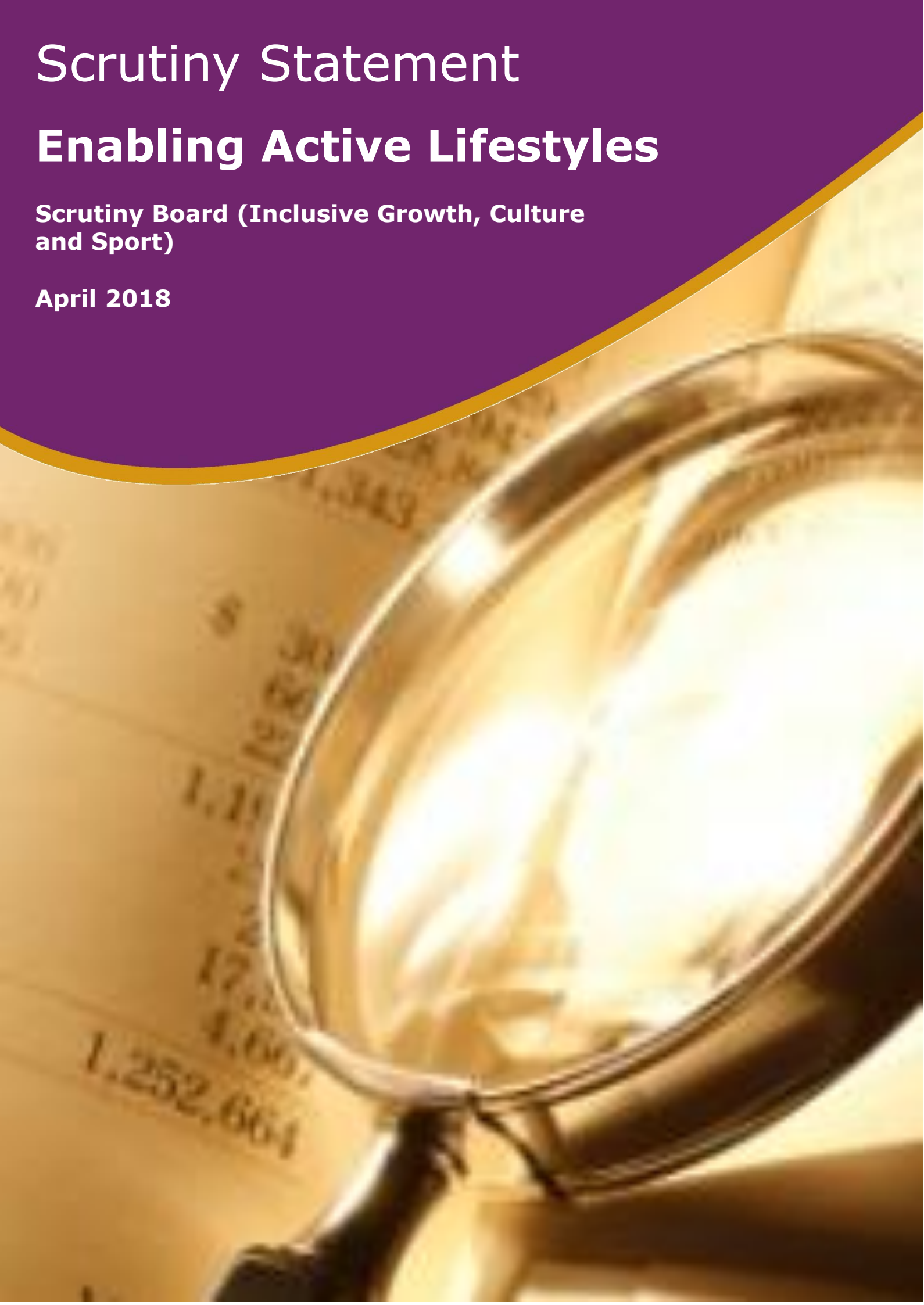


# Scrutiny Statement

## Enabling Active Lifestyles

Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport)

April 2018





# Introduction

1. The Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport Scrutiny Board was newly established in June 2017 and whilst the title of the Board specifically refers to 'sport', we agreed to consider more broadly how the Council, in conjunction with other partners, are tackling physical inactivity in Leeds and enabling more people to lead active and healthier lifestyles.
2. In doing so, we themed our October and December 2017 meetings around this particular agenda in order to gain a better understanding of the contribution that an active lifestyle can bring in terms of achieving the Council's wider outcomes and priorities.
3. As the existing Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy (2013-18) for the city was also in the process of being refreshed, the timeliness of this allowed us to use our March 2018 meeting to consider and share views surrounding the development of a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Leeds.
4. We welcomed a range of contributors to our discussions, with representation from Sport and Active Lifestyles; Public Health; Asset Management and Regeneration; and Communities Team, as well as the active involvement of the Council's Deputy Leader with Executive responsibility for this particular agenda. We also valued the input of a leading independent consultant, Rob Young MBE, surrounding the key factors and emerging issues associated with the development of a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Leeds.
5. Within this Statement we have briefly summarised our key observations and conclusions based on the information shared with Scrutiny this year.
6. Moving forward, we strongly advise on-going Scrutiny involvement in this area of work by successor Scrutiny Boards as we acknowledge that there is still a significant amount of work to be undertaken over the coming months and years to achieve the city's long term ambition to evoke a cultural change in which being physically active becomes the norm.



# Observations and Conclusions

## The key benefits of leading an active lifestyle.

7. Whilst being physically active is inarguably better for your health and wellbeing, we were very interested to learn how significant the health benefits really are, for example:
  - Being active can reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 30-40%. People with diabetes can reduce their need for medication and the risk of complications by being more active.
  - Persuading inactive people to become more active could prevent one in ten cases of stroke and heart disease in the UK.
  - One in eight women in the UK are at risk of developing breast cancer at some point in their lives. Being active every day can reduce that risk by up to 20% and also improve the lives of those living with cancer.
  - Dementia affects 800,000 people in the UK. Staying active can reduce the risk of vascular dementia and also have a positive impact on non-vascular dementia.
  - Depression is increasing in all age groups. People who are inactive have three times the rate of moderate to severe depression of active people. Being active is central to our mental health.
  
8. There is also strong evidence demonstrating the socio-economic benefits to leading a more active lifestyle, for example:
  - Being active plays a key role in brain development in early childhood and is also good for longer-term educational attainment. For instance, young people's participation in physical activity improves their numeracy scores by 8% on average above non-participants. In addition, under-achieving young people who take up physical activity see a 29% increase in numeracy skills and a 12 – 16% increase in other transferable skills. Other programmes targeted at young people at risk of offending show that physical activity can enhance self-esteem, reduce re-offending and support access to the workplace. In Leeds, for example, this is evidenced through the delivery of the Dame Kelly Holmes project and Positive Futures interventions.
  
  - In terms of economic impact, physical activity participation contributes £244.1 million to Leeds economy and provides a total of 7374 jobs in Leeds. It is also estimated that the value of volunteering related to physical activity is £147.5 million (information taken from Sport England local profile data). The economic impact of sports events in the city is also significant with, for example, the World Triathlon Series bringing in a cash boost to the local economy of at least £1.2 million with over 5 hours of TV coverage in the UK and worldwide. In a wider context, increased energy levels through participating in physical activity boosts workplace productivity and reduces sickness absence.
  
  - Physical activity has the ability to strengthen social networks and community cohesion. Through physical activity and sport, individuals can develop a sense of belonging and can build quality peer relationships with other members of their community. Projects that support the delivery of these outcomes include small scale asset based community development initiatives or larger scale facility development associated with events, such as the social regeneration which followed the Commonwealth Games in Manchester.



# Observations and Conclusions

- Physical activity, through active travel – walking and cycling - also has the ability to connect people and places together whilst supporting an improvement in air quality through a reduction in road traffic emissions. It is understood that people who walk or cycle to work are four times more likely to achieve the Chief Medical Officers recommendation of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. Walking is also the most inclusive form of physical activity and therefore we particularly recognise the significant benefits to be gained through more proactive action in enabling people to walk more freely around the city linked to the registration and maintenance of footpaths and public rights of way.
  - Social Isolation affects people of all ages but in particular it is older people who are at greater risk due to factors compounding such as wider determinants and long term health conditions. There are estimated to be 37000 older people experiencing loneliness or social isolation across Leeds. Cause for concern must be noted as research shows that loneliness and isolation is detrimental to health and comparable as a risk factor for early death to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Therefore physical activity for older people not only improves physiological health outcomes but increases the opportunity for improving social connections.
9. We acknowledge that within Leeds there are significant challenges in terms of health and social inequalities that ultimately sees gaps in life expectancy in different parts of the city of more than 10 years. Enabling people to be more physically active can therefore be part of the solution to addressing these inequalities in terms of tackling social isolation, raising aspirations and attainment amongst young people and improving people's confidence and physical capabilities to support them to find employment. As such, it is clear that enabling the population of Leeds to be physically active underpins so many of the Council's existing priorities.

## Acknowledging the scale of the issue in Leeds.

10. The table below presents the average physical activity levels for adults (16+) in Leeds and compares these to regional and national figures.

Metric	England	West Yorkshire	Leeds
Active (150+ minutes a week)	60.6%	59.3%	62.3% (394,400)
Fairly Active (30-149 minutes a week)	13.8%	13.8%	13.2% (83,700)
Inactive (Less than 30 minutes a week)	25.6%	26.9%	24.5% (155,200)

11. Whilst the figures do show that 62.3% of adults are classed as active (higher than the national average), it is concerning to note that approximately 238,900 people in Leeds are still not active enough for good health. We also learned that these people often tend to be those from more socially disadvantaged communities or those suffering from long term conditions. In addition to these figures, we learned that 50% of all children are also



# Observations and Conclusions

not achieving the required levels of physical activity needed to benefit their health and that 1 in 3 are classed as obese.

## **Time for a refreshed new approach.**

12. It is important that we continue to harness the good work arising from the Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy 2013-18, but we also recognise the need for a step change in order to achieve a more enlightened, integrated, long term systemic change to the way all Council services and other organisations work together on this agenda.
13. We therefore support the aspirations of the newly proposed city-wide Physical Activity and Sport Strategy in terms of driving forward transformational change linked to a long term ambition to deliver a better, more holistic systems approach to physical inactivity that will evoke a cultural change in which being physically active becomes the norm. The Strategy also sets out a vision for Leeds to become the best city in England for physical activity.
14. The diagram at Appendix 1 illustrates how this new Strategy seeks to make a difference through a range of priorities and enablers that are underpinned by 3 guiding principles towards a new way of working. At this early stage of development, we acknowledge that further developments may also arise as part of the ongoing consultation process leading up to the formal launch of the Strategy.
15. However, throughout this development process the focus of the Strategy will remain the same in terms of tackling inactivity and reducing inequalities and so whilst this is to be a Strategy for the whole population of Leeds, it recognises that there are communities and particular groups that will need more targeted intervention too in order to support the behaviour change process.
16. Whilst acknowledging that future arrangements linked to this new Strategy must also not lose sight of the strengths of Sport Leeds, not least the network of partners who have worked well together, it does present an opportunity to make even more from these partnerships and the significant knowledge base that does exist in the city. As such, moving forward we do recognise that change will be needed surrounding future governance arrangements to incorporate a broader scope with greater emphasises on physical activity than has traditionally been the focus through Sport Leeds.

## **Embedding physical activity and making 'being an active city' a city-wide obsession.**

17. In light of the significant health and socio-economic benefits to be gained through enabling more active lifestyles, it is vital that we continue to work proactively towards embedding physical activity into the fabric of everyday life, making it easy, cost effective and the normal choice in every community in Leeds.
18. Linked to this, all Scrutiny Boards were given the opportunity this year to consider initial proposals surrounding a refresh of the Best Council Plan for 2018/19 – 2020/21.



# Observations and Conclusions

Although we acknowledged the proposal for 'supporting healthy, active lifestyles' to be reflected as part of the refreshed Health and Wellbeing priority set out in the Plan, we felt that this area still warranted more prominence. We therefore made a formal recommendation to the Executive Board for it to support the need to make 'supporting healthy, active lifestyles' a dedicated Best Council Plan priority or city-wide obsession to support new efforts to achieve a sustainable whole systems approach towards physical activity for Leeds.

19. Although this recommendation was not taken forward as part of the 2018/19 Best Council Plan, we maintain our view that by raising the profile of this agenda and making 'being an active city' a city-wide obsession, this will help evoke a much needed cultural change in which being physically active becomes embedded into the fabric of everyday life.
20. Moving forward, we recognise that there is a significant amount of work to be undertaken over the coming months and years to achieve the vision and ambitions of the newly proposed Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Leeds and therefore we strongly advise on-going Scrutiny involvement in this area of work by successor Scrutiny Boards too.





# Appendix 1



**Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport)**

**Statement – Enabling Active Lifestyles**

**April 2018**