a fundamental and enjoyable part of people lives.”

5.2 Our priorities

Six overarching priorities have been identified, which are aligned with our key themes:

1. To **increase participation levels** in physical activity across the district, with a focus on tackling inactivity.
2. To develop sustainable and long term approaches to **incentivising specific groups** who have the lowest levels of activity in the district.
3. To further develop - through our Active Together Team - our **effective and sustainable network of organisations** across a diverse range of physical activity and sport opportunities to meet the changing needs of our residents.
4. To ensure that **physical activity and sport is integrated within the planning system** by utilising Sport England’s active design principles.
5. To **refurbish and rebuild the two leisure centres** in our district so that they meet national high standards.
6. To **promote the use of formal and informal local community facilities**, including schools and colleges, to help realise their full potential as high quality community assets.

Our vision and priorities will be delivered through an action plan. This will be reviewed and updated annually and progress reported to scrutiny.

6. Action plan

In this section we outline our action plan to bring this strategy to life. Our action plan is structured around the 6 key themes that we identified through our own assessment of the district and is supported by the insights provided by our residents through their comments during our consultation.

It is also important that we align our strategy with the objectives set out by Leicestershire and Rutland Sport (LRS) in their 'Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2017 – 2021', due to their role as Leicestershire's county-wide strategic lead for sport and physical activity.

1. Increase participation by tackling inactivity

LRS Objective	Our Local Action
<p>Develop and deliver targeted activity and sport campaigns to reduce inactivity and increase participation across the district.</p> <p>Make sure that pathways exist for all people of any ability to achieve through physical activity and sport.</p>	<p>To continue to support national and county-wide campaigns, such as those ran by Sport England, Public Health England and Leicestershire and Rutland Sport, to deliver insight driven, focused campaigns that help inactive people to become active</p>
<p>Ensure that all education settings (for children and for adults) use a whole systems approach that encourages everyone to embed regular, informal physical activity and sport opportunities into their daily family lives.</p>	<p>Strive to deepen our understanding of the barriers to participation experienced by the 50% of inactive residents in our district that want to become more active and take part in sport and develop a targeted approach that works for them.</p>
	<p>To champion the need for joint responsibility and local partnerships through our involvement in local networks such as the health and wellbeing forum, sports forums and local sports alliance.</p> <p>Continue to drive the message of physical activity as a lifestyle choice to create sustained positive attitudes towards healthy living and help integrate regular activity into the fabric of everyday life for all residents in the district.</p>
	<p>Using Sport England's 'Active People Survey' as a barometer of progress, we hope to increase participation levels in our district by 10% in the next 5 years.</p>

2. Targeting specific groups

LRS Objective	Our Local Action
<p>Develop a targeted approach to our interventions and raise physical activity levels in low participating groups, such as women and girls, people living with a disability, those on lower incomes, the elderly, young people and residents in rurally isolated locations.</p> <p>A tailored approach is required for these specific groups so that they can continue to be active despite their specific and challenging circumstances.</p>	<p>Continue to bring down the barriers to participation currently experienced by women and girls (such as time, cost, commitment and the fear of participating in a professional, highly structured or intimidating environment).</p> <p>Through our targeted programmes and campaigns that encourage women and girls to participate (such as 'JUST' and 'This Girl Can'.</p> <p>Liaise with local clubs and organisations in the area to establish what they could do to make their activities</p>

	more accessible for women.
	To work in partnership with disability and other associated organisations to better understand the specific needs of this target population and to ensure that the opportunities and facilities we have in the district meet their specific needs.
	Provide a number of opportunities across the district free of charge that are of real value to our residents. Examples include outdoor fitness equipment, playgrounds, parkrun, well-maintained cycle tracks and walking routes.
	<p>Have a meaningful impact on the daily lives of our elderly population through physical activity by increasing their functionality, resilience and independence.</p> <p>Focus resources on communities with high proportion of 65+ age group (often in rural areas) by delivering tailored activities on their doorstep (or at their community centre), coordinated by our Active Together Team, which focus on improving strength and functional ability as well as cardiovascular fitness.</p>

3. Building Effective Partnerships

LRS Objectives	Our Local Action
<p>Work with national and local organisations (including public, private and voluntary sector) to develop, promote a universal physical activity and sport offer, delivered via our network of clubs and organisations. To offer a range of physical activity and sport opportunities that meet the diverse needs of our local communities.</p> <p>Work to ensure that future strategic plans and policy reflect positively the role that physical activity and sport can play to improve health and strengthen our communities.</p>	<p>Continue to improve our the sport and physical activity opportunities in the district, which are delivered by the council and numerous local clubs, organisations, volunteers and residents, via our involvement in the health and wellbeing forum, the sports club forum and the local sports alliance.</p> <p>To actively pursue new network opportunities so that we can continue to tailor our offer to changing local needs.</p>
	<p>Use our existing channels to champion existing clubs and organisations and assist them when necessary, such as in funding and expansion.</p> <p>Strive to pool our funds and resources wherever possible when delivering services in partnership in order to 'do more with less'</p> <p>Follow up our review of open spaces, community facilities and pitches, by using our position in local networks to interface between clubs and facility owners/service providers to make sure that the facilities our clubs and organisations need are available when they need them.</p>
	<p>Establish and support 'physical activity champions' in rural areas where our Active Together team currently have limited presence, increasing the number of opportunities in rurally isolated areas.</p>

	Work closely with organisations associated with our targeted population (such as those highlighted in the <i>targeting specific groups</i> section) to collectively overcome the context-specific barriers that these populations may face.
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4. Developing active environments

LRS Objectives	Our Local Action
<p>Establish physical activity and sport as a priority within the planning system.</p> <p>Use Sport England’s Active Design principles for new developments and encourage active travel where possible.</p> <p>Help stakeholders across the voluntary and public sector to use physical activity and sport to strengthen their local neighbourhoods and communities.</p>	Nominate a ‘physical activity champion’ that is present within the council to promote active design and ensure its due consideration throughout the planning process.
	Integrate walking and cycling routes into our local public transport network and encourage their use in commuting and school travel by clearly mapping safe routes throughout the district.
	To develop a framework that empowers parish councils to become a key player in promoting physical activity and providing opportunities in their local area – especially when new developments are taking place within their jurisdiction.
	To continue to secure investment based on strategic need, for physical activity and sport by actively pursuing Section 106, CIL and Lottery funds where applicable.

5. Improving our leisure centres

LRS Objectives	Our Local Action
<p>Building a physical activity and sport environment that is safe fair and customer focused</p> <p>Facilities, playing pitches and informal spaces that encourage physical activity and sport are high quality and accessible</p>	Identify space that could be used to develop a new build leisure centre for Market Harborough that meets the needs of Harborough districts community
	Recruit a competent leisure provider that will Design Build Operate and Manage the facility at Market Harborough and Lutterworth in line with contract
	Working with Land Owners and developers through the Local Plan process to identify sites to address demand from increased housing numbers, eg Lutterworth East.
	Provide a community offer to parishes that ensures that hard to reach areas benefit from the improved leisure facilities.

6. Better utilising our other sport and leisure infrastructure

LRS Objectives	Our Local Action
<p>Local sport facilities are maintained to a high standard and have a diverse and inclusive approach to their programming</p> <p>Promote the use of formal and informal local community facilities and open spaces for physical activity and sport</p> <p>Realise the potential that schools and colleges can offer their communities through high quality accessible facilities</p>	<p>Identify underused space and resources during the day time (such as community halls, school halls and other local spaces) that could be used for free/subsidised activity - with a particular emphasis on our target groups.</p>
	<p>Complete an extensive audit of the total facilities stock capable of supporting physical activity outcomes in the district that takes account of their current usage.</p> <p>This should build on recent reviews of facilities and open spaces and be orientated toward establishing where there is particular under utilised capacity.</p>
	<p>Continue our work with LRS to unlock the potential of school facilities in the district through their whole systems approach to schools – whereby a key aim is to increase availability of school facilities to local residents and clubs.</p>
	<p>Focus specifically on addressing the lack of opportunities for residents living in rural parts of the district who may not have access to a leisure centre (i.e. no personal transportation)</p> <p>Options include the Active Together Team working in partnership with independent providers using local community halls and pitches as venues, exploring the prospect of our leisure centres expanding and operating from rural locations as well as giving parish councils greater powers to coordinate physical activity and sport in their local jurisdiction.</p> <p>We will also explore the potential for local stakeholders to work together to develop shared 'multi-sport hubs' – expanding the options available to residents and enabling budget-sharing between clubs and organisations.</p>

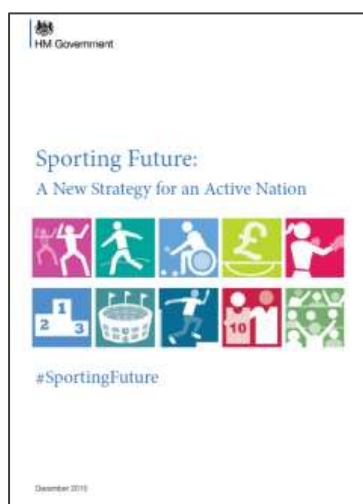
Once adopted a rolling action plan will be implemented and checked and challenged through the Local Sports Alliance and Health and Wellbeing group.

7. Wider context

Physical activity is now firmly in the national spotlight, there is an increasing drive to improve public health and tackle health inequalities. Our Government is directing investment toward preventative measures and targeting inactivity is the new focus.

As mentioned previously within this strategy, research by Sport England indicates that certain demographic groups have physical activity participation levels far below the national average (namely women and girls, people with disabilities, those in lower socio-economic groups and the older population). More funds have been made available by central Government in relation to this area. A number of strategic documents have been reviewed below.

HM Government: Sporting Future, A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2016)



It is important that our strategy takes account of our policy environment. If we can align our own priorities with national and regional objectives we can maximise our own funding opportunities. These national priorities are set out in the UK government's updated five year plan: *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* (2016 - 2021), which is summarised below.

Sporting Future aims to maximise the role of sport in promoting positive life outcomes, whilst also recognising the need to increase overall levels of physical activity in a way that moves beyond participation in sport for its own sake. It considers the wider benefits of physical activity and its contributions toward physical and mental wellbeing, the development of individuals and communities, and the achievement of social and economic

progress.

Importantly, the strategy identifies that engagement in physical activity from certain demographic groups is far below the national average. Future funding will focus on encouraging those who tend not to take part to become more active – such as women and girls, those living with a disability, those in lower socio-economic groups and the elderly.

It also broadens Sport England's remit to include responsibility for encouraging participation in sport outside of school for individuals from the age of five years rather than the previous fourteen years.

Sporting Future prescribes a framework for encouraging more people from every background to regularly and meaningfully take part in physical activity, it determines how funding will be measured and allocated in the future. As of 2016, Sport England has set out the following priority areas for its future investment strategy (note percentage of funding in brackets):

- Tackling inactivity (13%)
- Children and young people (17%)
- Volunteering (3%)
- Taking sport and activity into the mass market (6%)
- Supporting sport's core market (29%)
- Local delivery (16%)
- Facilities (16%)

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016 – 2021)

As a distributor of national lottery funding, Sport England's role is to increase the number of people who play sport regularly and to make peoples' lives better through sport.

Sport England's, *Towards an Active Nation* sets out how they will deliver the new priorities detailed in *Sporting Future*, the overall approach of the strategy is summarised in the following excerpt:

"We want everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. We need a sports sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers."

The strategy represents a new direction for Sport England, which can be summarised below:

- Focusing more resources on tackling inactivity
- Investing more in children and young people, especially the early years (5 years and older)
- Helping those that are already active to continue, but at a lower cost to the public purse
- Putting customers at the heart of their operations, regardless of ability
- Helping sport keep pace with technological development
- Encouraging local collaboration and working with a wider range of partners



Public Health England: Everybody Active, Every Day (2014)

Public Health England was set up in April 2013 as a subsidiary of the Department of Health to protect and improve the nation's health and well-being, with a specific focus on health inequalities. Part of their remit is to share information and expertise with local authorities to help them make improvements in public health.

Across our population, obesity continues to rise and 27% of adults are considered to be obese. We are currently 20% less active than we were in 1961 and this is projected to increase to 35% by 2030. We lead increasingly sedentary lifestyles and if current trends persist, one in three people will be obese by 2034 and one in ten will have type 2 diabetes.

Over 1 in 4 women and 1 in 5 men do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week and are therefore classified as inactive. Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK – this is unsustainable and the cost of inactivity in the UK is estimated at £0.9 billion per year.

There is growing recognition of the need for further integration of physical activity into public health policy as part of a wider shift from treating physical health to promoting overall wellbeing. *Everybody Active Every Day* focuses upon the need to embed physical activity into the fabric of daily life, making it an easy, cost effective and 'normal' choice in every community in England.

Leicestershire County Council: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2015)

The vision of Leicestershire's *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*, compiled by the Public Health Department of Leicestershire County Council, is to:

“Add quality and years to life by improving health throughout people’s lives, reducing inequalities and focusing on the needs of the local population.”

A number of priorities have been identified for improving health and wellbeing through the life course, which are summarised below:

- Supporting Young People as they transition to adulthood
- Improving the health and wellbeing of working age adults, with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention
- Supporting the ageing population

Furthermore, the *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* identifies the need to improve health and wellbeing among our vulnerable populations by:

- Provide effective support for carers
- Improving services for mental health and wellbeing
- Improving services for people with learning disabilities
- Providing effective support for people with physical and sensory disabilities

Strategic Growth Plan – Leicester and Leicestershire (2016)

The strategic growth plan was mutually prepared by the nine local authorities in Leicestershire; it establishes a shared vision of the city and surrounding county for the future:

“By 2050 Leicester and Leicestershire will have established itself as a driver of the UK economy, exploiting opportunities for linkages across its diverse economic base, supporting its urban and rural centres and taking advantages of its exceptional location. Growth will contribute to people’s health, happiness and well-being through the timely delivery of well designed and high quality development, raising the bar in terms of environmental standards, quality of life and local distinctiveness.”

This vision is supported by a number of objectives:

- Provide a deliverable supply of land for housing
- Strengthen and maintain the diversity of the economic base
- Maximise potential of transport corridors to deliver sustainable development
- Promote prosperous and sustainable rural communities
- Protect and enhance the quality of built and natural environment
- Achieve high standards of design and environmental sustainability
- Focus on importance of communities

8. Case Studies:

1. Market Harborough parkrun

The local Welland Park parkrun was set up in April 2015 with start up funding from the sport and health team at Harborough District Council. The scheme offers free, weekly, timed 5k runs at 9am on Saturday mornings and is now organised solely by volunteers who marshal the course, coordinate start and finish times, and photograph runners.

Parkrun offers people of all ages, regardless of ability, the opportunity to come together on a regular basis to enjoy the park and take part in physical activity at the same time. The average weekly attendance is over 300 people and it is free to participate. Voluntary contributions are collected to help sustain the success of the programme going forward.

The parkrun message is that it is for everyone; locally driven, and as much about friendship, community and supporting sustainable lifestyle changes as it is about running. Evidence has also suggested that this national scheme is popular among non-runners; with older adults and people who want to lose weight both being well represented. Improvements in the fitness levels of participants and other reported benefits demonstrate the efficacy of the scheme as a cost-effective, community-based vehicle for improving public health.

Building on the initial success of the original parkrun, a junior parkrun has been introduced to Welland Park. Aimed toward children aged from 4 to 14, this 2k run promises to be an excellent way to encourage whole families to exercise together and serves as a stepping stone for those wishing to work their way up to a full length 5k run.

2. Exercise referral

The exercise referral programme is a well established and recognised scheme that is delivered across the country for residents living with, or at risk of soon experiencing a medical condition. The primary aim of the exercise referral classes is to support individuals who have been recommended by their GP to undertake a 12 week exercise referral programme in a supportive group environment - with a view to progress each individual onto long term or permanent exercise to help them continue to manage their medical condition going forward.

The programme is delivered across the District with a mixture of public, private and community facilities being utilised. Outreach programmes have been set up throughout the district to allow individuals that have been referred for classes, yet are located in rural isolated areas, to attend a weekly session that is accessible and suitable for their specific needs. Outreach groups tend to be inclusive, accessible and appeal to a wide range of ages; they present a great alternative for those that have difficulty arranging transport or may not feel comfortable at a gym or leisure facility

3. This Girl Can

This Girl Can is a nationwide drive to get women and girls moving, regardless of shape, size and ability. The campaign sets out to address the disparity in the number of men and women playing sport - arising not because females do not want to be active, but because millions of women and girls can be reluctant to exercise due to a fear of being judged. Research commissioned by Sport England revealed that two million fewer 14 – 40 year old women played sport than men, despite 75 percent of women stating that they would like to be more active. Importantly, this disparity does not exist in other European countries.

These findings were the driving force behind the This Girl Can campaign, which aims to empower women and encourage more to be active. More than 7.2 million women now play sport and do regular physical activity – 250,000 more than when Sport England introduced their This Girl Can campaign. It means the gender gap, which once stood at over two million, has now been narrowed to 1.55 million.

4. JUST

On a local level, JUST is an 8-week initiative built on the back of Sport England's This Girl Can. JUST encourages females to 'just' turn up and have a go at a new sport or activity by removing some of the barriers to participation such as cost, time, commitment, or the fear of participating in a professional, highly structured or intimidating environment.