

Report for Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport Scrutiny Board

Date of meeting	14 th March 2018
Title of Paper	Physical Activity and Sport Strategy
Author	Rob Young
Status	For Discussion
Purpose	To present an update on the development of the new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for the city and some of the key themes emerging

1. The need for a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy

The existing Sport and Active Lifestyles Lifestyles Strategy (2013-18) for the city is in the process of being refreshed. This is timely as it is increasingly recognised that enabling the population of Leeds to be physically active underpins so many of the council priorities. This report outlines why physical activity is so important and how it can help the city achieve its wider ambition and outcomes. The research and consultation undertaken in the development of the new strategy reinforces this and aims to harness this enthusiasm and commitment to drive forward a bold and transformational strategy for the city.

In setting the context it is important to recognise that ‘physical activity’ is an all-encompassing term that captures active travel; lifestyle healthcare programmes such as cardiac rehab or weight management; active recreation including play, dance, and fitness activities; mass participation sports events; as well as more ‘traditional’ organised sporting activities. Whilst ‘sport’ is a term that is a turn off for many, it is an important part of the city’s identity and a key contributor towards health and wellbeing, social and community cohesion, and economic growth. This strategy aspires to move this to the next level and make an Active City part of the city’s DNA in the future.

2. Benefits of being active and its position in Leeds

There is a strong evidence base to highlight the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

- Children and young people are more likely to do better academically
- Physical activity and sport drives a stronger economy. The GVA of sport to the local economy is £244.1m (£166.6m resulting from people participating in sport).
- Volunteering is a win-win for society providing the workforce to enable activity to take place alongside the social and employability benefits for the individual. The economic value of sports volunteering in Leeds is £147.5m.
- Physical activity and sport can help to reduce risk taking behavior, crime and anti-social behavior.
- Playing sport has a positive effect on earnings and employability.
- Active workplaces are more productive workplaces.
- An active life reduces anxiety, lifts mood, reduces stress, promotes clearer thinking and increases self-esteem, and reduces the risk of depression.
- The value of improved quality and length of life plus health care costs avoided due to participation in sport is £329m.

However, we also know that the city has some significant challenges in terms of inequalities and that physical activity patterns mirror these social inequalities. Physical activity can be an important part of the solution to addressing health inequalities, that ultimately sees gaps in life expectancy in different

parts of the city of more than 10 years. Physical activity can help tackle social isolation, bring communities together, support aspiration and attainment amongst young people, and help provide the confidence, self-esteem and physical capabilities to support people to find employment.

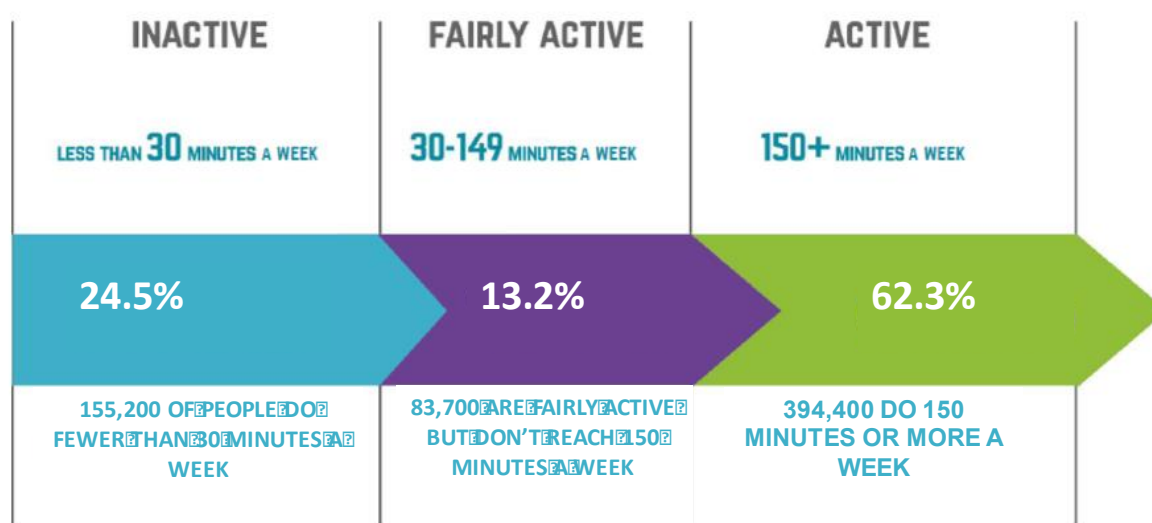
The following key citywide strategies and policy documents are now in place and demonstrate the strength of the commitment to physical activity in the city;

- **Best Council Plan (2018 -2021)** – physical activity and sport can contribute to every one of the Best City Outcomes, and is fundamental to three:
 - Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
 - Enjoy access to green spaces, leisure and the arts
 - Move around a well-planned city easily.
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016 – 2021)** - physical activity is one of only 12 priorities for the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board (and the only lifestyle risk factor identified individually within a specific priority). In addition, it is explicitly recognised in the draft **Leeds Health and Care Plan**. Under the theme of prevention:
 - ‘We will ensure that people understand the benefits of being physical active. We will create environments that encourage people to build physical activity into their everyday life.’

3. Emerging issues

There is a strong infrastructure of delivery and partners working under the umbrella of Sport Leeds to drive forwards this agenda. It is clear that this strategy is **building from some real strengths**. As highlighted below 62.3% of adults (16+) are classed as active, higher than the national average. However, we also know that **238,900 (16+) are not active enough for good health**, and that these people often tend to be those from more socially disadvantaged communities, or those suffering from long term limiting conditions. Furthermore, we know that **50% of all children in Leeds are not achieving the levels of physical activity needed to benefit their health** and 1 in 3 are classed as obese.

Physical activity levels in Leeds



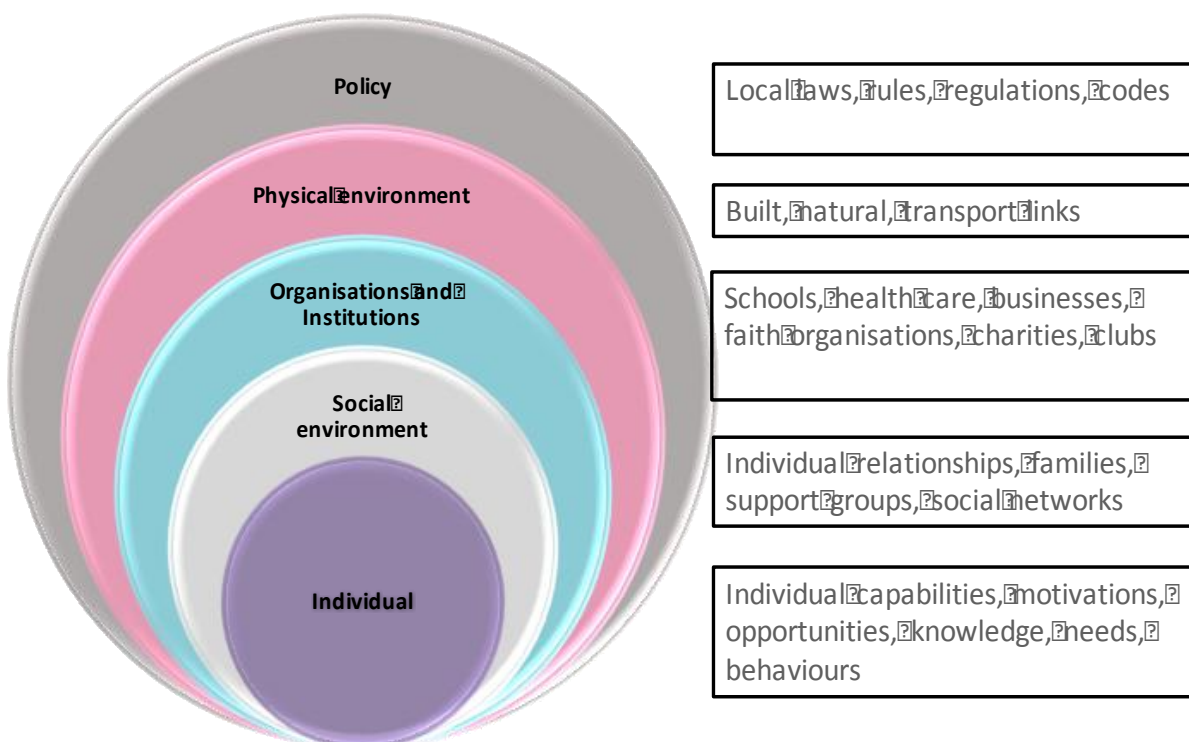
It is clear that, whilst this strategy is about physical activity and sport, a **key focus has to be on reducing inactivity and reducing inequalities**. Whilst a strategy for the whole population of Leeds, there are communities and particular groups that will need **more targeted intervention**

to support the behavior change process. The strategy needs to focus as much on influencing demand, i.e. influencing attitudes and helping to change people’s behaviours towards physical activity, as it does towards supply, i.e. ensuring there are the right opportunities in the right places, at the right times, with the right workforce. **Improved understanding of people (the customer) and places** will underpin this.

Whole Systems Approach

Evidence suggests that population level behaviour change for active lives requires a system wide approach. There isn’t one solution to the issue of inactivity. This strategy will enable cross sector workforces to consider the barriers and enablers to people leading more active lives; from policy, the physical environment, organisations and institutions, the social environment, to people of all ages, their motivations, opportunities, needs and behaviours.

One of the most notable findings of recent ‘whole systems’ interventions is that unless people and communities are recognised as having assets and resources that can and must be mobilised to achieve shared challenges, the impact of our interventions are, at best, short-lived. Consultation reinforced that **asset-based community development** be seen as central to the approach, leading to sustained improvements in physical and mental wellbeing as well as individual, community and economic development. This aligns well to the **locality working approach** within priority areas across the city.



Adopting a truly whole systems approach won’t be without challenge because there are a number of policy areas to influence. The physical environment of the city is changing rapidly, not least with the significant population growth forecast for the city. In the developments that take place we want to ensure that green and blue infrastructure is valued, as well as the opportunities to create a safer environment for active travel (walking and cycling).

Particular opportunities have been identified to influence large employers across the city to adopt the principles of a more active and healthy workplace and there is an emerging aspiration that this begins with the key strategy partners such as the Council, Universities and NHS organisations.

To summarise some of the other important cross cutting themes emerging from consultation:

- Strategic influence – it is evident that the policy hooks are in place but there needs to be an ongoing influence to help ensure these are fully maximised across other areas of public policy.
- Workforce – people, whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, make or break the customer experience. We also have the opportunity to influence a wider workforce to ensure that there is a base level of understanding of physical activity and signposting opportunities. Furthermore, there are real opportunities to capitalise on the significant student workforce to support the aims of the strategy whilst also providing key employability skills for the students themselves.
- Marketing and communications – to help underpin a population wider approach and influence demand there is an aspiration to develop a city wide behaviour change campaign around the theme of ‘Move More’.

4. Next Steps and Governance

The emerging findings from the research and consultation process are being tested with a range of stakeholders in March. The final draft strategy will be presented to the Sport Leeds Board on the 19th April.

It is evident that the city has a network of partners who work well together and trust each other. It is also evident that there is an opportunity to make even more from these partnerships and the significant knowledge capital that exists in the city and these are considerations for the future governance arrangements for Sport Leeds that will help to support the delivery of the strategy.

Implications for the future governance arrangements include:

- There is an acknowledgement that change is needed, to incorporate, among other things, a broader scope with greater emphasis on physical activity than has traditionally been the focus through Sport Leeds.
- It is encouraging that the Council’s active Leeds Service is leading on physical activity from within the Council. Moving forward clarity regarding where the strategic leadership for physical activity in the city sits is important. An operational function (possibly support by Active Leeds) is needed to drive action outside of formal meetings.
- A whole systems approach to physical activity is complex and very cross cutting and needs very senior input to drive/influence. There is a need to better coordinate and ensure there are appropriate links with other key policy drivers such as Leeds Health and Care Plan.
- Governance arrangements may go beyond Sport Leeds current remit and will therefore require endorsement from other parties, i.e. the Council.
- Future arrangements must not lose sight of the strengths of Sport Leeds, not least the engagement of the current network and environment of trust between partners.
- There is desire to avoid duplication but at the same time capitalise on the range of expertise that exists in different areas of the sport and physical activity landscape.

In support of this, there is a desire to consider the launch arrangements for the strategy to ensure it has the maximum impact as a launch pad to unite partners behind a common vision of an active city for all.