

Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture)

16 July 2013

Leeds Let's Get Active Scheme

Comments to Executive Board

The Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) considered the Leeds Let's Get Active Scheme proposals at its meeting on 16 July 2013. The Scrutiny Board makes the following comments and proposals for consideration in finalising the scheme to be presented to the Executive Board on 4 September for approval.

General

Members of the Board strongly welcome the scheme and its aims and objectives. We are pleased that the council has been successful in obtaining the funding for the pilot from Sport England and public health, and we are keen to play our part in seeing the project succeed.

Involvement of the Scrutiny Board

The Scrutiny Board has made these comments on the scheme proposals at this point in order to influence the final scheme that is presented to the Executive Board for approval and the launch of the programme. The Board will continue to monitor the implementation and progress of the scheme as part of its ongoing inquiry on the role of the Leeds Let's Get Active scheme in promoting public health.

Specific issues

Marketing

The Board stressed the importance of targeting the marketing of the scheme to ensure those that it is aimed at and who can derive the most benefit from it know about it and are supported to take part. The role of local community and faith groups, as well as health professionals and other local workers such as youth service staff in being aware of the scheme and encouraging people to take part will also be important.

We recommend that officers tap into the local knowledge of ward councillors in developing the community offer.

We also recommend that schools be approached as a good way of contacting parents in key target locations, particularly through letters home.

Transport

We felt that transport was an important issue, and could potentially be a barrier to participation if people could not afford to travel to a location offering free sessions. On the other hand there may be opportunities to encourage walking or cycling to access these opportunities in some cases.

Whilst we were reminded that, as a pilot, the scheme is limited in what it can deliver, we recommend that the transport issue needs to be kept under review as

the project progresses, and adjustments made if it proves to be a significant barrier.

Community offer

We discussed the geographic spread of the offer and remain concerned that some key target communities in terms of health deprivation will not have easy access to the scheme. This includes people living in pockets of deprivation within the more affluent parts of the city. We were given details of the proposed locations for the community offer, and the rationale for the selection of locations. We were also told that it is hoped to complement this with other provision that it is not formally part of the Leeds Let's Get Active scheme.

We really welcome the ambition to use other pots of funding to complement the scheme. Nevertheless we were disappointed by the low targets for the community offer aspect of the scheme itself, and would strongly recommend that officers explore all available options within the requirements of the grant funding to increase this offer as the scheme develops.

We also specifically discussed the facilities at the NHS Quarry Hill site, and agreed that the Chair of the Scrutiny Board would write to ask if the NHS would consider including these facilities in the free offer, given the obvious benefits to the NHS of getting inactive people to be active and the lack of council facilities in the local area.

Targeting of specific communities

We noted that most, if not all, of the targeting within the scheme is currently on a geographic basis.

We recommend that consideration be given to the needs of other non-geographic communities that are identified as suffering from health deprivation, for example the gypsy and traveller community where life expectancy is among the lowest in the city.

We also recommend that some single sex provision is included in the offer, or provided as an additional feature, to meet cultural and faith needs.

General comments

We are pleased to note that there is interest from Clinical Commissioning Groups in the idea of exercise on prescription. The evaluation of the Bodyline Access Scheme will hopefully encourage them to fund more of this type of activity.

We stressed the importance of sustainability in terms of people continuing to have access to provision and to participate in activity. We will be very interested to follow the research aspect of the project in tracking people's ongoing levels of participation.

We noted the importance of gathering qualitative as well as quantitative data in order to understand the motivations and barriers for people taking part in activity, and that research is a key element of the scheme's objectives. We discussed the use of accelerometers as an accurate measure of activity undertaken, but acknowledged the cost implications of such an approach.