

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 17 October 2018

Subject: Run Leeds - Sport England Funding Award

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): City-wide project, however there will be an initial focus on the following wards/priority community areas: Beeston & Holbeck Middleton Park Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Gipton & Harehills Armley	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	

Summary of main issues

This report explains the growth of the Run Leeds programme and outlines plans for its future development in the city having secured significant external grant funding of £176,000 through Sport England to develop this innovative programme until July 2022.

Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended:

- (i) to note the successful award from Sport England;
- (ii) to support the programme of work outlined;
- (iii) to receive a progress report by June 2021;
- (iv) to note that the Head of Active Leeds is responsible for implementation.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to raise awareness of the successful Run Leeds programme and to outline how the successful award of significant Sport England external funding will be programmed.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Executive Board will recall the paper submitted in September outlining the development of a new Physical Activity and Sport Ambition for the city. Within that report examples were provided about some of the innovative work the Active Leeds Service is doing to try and help bring about long term positive change in levels of physical activity and sport. This report provides details of one of the successful pieces of work undertaken which has resulted in a significant Sport England funding award being made.
- 2.2 The Active Leeds service have been successful with a bid for external Sport England funding to consolidate, refresh and expand the existing Run Leeds programme. The Active Leeds development team have been awarded £176,000 from the Sport England "Core Market Open Fund" which will enable the service to appoint a project officer to oversee this programme until July 2022. The Core Market Open fund was set up to specifically support regularly active people, from underrepresented groups who are going through life changes. The Run Leeds project was one of only 18 nationally to be awarded funding by Sport England.
- 2.3 Essentially the programme will involve the re-development of the existing Run Leeds brand, website and expansion of the online community and digital campaigns with the development of a new participant focused mobile app. The Active Leeds service is increasingly using enabling approaches to deliver better outcomes. And by utilising external funding via Sport England it allows the team to expand and accelerate it's work. Not only is walking and running a good way to keep people taking part (the essence of the bid), but walking and running programmes are also one of the most effective ways of addressing low levels of physical activity where people are inactive, especially when developed within a social setting.
- 2.4 The new phase of the project will collaborate with a range of locality stakeholders to expand and grow social running opportunities in targeted communities and with key underrepresented groups (with a particular focus on women), and offer comprehensive additional training for the run leaders and community champions who are key to delivering activity, through for example motivational interviewing and mental health awareness training.
- 2.5 Campaigns will be run to test key moments of influence in the year and to build on the acquisition of real life stories and videos to showcase how core participants (those demonstrating a regular sporting habit) can be supported whilst going through unpredictable life changes. All of this will be underpinned by comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the programme by Leeds Beckett University to assess how mental wellbeing can affect resilience and participant habit, when going through these life changes, ultimately to understand further how we can get and keep more people active.

3. Main issues

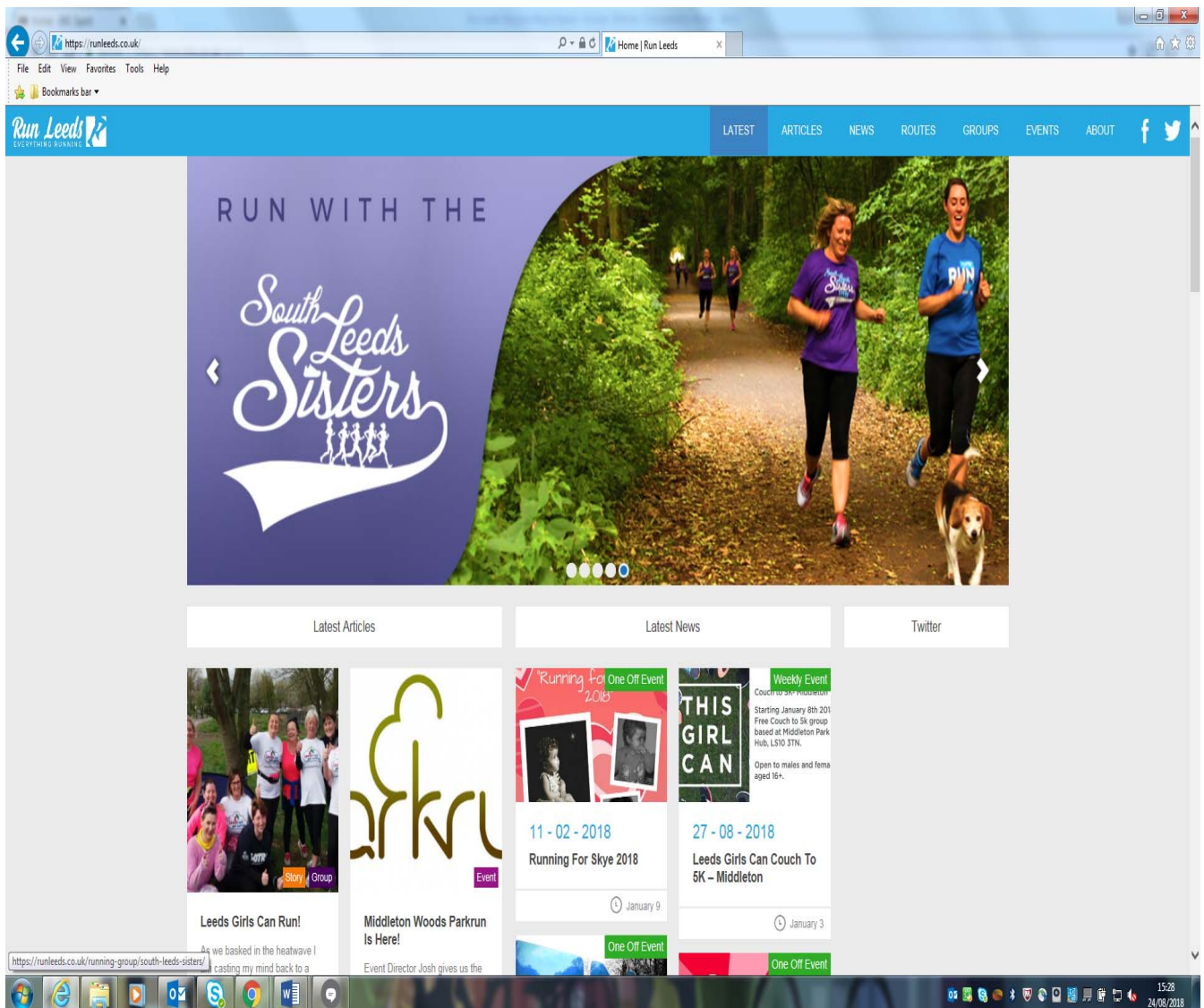
- 3.1 The formal Run Leeds project began four years ago as part of the Sport England funded National Governing Body (NGB) Place Pilot programme. Prior to this funding the service helped coordinate and establish a couple of informal running groups across the city, but the new Run Leeds programme brought everything (all running opportunities) together under one supportive banner. These previous informal running opportunities had enabled the service to build a large solid base of core regular runners, which was then expanded with the appointment of a running activator to drive the development of the Run Leeds programme further.



- 3.2 Learning from the NGB Place Pilot programme has included:

- Valuable insight into how needs led community engagement was key, with activators, leaders and volunteers who were able to build relationships with local people, essential to supporting behaviour change in participants. Regular, personalised, easily accessible and clear communication methods were vital for engagement and retention, as were the peer support mechanisms put in place. Essentially programmes were successful when they were embedded within the community and had the person at the centre; a person who was able to be supported regularly in the right way remained active.
- This insight has informed the development of the programme and subsequently the service's social media and digital applications have helped greatly to retain Run Leeds core participants, to make runners feel wanted and to grow awareness of groups. Case studies, photos and videos all contributed to a feeling of inclusivity, and the realisation that a running group can actually be for "someone like me". This is backed up by similar findings from a piece of research undertaken for us in Leeds by the Social Marketing Gateway in 2015 stating "the umbrella motivator highlighted in the research relates to creating a positive sense of social norm around exercise. Respondents felt that they could be motivated to get involved and stay in exercise if they were inspired and through this given confidence by seeing people 'like them' getting involved, enjoying and benefiting from exercise".
- Natural leaders and volunteers in the community were specifically targeted in communities- those individuals with special traits that whilst often lacking in initial confidence and self-esteem, with the right individual support were able to flourish. Understanding has evolved but crucially the service found that getting participants to volunteer was really hard and very time intensive, however, the lasting results were so much more effective in empowering them, ultimately allowing them to support and retain runners in the groups.

- 3.3 The new phase of the project will aim to ensure regular runners maintain their level of activity enabling them to become more resilient to the pressures and unpredictable changes that may occur in life. This will be achieved through increasing awareness of the programme through city wide campaigns and with additional support by a network of suitably skilled, knowledgeable and trained Run Leaders (via motivational interviewing, mental health awareness and behaviour change type training courses). These advocates will help create open communities where participants are supported within self-sustaining sessions, online and within their own personal social circles, which have developed as a result of the Run Leeds project. This is quite different to the level of support a standard running club would be able to offer.
- 3.4 A comprehensive online Run Leeds survey of the group running community found that 96% of respondents had continued running with a Run Leeds inspired group and remained active or maintained a resilient habit since they had started. A total of 66% had increased their levels of physical activity, with 1 in 3 highlighting their mental health as a reason they continued to run. These outcomes are extremely positive.
- 3.5 The benefits of running are well documented: be that improving aerobic fitness and therefore cardiovascular health, through to burning calories, building strength, and a long list of psychological benefits. The national (and now global) Parkrun concept has flourished in recent years, particularly in Leeds where this free timed run has really established itself and is due to launch its sixteenth weekly Saturday Parkrun shortly. (This includes the weekly junior Parkruns). Since its inception 11 years ago statistically runners in Leeds have covered over one million miles collectively.
- 3.6 The initial Run Leeds project uncovered that the barriers to participation for some of the regular core runners have included bereavement, relationship breakdown, exam stress, health and medical conditions, changes in the family, social acceptance and gender reassignment. These barriers also double up as key unpredictable life changes, which all emerged as themes from the previous Run Leeds project, and will be explored further in the new phase.
- 3.7 The Run Leeds online community hub collates all elements of the project, in a central place, using social media, website and mail marketing programmes to communicate with its digital community. Around 2,300 unique users find their way to the Run Leeds website every month. This brand and website will be re-refreshed and re-developed as part of the new phase of the project.

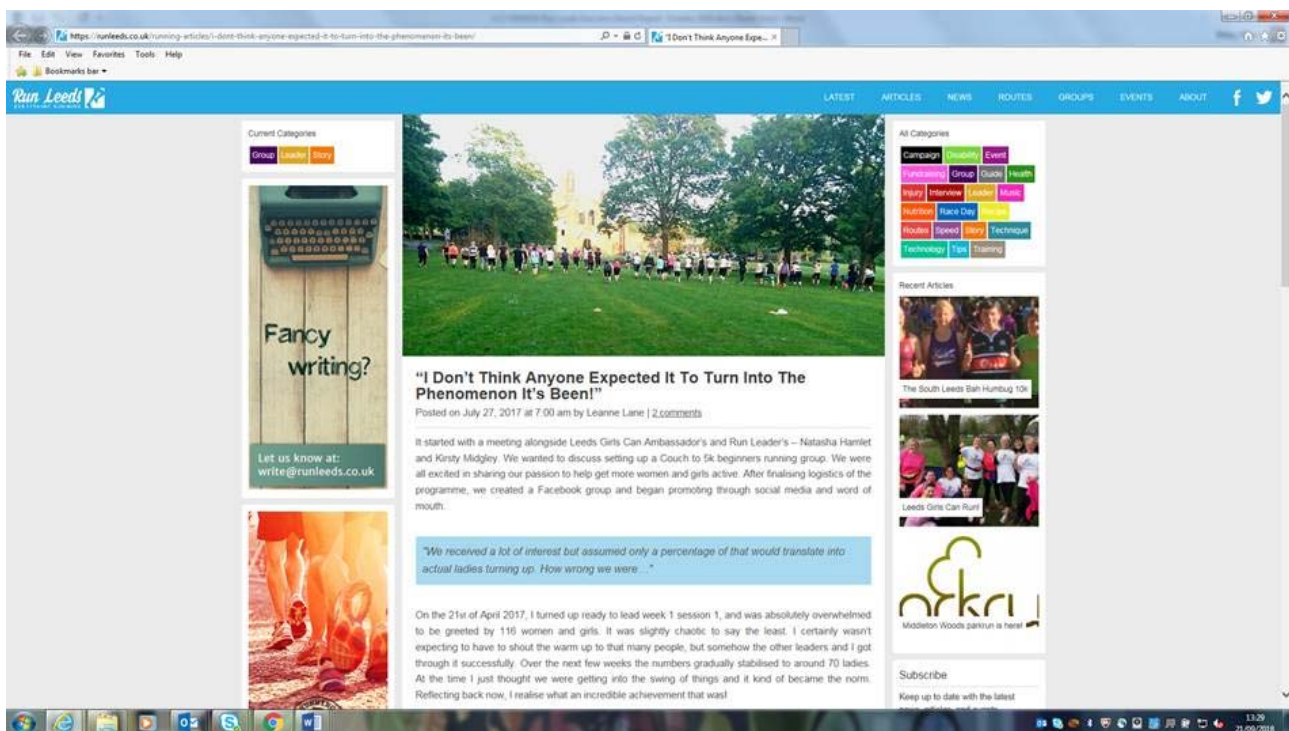


The current Run Leeds website

- 3.8 The Run Leeds online community hub has a Facebook reach of over 7,000 and a Twitter reach of over 18,000 providing a great opportunity to attract and reach out to other regular runners to include in the second phase of the project. This will continue to be used as a key method of communication and dialogue in engaging with and retaining our existing runners.

- 3.9 We know the existing Run Leeds programmes have been extremely popular with women, with 67% of the current Run Leeds participants female; as highlighted above the key elements of the “Run Leeds” model creates an environment that effectively supports regular female participation. The model builds relationships that encourage long term behaviour change through effective communication and peer support, from face to face engagement through to the sharing of good and bad experiences on WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Activities are adapted for mixed ability run groups, with many making the transition from walking into running; “Couch 2 5k” is a key running programme that is utilised. “People like me” are not only participants but also become group leaders. Our run groups are embedded within local communities, in familiar settings and surroundings and not far away from home – a really good

example of this is a [women only group based in Kirkstall](#) delivered with our Leeds Girls Can project, which on a peak evening can see 116 women out running.

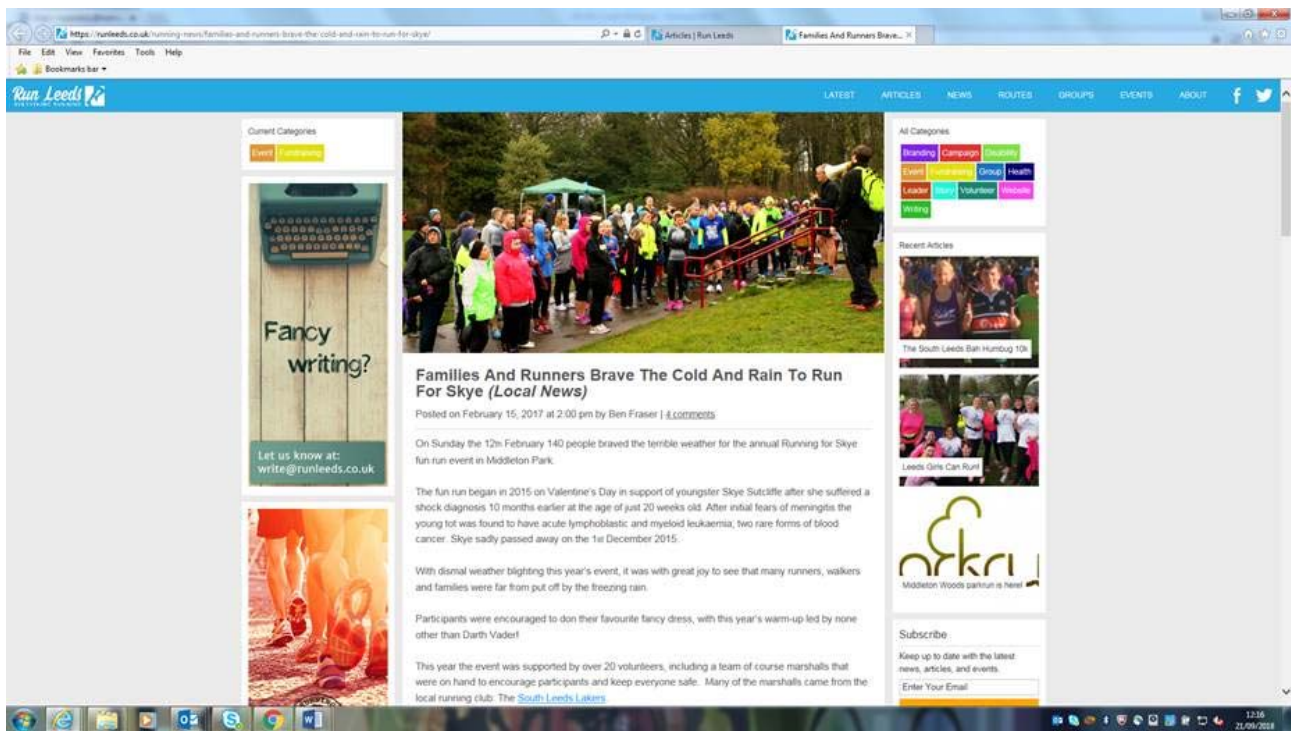


3.10 There are many real life case studies, stories and examples captured over the last few years that give a snap shot of the diverse reasons why people, and particularly women across the city choose to run, or kept a resilient habit whilst going through often profound and unexpected life changes. These are all documented on our website: <https://runleeds.co.uk> and via our social media outlets:

- It took [Amanda](#), a Trans person, 6 months to pluck up the courage and join the Leeds Frontrunners; a club she has found acceptance in. **“The Frontrunners are such a welcoming club where no one ever asks about what your orientation is, your relationship status – It’s not about that and there are no labels.”**
- After [Caroline](#) was diagnosed with the early signs of breast cancer she was asked “why don’t you just relax and take some time out?” Caroline pondered this statement whilst out running one of her regular run routes around the streets of Farsley. She concluded **“this is my relax time, this is my time out!”**... Adding: **“and thank goodness I had running as a focus as it’s certainly been a challenging and busy year”**. This was the same lady that had lost her mum to breast cancer over 10 years before. Consolidating the part running has played in her life, Caroline said: **“running has helped me put my life into perspective, it keeps me fit and healthy but most of all clears my mind and helps me to remember the good times. My mum would be so proud!”** Caroline has been given the all clear since her original cancer diagnosis.
- Take [Nicky’s experience](#). A self-confessed ‘sports man’ who has “struggled through my life with confidence, negativity, procrastination, weight, mental health and depression”. Nicky’s low self-esteem is linked to his lack of confidence and

persistence in working towards his own personal goals. Running has become his reason to move forward after he decided to: “find something you physically, mentally and periodically DO NOT like doing (but... you know you are capable of doing) and simply, DO IT forever if need be”. As a result of running Nicky doesn’t give up on his own goals. “I run up to four times a week. I run with groups and I have made some dear friends. In fact I’ve made more GOOD friends through running in the last five years than in 32 years of constantly playing football. I would probably go as far as saying I don’t dislike it anymore”.

- 3.11 Research undertaken through our programme has also shown that a Run Leeds group and the positive social support network this community group provides has become a sanctuary for people amidst a life transition. A Run Leeds social run group can become a place for people to build resilience against these growing struggles and unpredictable life changes. Running and the relationships formed around this activity (via a Run Leeds group) have helped people cope through emotionally heightened times. For example, [Dalia](#) *chases the chemical (biological) high of running “I still struggle to feel an emotional connection to a lot of things, especially ones that require social interactions but as soon as I’m out running, every single part of me becomes alive again.”*
- 3.12 These run groups are led by community ambassadors and champions, real-life members of the community who can empathise with the groups and have a deep understanding of the local community and what works for it. Case studies and stories that have been drawn out through the initial Run Leeds project highlight how we have worked closely with and impacted on people going through different life changes. The identification and recruitment of these local champions and ambassadors are an essential part of the programme and supply vital learning in terms of scaling up wider engagement programmes to get people active.
- 3.13 A selection of stories detailed earlier in the report provide examples of how the Run Leeds project has previously delivered with and discovered people during different life changes. The cause and effect of these experiences vary from person to person but a common theme within these stories is the improvement or maintenance in mental and emotional wellbeing. This wouldn’t be possible without the opportunity to run together regularly, through the community that Run Leeds has provided. One example that embodies this on a large scale is the story of [“Skye”](#) and the Middleton community of South Leeds. *Running for Skye is an annual fundraising event that was set up by Skye’s nana in response to her granddaughter’s cancer diagnosis. Before the third Running for Skye took place Skye sadly passed away. Led by her nana and her family, over 600 people from the South Leeds community have Run for Skye, raising £7500 pounds for the charities “Candlelighters” and “Delete Blood Cancer” along the way.*



3.14 The target audience moving into the second phase of Run Leeds will be supporting those people demonstrating a regular sporting habit through the current network of social running opportunities, focusing on lower socio-economic communities and women in the Inner South and Inner East of the city.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Phase 2 of the Run Leeds programme will begin with comprehensive engagement with the 1700+ existing registered runners and 20+ social running groups currently linked to the programme across the city. Leeds Beckett University will be conducting this research to determine participants' current engagement in sport, details of any current life change or change in circumstance and how this alters across the year.

4.1.2 Consultation will take place with the localities teams, officers, additional internal colleagues (e.g Parks and Countryside department) and external partners to identify opportunities to expand the social running offer in priority communities across the city. This will include the identification of and support for community "champions". Collaboration with the extensive network of community partners does enable us to better reach individuals within our priority communities – the Bangladeshi Centre, East Leeds Health for All, CATCH, Gipton Together, Shantona Women's Centre and South Seacroft Friend & Neighbour give a feel of the range of relationships built at a local level in the Inner East. Our team have also supported, for example, the establishment of the Mandela Runners, an ethnically diverse group with 83% BAME runners and based within the Inner East and in a LSOA of decile 1 of deprivation (10% most deprived).

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 The aim of the Run Leeds programme is to provide better opportunities to be active and maintain or improve activity levels specifically for Leeds residents amongst the most underrepresented groups and in the most deprived areas of the city. The body of the report has highlighted the way in which the existing Run Leeds programme has managed to reach out to a wide range of groups. The new funding will allow the service to better reach priority communities and populations. There will be a particular focus on supporting women and girls in the inner South and inner East of the city, however the programme will still be a city-wide initiative that not only supports regular runners but also those beginners completely new to running or making the transition from walking.

4.2.2 An equality impact screening has been undertaken and is attached as an appendix.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 The Run Leeds programme helps people directly to be more physically active and can address many of the best Council outcomes and priorities, but in particular the key outcomes include:

- Enjoy happy and healthy lives and;
- Enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts'

The proposals also support the Best Council plan priorities as below:

- **Health and wellbeing** - the strategy provides a vision for Leeds as a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest. Enabling people to live active lives is a key part of the plan to prevent people falling into ill health.
- **Safe and strong communities** – Developing positive approaches to being physically active in our most deprived areas is an essential goal and outcomes will not be delivered if we don't take an Asset Based Community Development approach.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The majority of funding for this project has been received via a successful application to the Sport England Core Market Open Fund. The total project funding received from Sport England will be £176,000 until July 2022, with funding earmarked each year for the new project officer role, topped up by an annual £5,000 contribution from existing Active Leeds budgets. This is major investment from Sport England and one of only 18 projects nationally to receive this funding.

4.4.2 The remaining external Sport England funding will be used to fund the rest of the Run Leeds project such as new website, app, run leader training, evaluation and research partners and digital campaigns.

4.4.3 Support will be available from the wider Active Leeds Development team, where additional externally funded projects complement the Run Leeds programme, such

as Leeds Girls Can and Leeds Let's Get Active, allowing a joined up approach to achieving successful outcomes.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The project will be subject to monitoring by Sport England. Pending successful outcomes the programme options will need to be developed during the project in order to address future sustainability.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The award of significant external Sport England funding to further develop and enhance Run Leeds is testament to an innovative programme that has made a real difference over the last few years in providing and supporting local Leeds people to get more physically active through the means of social running. This aspect will continue to be supported and enhanced in the new phase.

5.2 Additionally Sport England recognise they know very little about how to support people to continue to stay active when going through unpredictable life changes, therefore phase 2 of the Run Leeds programme provides the ideal opportunity to test what can really make a difference. With a focus on some of our most deprived communities and with our most underrepresented groups this is a really positive opportunity to make a difference locally, as well as showcasing what could be scaled up and replicated across the city, in other sports or in other areas of the country.

5.3 The Run Leeds programme further enhances Leeds reputation as a city and local authority that can be relied upon and trusted to enable successful, innovative and inspiring sport and physical activity programmes.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended:

- (i) to note the successful award from Sport England;
- (ii) to support the programme of work outlined;
- (iii) to receive a progress report by June 2021;
- (iv) to note that the Head of Active Leeds is responsible for implementation.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.