



Healthier Communities Select Committee

Report title: Physical Activity Strategy Briefing

Date: 9/6/2023

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Outline and recommendations

To note, and comment on the contents of the report in preparation for its presentation at Mayor and Cabinet in July.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Mayor and Cabinet

13 January 2021 – Leisure Management Arrangements

3 November 2021 – Leisure Management Arrangements

Healthier Communities Select Committee

1 March 2023 – Leisure Contracts Performance

1. Summary

- 1.1. This paper seeks comments from the Healthier Communities Select Committee on the contents of the draft Lewisham Physical Activity Strategy 2023 – 2028 (appendix 1) which outlines the work we will undertake to monitor and increase the physical activity participation levels of our residents over the next five years.
- 1.2. The physical activity strategy has been in development for a number of years, with public consultations taking place before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This gives this document the unique perspective of tracking how attitudes towards physical activity have changed since the unprecedented events of 2020.
- 1.3. In recognition of the great work already taking place throughout the borough to improve the health and wellbeing of our local residents; this strategy provides a

framework for how the Council will work in partnership with local organisations to empower our community to engage in physical activity.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note, and comment on the contents of the report in preparation for its presentation at Mayor and Cabinet in July.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2026. The characteristics of the Borough are clearly set out with a growing and diverse population including some areas of very high deprivation and child poverty. Encouraging healthy lifestyles and the availability of local leisure centres are key to delivering three of the key priorities namely:
- Supporting the delivery of an inclusive and high achieving education system
 - Working with schools to strengthen the links between their students and our local sport and physical activity providers
 - Contributing to improving the health and wellbeing of our residents by;
 - Addressing some of the issues identified in the BLACHIR report
 - Empowering our residents to live a physically active lifestyle
 - Contributing to a Cleaner and Greener Lewisham
 - Increasing physical activity also has direct benefits for the local environment. For example, increasing the number of journeys taken on foot and by bicycle will lead to reduced traffic and an improvement in air quality and the overall environment.
- 3.2. Partnership working is a key tool in delivering against these priorities. It is clear that leisure services can play a major role in the delivery of the Corporate Strategy priorities.
- 3.3. The Lewisham Local Plan – This is an important document to help inform the need for future built facilities (including the active environment) and services (impacted by a growing population and potential changes to the demographic profile of the Borough)
- 3.4. Lewisham Whole Systems Obesity Action Plan - The Council's whole systems approach to obesity has three overarching aims:
- Promote an environment that supports healthy weight and wellbeing as the norm, making healthier options the easiest choice for our residents to eat well and have active lifestyles;
 - Supporting our communities and families to become healthier and more resilient, which will include addressing the wider determinants of health; and
 - Tackle the weight issues of those who are already overweight and obese.
- 3.5. The strategy sits alongside an annual implementation plan with targets designed to assess progress linked to getting people more physically active, increasing active travel and using outdoor space for exercise.
- 3.6. The Lewisham Physical Activity Strategy closely aligns to the vision outlined in Sport England's new national strategy 'Uniting the Movement'. This strategy highlights the importance of ensuring that whilst indoor leisure facilities remain inclusive and accessible to local people; outdoor and nontraditional spaces should be recognised as equally important in getting people more physically active.

4. Background

- 4.1. The strategy has been a long time in development. Originally, the strategy aimed to

incorporate plans to change the facility mix in the borough, alongside an overall framework for physical activity.

- 4.2. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition of the Leisure Contract from Fusion Lifestyle to GLL somewhat altered the need create one overarching document.
- 4.3. As a result, the Council commissioned an independent assessment of Lewisham's indoor sports facilities (appendix 2) to accompany the existing Playing Pitch Strategy adopted in 2019 (appendix 3). These, together with the draft Physical Activity Strategy create a suite of documents that outline Lewisham's aims for sport and physical activity for the coming years.
- 4.4. In essence, both the Indoor Built Sports Facilities Assessment and the Playing Pitch Strategy, provide an in-depth look at the current vs future supply and demand for sports facilities which has formed an information based for the development of our Physical Activity Strategy.

5. The Importance of Physical Activity

- 5.1. The development of this Physical Activity Strategy sets out a positive vision and clear way forward to achieve much improved rates of physical activity amongst our residents.
- 5.2. This is required as there is a clear correlation between meeting the Chief Medical Officers (CHO) recommendations for weekly physical activity (a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity weekly, along with strengthening activities) and good health.
- 5.3. Furthermore, not meeting physical activity recommendations increases an individual's chances of having a major long-term condition and an early death.
- 5.4. Physical inactivity is the one for the leading risk factor for death in the world, significantly increasing an individual's chances of suffering with coronary heart disease (24%), a 16% enhanced risk of stroke and a 42% higher risk of developing diabetes (Lippi et al, 2020).
- 5.5. Figure 1 below displays Sport England's Active Lives Survey data from their most recent survey (November 2021 – November 2022). This data compares Lewisham's levels of physical inactivity (less than 30 minutes of exercise per week) and levels of physical activity with the average activity rates across London.

Figure 1. Sport England Active Lives Data Nov 2021 – Nov 2022

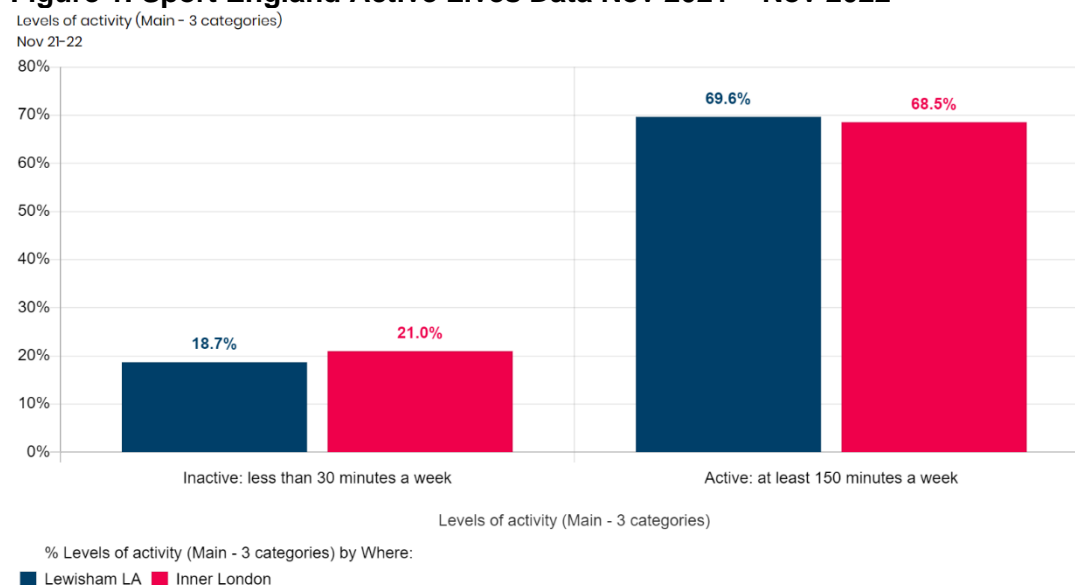


Figure 1. Sport England Active Lives Data Nov 2021 – Nov 2022

- 5.6. The graph above shows that c70% of our residents are physically active for 150 minutes of more each week, this is great news as this demonstrates that Lewisham residents are marginally more active than the London average. We will of course aim to keep those already engaged in physical activity active.
- 5.7. However, the graph also shows that Lewisham have a higher proportion of inactive residents than the London average. This is a figure that needs to be addressed due to the health implications mentioned in points 4.3 – 4.5.

6. The Physical Activity Strategy 2023 – 2028

- 6.1. The development of this Physical Activity Strategy sets out a positive vision and clear way forward to achieve much improved rates of physical activity amongst our residents.
- 6.2. We are aiming to make Lewisham a healthy, prosperous, safe and cohesive place to live and we believe that physical activity has a big role to play in helping to achieve that aim.
- 6.3. Our vision for this strategy is to:
- Create a whole systems approach to physical activity, which will transform the health, wellbeing and quality of life of all Lewisham residents by supporting them to become more active in their daily lives.*
- 6.4. The strategy sets a strategic framework around 3 key themes – Active People, Active Environments and Active Systems.
- Active People
- 6.5. Our Active People theme focuses on ensuring as many of our c300k residents are as active as possible. This means we must aim to ensure our programmes and services that are tailored around the needs of our local people.
- 6.6. As stated in points 4.6 and 4.7, we know that there is a fair proportion of the population already engaged in physical activity. In light of this, considerable efforts will be made to engage our residents that are underrepresented in physical activity participation. These residents fit into five groupings which are highlighted in bold below.
- 6.7. We aim to strengthen links between schools and community sports clubs / organisations to ensure that we have clear pathways for our **Children and Young People** to get into physical activity.
- 6.8. In Lewisham, **women and girls** are more likely to be inactive (19.8%) when compared to males (16.7%) - Sport England Active Lives 2021. With females tending to stop doing physical activity at around 14 years old. So the creation of appealing and accessible opportunities for our female residents to ensure they feel safe, confident, motivated and supported enough to change their behaviours is of paramount importance.
- 6.9. According to the 2021 Census, 17.7% of residents are living with a **disability or long-term health condition** which limits their daily activities. Our work will need to focus on ensuring our local physical activity deliverers are supported in creating inclusive spaces for our residents to take part in activities, as well as developing reliable pathways for carers and health practitioners to be able to signpost residents into activities.
- 6.10. **Older adults** aged 65+ make up 9.6% of the Lewisham population. We know that maintaining physical activity becomes harder as we get older, so this will require us to focus on creating the conditions that make healthier lifestyle choices easier for our older residents.
- 6.11. We also need to ensure the sessions and activities available throughout our borough reflect the rich **diversity** in ethnic backgrounds our borough has. According to

Lewisham's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Lewisham is the 15th most ethnically diverse local authority in England, with 27% of our residents coming from Black ethnic groups; so we need to ensure everything delivered through this strategy considers and reflects the ethnic diversity of our borough.

Active Environments

- 6.12. Our Active Environments theme focuses on the impact our local environment have on enabling our residents to access opportunities to be physically active.
- 6.13. We will ensure that all of our residents have access to high quality, safe and affordable places to engage with physical activity, whether this be in a traditional gym/leisure centre or a non-traditional place like religious institutions and workplaces.
- 6.14. We will continue to work with our current leisure providers – Greenwich Leisure Limited (operating as Better) and 1Life to ensure that our **Leisure Centres** these facilities are at the centre of our residents' needs by continuing to improve the pools, gyms, sports halls, sauna and steam room facilities to keep them open.
- 6.15. We know that the correlation between inactivity and economically impacted areas is stark. We will take a **'place-based' approach** to targeting the most inactive areas in our borough. In particular, this will focus on the most economically impacted areas in the south of the borough, considering how we can ensure the most appropriate programmes and assets are in place, no matter who is providing them and better utilise existing assets to help these areas to become more active.
- 6.16. As stated in our Transport Strategy (2018), we must acknowledge the importance of encouraging our residents to utilise **active travel** modes of transport. This includes increasing the number of people walking, cycling or even scooting to, from and within our borough.
- 6.17. We also want to ensure we are utilising **less-traditional spaces** for people to engage in sport and physical activity. This will involve harnessing activities already taking place in community centres and schools (outside of school hours) to enable effective signposting to residents looking for activities closer to home.
- 6.18. Our Active Systems theme aims to contribute to having a positive impact on a number of societal challenges including closing the gap on health issues such as childhood obesity, increasing levels of employment skills and employability and reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

Active Systems

- 6.19. We acknowledge that we can not achieve the aims of this theme without working in partnership with a range of **internal and external partners** that work to address these societal issue. Partners should include (but are not limited to) public health, social care, employment, antisocial behaviour and crime prevention to ensure we have effect pathways and codesigned interventions to cater to the cohorts of people they work with.
- 6.20. We need to expand on our current methods of **communication** to ensure residents are able to find how and where they can get active information they are looking for that the local systems and structures in place to facilitate the achievement of our vision. Supporting and upskilling the existing and workforce as well as new volunteers to deliver physical activity to their community.
- 6.21. We aim to work with our local further education providers to unlock the potential of our future leaders, providing pathways to increase the number of registered coaches and volunteers in our borough. We will particularly focus on female coaches and male volunteers to help to support the great work our sports clubs and organisations provide for the community
- 6.22. The strategy is purposefully iterative with targets set on an annual basis in

recognition of the fact that we have a lot of rebuilding to do post COVID in re-engaging our residents in physical activity.

7. Governance

- 7.1. Implementation planning for the Physical Activity Strategy will take place on an annual basis, owned by a (yet to be named) stakeholder group. This stakeholder group will be a cross cutting partnership body made up of the external organisations and internal departments we will be working in partnership with to achieve the aims of the strategy and accompanying implementation plan.
- 7.2. The implementation plan will be produced and delivered collaboratively by the stakeholder forum on an annual basis. The Stakeholder forum will meet periodically throughout the year to monitor progress against action plan targets.
- 7.3. The stakeholder group will report to the Healthier Communities Select Committee and as required

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. The adoption of this strategy in the recommendation does not have any direct financial implications with existing budgets taking account for current physical activity commitments.
- 8.2. This primarily relates to the cost of delivering the two existing Leisure contracts in the borough and staff resourcing the Councils Sport and Leisure Team.
- 8.3. There may be elements of capital works required to delivery improvements to local facilities through the lifespan of this strategy however, these would typically be resourced via a combination of external funding sources and applications for capital funding allocations.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. Section 1 localism act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything that individuals may generally do.
- 9.2. Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended by Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012) introduced a new duty on Councils in England to take appropriate steps to improve the health of the people who live in their area.
- 9.3. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on the Council to ensure its functions are discharged having regard to the need to promote the welfare of children, including preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- 9.4. The adoption of the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy will assist the Council in fulfilling the above statutory obligations.

10. Equalities implications

- 10.1. The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

11. Climate change and environmental implications

- 11.1. There are limited climate change and environmental implications that arise as a result of this report. However, through encouraging more Lewisham residents to engage in active travel methods, there may be a reduction in the number of people using traditional transportation methods.

12. Crime and disorder implications

- 12.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications as that arise as a result of this report.

13. Health and wellbeing implications

- 13.1. There is a wealth of evidence to highlight that the benefits of an active lifestyle are far reaching and impact positively on people's lives across the life course. Those who play sport and are active are healthier, happier and more likely to be successful in academic and professional life.
- 13.2. We know that the benefits of an active lifestyle are far reaching and impact positively on people's lives. The weight of the national evidence base regarding the risks and costs of inactivity is compelling:
- Physical inactivity directly contributes to one in six deaths in the UK, the same number as smoking;
 - Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK;
 - Physical inactivity leads to around 37,000 premature deaths a year;
 - Evidence highlights that active people are less likely to suffer from heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and may consequently live 5 years longer.
- 13.3. Physical inactivity poses a serious and growing danger to society; it damages health, economy and the environment and limits the educational attainment and future lives of children.'
- 13.4. It is estimated by Public Health England that the cost of physical inactivity is £7.4 billion per year.

14. Report author and contact

- 14.1. Neville Graham, Sport and Leisure Service Manager 020 8314 6009 – neville.graham@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.2. Chris Goddard, Business Partner-Financial Services 020 8314 8466 – chris.goddard@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.3. For legal implications: Melanie Dawson, Principal Lawyer – Place – melanie.dawson@lewisham.gov.uk