



**Report of:** Director of Public Health and Director of City Development

**Report to:** Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**Subject:** An Update on the Physical Activity Ambition

**Strapline:** ‘Get More People, More Physically Active, More Often’

**Comms & Engagement:** Please provide 3 key points that you would want to communicate with the public about this paper / item for use on social media to promote engagement with this meeting.

Are specific geographical areas affected? If relevant, name(s) of area(s): Get Set Leeds Local in Priority Neighbourhoods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## Summary of main issues

This report provides an update on the development of the Physical Activity (PA) Ambition for Leeds which is being led by Active Leeds and Public Health together with partners across the city. The report builds upon previous items covering the Physical Activity Ambition presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2018 and October 2020. It includes the following information:

- Physical Activity Ambition – progress, agreeing the priorities and next steps
- Covid-19 Response
- Proposed Physical Activity Governance arrangements
- Exploring the role of system leaders around physical activity

## Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- To note the progress presented and support the proposed next stage priorities of Active Environments and Active People - Reconditioning.
- Support the establishment of the Physical Activity Partnership Board as part of governance arrangements.
- Consider their role in realising a number of system leadership outcomes to support the achievement of the Physical Activity Ambition.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 Provide an update on progress with the Physical Activity Ambition and the response to Covid-19. Proposes a focus in the next stage on the two priorities of Active Environments and Active People – Reconditioning.
- 1.2 Give an overview of the development of Physical Activity Partnership Board.
- 1.3 Explore the role of strong system leadership in developing the Physical Activity Ambition.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 There is clear evidence that being active is essential for good physical and mental health and wellbeing. As well as being physically active, it is important that all adults and children minimise the time spent being sedentary for extended periods. Increasing physical activity levels has the potential to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities and reduce inequalities.
- 2.2 The ambition is for Leeds to be the most active city in England. This is outlined in the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy ‘Get More People, More Physically Active, More Often’ and is a key component of reaching our vision to be a healthy and caring city where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest.
- 2.3 Embedding physical activity into everyday life provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the three city strategic pillars of Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change. This aligns with other key strategies such as Mental Health Strategy, Transport Strategy and developing the Local Plan. There is good evidence that the benefits of increasing physical activity are wide ranging including impact on employment and employability, promoting engagement and civic trust and reducing isolation. Realising the ambition to increase levels of physical activity has the potential to contribute to a healthier place, a greener city and a stronger local economy.

Physical activity levels have flattened off in recent years and have significantly reduced due to the impact of Covid-19. The most recent Active Lives survey shows the percentage of inactive adults in Leeds is 25.5%, 164,100 people aged 16+ are inactive in Leeds (May 2020 – May 2021). Inequalities have widened and lifestyle habits have changed – leading to less active and more sedentary hours. The “Build Back Fairer Covid-19 Marmot Review” highlighted that there are pre-existing inequalities in levels of physical activity related to the socioeconomic position and that more advantaged groups tend to have higher levels of physical

activity. Adults in higher occupational groups increased their levels of physical activity more than adults in lower occupational grades.

Many older adults were negatively impacted due to the lockdown with many aged 70 years+ shielding. The “Build Back Fairer Covid-19 Marmot Review” also found that lockdowns and social isolation were much more harmful to people without access to gardens and this will have impacted on levels of physical activity and wellbeing. It also pointed out that being active outside can have a more positive mental health impact than other kinds of exercise. It is evident that there are a range of inequalities in physical activity levels and action is needed to address these.

### **3 Main issues**

#### **3.1 Physical Activity Ambition – Further progress and agreeing the priorities**

3.1.1 “Get Set Leeds” - As previously described to the HWB in October 2020, the development of the new PA Ambition began with a city-wide conversation ‘Get Set Leeds’ in January 2019. ‘Get Set Leeds’ was a proactive engagement campaign that encouraged a city-wide conversation about physical activity. It gave people a chance to their share ideas on what getting active meant to them and what might support them to move more. It focused on identifying assets, barriers and co-producing solutions. Get Set Leeds was the largest-ever study completed in Leeds around the importance of physical activity in the lives of over 4000 residents.

3.1.2 The four key messages set out below emerged from the study analysis by Leeds Beckett (Appendix A) University and have shaped the development of the Physical Activity Ambition:

- Most people want to be physically active but find it hard to be – motivation isn’t enough.
- People do not feel their environment makes it easy to be active, this includes having space to move and be active in, feeling safe in the places around us, access to transport and child-care, good air quality and local information.
- Inactive people want to be active, but feel they aren’t able to be or don’t know where to start. People worry about their basic needs before they can think about being active (e.g. access to housing, employment, food, education, technology, and good health).
- Small changes to how capable people feel can lead to big changes in physical activity levels - for everyone in Leeds to be more active, it is important they feel they can be.

Get Set Leeds continues hold conversations around how to get the city moving more. It has developed a website and campaign platform that is being used to promote consistent messaging around physical activity and for various projects which are outlined later in this report.

## 3.2 Covid-19 response

3.2.1 The significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on physical activity and in highlighting and widening existing inequalities in activity levels has also been reflected in the development of the Physical Activity Ambition.

The pandemic emphasised how important physical activity is for physical and mental wellbeing particularly in terms of:

- Deconditioning due to inactivity e.g. increasing the risk of falls, the impact on frailty and long term conditions.
- Inactivity in children and impact on academic achievement, behaviour and mental health.
- The importance of access to spaces and places to be active and the inequalities that exist.

3.2.2 A Covid-19 Rapid Literature Review was undertaken with Leeds Beckett University between January 2021 – April 2021 to understand the impact of Covid-19 on physical activity. This research demonstrated the potential role of physical activity in contributing to recovery; physical and mental reconditioning, and rebuilding from Covid-19. Further information is provided in the background documents in the form of a short report summarising the research findings.

The research also identified a likely link between sarcopenia (age related reduction in muscle mass) and a reduction in immunity which could be improved through physical activity. It supplemented the key findings from the Get Set Leeds conversation research and further emphasised the importance of physical activity in addressing growing health inequalities.

3.2.3 Various pieces of work have been developed in response to the pandemic and to help Leeds to recover from its impacts. A few examples are highlighted below:

- Through the Get Set Leeds – Local project the development and distribution of play boxes in Seacroft. This project is now being extended to people who have been shielding and/or have long term conditions via Sport England £50k funding.
- Production and distribution of the Healthy at Home Booklet and the development of the Healthy at Home Website for people with Long Term Conditions and those shielding. This promoted moving more in and around the home alongside Covid-19 messages and healthy living advice.
- Contributing, influencing and connecting colleagues across transport, highways and active travel to develop Active Travel Neighbourhoods. This includes submitting a bid for the Department for Transport's Walking, Cycling and Social Prescribing Fund. A decision as to whether or not the bid has been successful is imminent.

- Development of a series of Physical Activity Webinars for the wider workforce and Third Sector.
- Continued communication through blogs and social media posts through the Get Set Leeds website and Leeds City Council social media channels promoting the benefits to physical and mental health of being active as well as key Covid-19 messages.

### 3.3 PA Ambition Priorities and Next Steps

3.3.1 The Get Set Leeds conversations and Covid-19 review have shaped the shared ambition which is for Leeds to get “Get More People, More Physically Active, More Often” and drive a radical cultural shift to increase physical activity requiring commitment over the long term. This shared ambition and its work programmes will be co-produced at all levels.

3.3.2 In order to deliver the ambition to “Get More People, More Physically Active, More Often” action will be focused around four themes based upon the core ideas in the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 with reducing inequalities as a cross cutting aim:

**ACTIVE SOCIETY** – In Leeds we will create a social norm where it is the easiest choice to be physically active every day.

**ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT** - We will work with people to understand the external drivers affecting their physical activity levels

**ACTIVE PEOPLE** - We will work with identified target groups to create small changes to how capable they feel to be physically active every day and test new ways of working.

**ACTIVE SYSTEMS** - We will work in partnership to create a healthier place, a greener city and a stronger local economy.

3.3.3 In order to enable a more in-depth, co-produced and effective response to the post pandemic challenges it is proposed that Active Environments and Active People - Reconditioning are selected as an initial focus with inequalities being a central theme for both.

#### Proposed Priorities:

##### Active Environments

Active Travel  
Get Set Leeds Local – priority neighbourhoods  
Walking and cycling  
Influencing strategy and policy

##### Active People - Reconditioning

Young People – physical literacy  
Learning Disabilities  
Older People  
Long Term Conditions/Long Covid

3.3.4 These priorities have been selected because they are:

- Able to significantly impact on inequalities across the city.
- Present genuine opportunities for cross-sector / cross-cutting co-production with communities and key stakeholders.
- Emerging as key priorities from the Get Set Leeds Conversation and Covid-19 rapid review.
- Aligned to city priorities - Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change.
- Areas where there is already momentum building and willingness to engage.

3.3.5 Co-production with communities is key to the successful development of work to address these priorities. A Leeds Physical Activity Ambition Co-Production Toolkit has been developed. This is a guidance document for everyone who is helping to make Leeds more active.

The Toolkit identifies different stages to help understand what co-production means in practice, to reflect on how we currently work and to consider any existing co-production examples currently in place. The key next step in our work is the co-design of both the Active Environments and Active People - Reconditioning priorities. This will involve identifying, bringing together and involving stakeholders, ensuring that anyone with a personal need or want is put at the heart of developing any change or solution. In order to begin the co-production of a shared vision, agreed priorities with partners and residents within each of the two priorities it will enable an understanding of the assets, strengths and the improvements needed in each part of the system.

### 3.4 **Physical Activity Governance**

3.4.1 Progress is also being made around creating the Physical Activity Governance structure which involves the establishment of a Physical Activity Partnership Board. The Partnership Board will provide strong systems leadership and accountability for the Physical Activity Ambition and action plans. The aims of the Partnership Board are to:

- Articulate the power of being physically active in delivering city outcomes, particularly in reducing inequalities.
- Lead and activate change.
- Focus on creating the right physical environment.
- Take an all age/population approach.
- Help to harness the power of people in communities to increase activity levels.
- Create connections and links to embed physical activity across the system.

Planning for recruitment to the Board is underway and is aimed at finding leaders who can provide strategic influence; those that will spearhead and champion different ways of working; and those who have influence within the two priority areas (Active People - Reconditioning and Active Environments). The Board will also

include experts both in terms of a resident's voice and academic / physical activity specialists.

The establishment of the Board is a key step in developing the Physical Activity Ambition, there is recognition of the importance of finding physical activity ambassadors, with the right skills, those who can build relationships, networks and trust, and drive the behaviours to develop leadership as a collective activity that anyone in the system can take up.

In addition to the proposed Board the following structures and delivery mechanisms are already in place:

- **Design Group** – operational, cross service including Active Leeds, Public Health, Health Partnerships, Leeds Beckett University and Comms & Marketing providing the support role to the Physical Activity Ambition
- **Physical Activity Ambition Steering Group** – partnership including Public Health, Active Leeds, Economic Development, Health Partnerships, Human Resources and cross-sector representation including citizens voice Healthwatch, Sport England, Leeds Beckett University and Yorkshire Sport, currently providing overall strategic direction for the Physical Activity Ambition until Partnership Board is in place
- **Sub-Groups** - for example Comms & Marketing, Co-production, Get Set Leeds – Local.
- **Physical Activity Champions** – Movers & Shakers, Leeds Girls Can, Walk and Ride Leaders. Further development is still needed recognising to develop and formalise the role of Champions.

### 3.5 **Role of System Leaders**

Support and action from system leaders is needed to mobilise the Physical Activity Ambition for the city. It is hoped that the following outcomes can be realised through effective system leadership around physical activity:

- All leaders start to tackle identified blockages and drive new ways of working.
- Leaders, organisations and communities start thinking about how they tackle inactivity in a different way.
- Improved strategic recognition of physical activity in a place with a focus on assets.
- Improved collaborative leadership and engagement of local leaders.
- The start of changing behaviours in the system itself and among communities

In their role as system leaders it would be helpful to understand how Health and Wellbeing Board members believe they can support the achievement of these outcomes.

#### **4 Consultation, engagement and hearing citizen voice**

- 4.1 The Physical Activity Ambition approach to reducing inactivity aims to connect work that is taking place at a city-wide level with a more in-depth engagement across the life course with priority neighbourhoods / communities and under-represented groups.
- 4.2 Coproduction/codesign is an embedded principle of working for the development of the Physical Activity Ambition. A detailed Co-Production Physical Activity Toolkit has been developed to support this approach to working.
- 4.3 Get Set Leeds engaged over 4,000 people through a citywide survey and focus groups. We are continuing to talk to those we have started conversations within priority neighbourhoods and with priority groups through focus groups and Leeds Girls Can.

#### **5 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 5.1 There is robust evidence to demonstrate that certain groups of the population who live in the most deprived areas of the city are more likely to suffer increased ill health and diseases. The Physical Activity Ambition will seek to reduce inequalities and try to avoid approaches and interventions that may widen them.
- 5.2 A key part of the approach to the Physical Activity Ambition is that resources will be more focused and interventions more tailored into those areas and communities with the worse health outcomes. There is a commitment to Asset Based Community Development and coproduction principles and to work closely with residents, local leaders and partners in embedding physical activity at a locality level.

#### **6 Resources and value for money**

- 6.1 The social return on investment from increasing the numbers of people being more physically active is significant for the city including social, economic, physical and mental health benefits.
- 6.2 A successful submission to Sport England has seen £475,000 in additional funding to help focus this learning and understanding of affecting long term behaviour change around being more active in some of the priority neighbourhoods, with an aim of building those wider health and wellbeing benefits and reducing health inequalities.
- 6.3 The Physical Activity Ambition work is funded through time limited grants and this project is working to achieve long term behavioural change, consideration needs to be given to the sustainability of the resources to fully realise the benefits.
- 6.4 Public Health, Active Leeds, Health Partnerships, Planning and Transport colleagues all collaborate and lead the project along with contributions from



partners in the Place Based Partnership, Sport Leeds Board, Leeds Beckett University, and the Third Sector.

## **7 Legal Implications, access to information and call In**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **8 Risk management**

- 8.1 There are no major specific risk issues identified. In future it is envisaged that Physical Activity Ambition work will be governed through the new Physical Activity Ambition Board governance structures, currently in development. In the meantime, there is a Physical Activity Ambition Steering Group in place to take overall responsibility for this work.

## **9 Conclusions**

- 9.1 Now more than ever embedding physical activity into everyday life provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the three city strategic pillars of Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change. Realising our ambition to increase levels of physical activity has the potential to contribute to a healthier place, a greener city and a stronger local economy.
- 9.2 This report has described progress in developing the Physical Activity Ambition and the response to the challenges presented by Covid-19 particularly around inequalities. Two priorities around Active Environments and Active People – Reconditioning have been proposed as a next stage focus. In order to complete the establishment of effective governance arrangements a Physical Activity Partnership Board is being proposed. A series of system leadership outcomes have also been set out and views are requested on the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board in realising them.

## **10 Recommendations**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the progress presented and support the proposed next stage priorities of Active Environments and Active People - Reconditioning.
- Support the establishment of the Physical Activity Partnership Board as part of governance arrangements.
- Consider their role in realising a number of system leadership outcomes to support the achievement of the Physical Activity Ambition.

## **11 Background documents**

- 11.1 None.

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### **How does this help reduce health inequalities in Leeds?**

Collaborative approaches provide a structure and focus to be more effective and will help reduce health inequalities. Physical inactivity negatively impacts both physical and mental health and it is in the top 10 greatest causes of ill health nationally.

### **How does this help create a high quality health and care system?**

The PA Ambition has a preventive approach and will contribute to several of the key outcomes across the life course and will deliver future health benefits. This will decrease the demand on health and adult social care services.

### **How does this help to have a financially sustainable health and care system?**

The Sport England, Sport Industry Research Centre (2020) Social, Health and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England estimates the value of physical activity and sport as follows:

Social return on investment of PA and sport - Community physical activity generates £85.5 billion social and economic benefits annually - £1 spent generates £3.91 worth of social impact - £9.5 billion in physical and mental health benefits: - £5.2bn healthcare, £1.7bn social care savings - >£3.6bn savings by prevention of 900k diabetes cases - Further £3.5bn through avoided dementia cases & related care - £450m preventing 30m GP visits

### **Future challenges or opportunities**

Develop strong system leadership across all partners that develops and supports the PA Ambition

**Priorities of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21  
(please tick all that apply to this report)**

A Child Friendly City and the best start in life	x
An Age Friendly City where people age well	x
Strong, engaged and well-connected communities	x
Housing and the environment enable all people of Leeds to be healthy	
A strong economy with quality, local jobs	
Get more people, more physically active, more often	x
Maximise the benefits of information and technology	
A stronger focus on prevention	x
Support self-care, with more people managing their own conditions	
Promote mental and physical health equally	x
A valued, well trained and supported workforce	
The best care, in the right place, at the right time	