



Healthier Communities Select Committee

Physical Activity Strategy Update

Date: 19 November 2024

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Neville Graham

Outline and recommendations

To review and comment on the progress made on the Physical Activity Strategy and accompanying year 1 Action Plan

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 to update Healthier Communities Select Committee on the progress made on the Lewisham Physical Activity Strategy 2023 – 2028, adopted by Mayor and Cabinet in July 2023
- 1.2. The adopted Physical Activity Strategy was accompanied by an Action Plan, detailing the aims of the first year of the strategy and how they would be achieved.
- 1.3. This paper is accompanied by RAG rated spreadsheet, detailing progress against each aim of the first-year action plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To review and comment on the progress made on the Physical Activity Strategy and accompanying year 1 Action Plan

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 location sport and physical activity providers
 - contributing through improving the health and well-being 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 and sets out the facilities (including the active environment) and services required in the borough (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 whole systems approach obesity has three overarching aim:
 - promote an environment that supports healthy weight and well-being 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 determinant of health; and
 - tackle the white issue of those who are already overweight and obese.
 - 3.5. The strategy sits alongside an annual implementation plan with targets designs to 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 national strategy uniting the movement. This strategy highlights the importance of ensuring that whilst indoor leisure facilities remain inclusive and accessible for local people; outdoor and nontraditional spaces should be recognised as equally important in getting people more physically active.
- ## **4. Background**
- 4.1. The physical activity strategy set out a clear and positive vision to make Lewisham a healthy, cross press, safe and cohesive place to live, and the role that physical activity has in achieving those things.

- 4.2. The overarching aim of the strategy what's the increase the number of residents achieving the chief medical officer's recommendations for leading an active life. This is for adults to achieve a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on a weekly basis and to undertake activities that will help strengthen the body.
- 4.3. Increasing the number of adults achieving this standard, we will simultaneously reduce the amount of inactive (definition needed) people living in the Borough. Reducing inactivity is not to be one of the key ways to mitigate incidences of long term health conditions and early death.
- 4.4. Our vision for this strategy is to:

Create a whole systems approach to physical activity, which will transform the health, well-being and quality of life for all Lewisham residents by supporting them to become more active in their daily lives.
- 4.5. The strategy was divided into 3 main themes, based on the areas that would give the most impact if development could be achieved.
- 4.6. Active People aims focus on ensuring all pockets of the Lewisham community were provided with as many opportunities as possible to become physically active. Underrepresented groups including women and girls, children and young people , people with disabilities or long term health conditions, older people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds being the main focus of this theme.
- 4.7. Active Environments focuses on 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.
- 4.8. Active Systems concentrates on the development of clear and effective pathways to improve childhood obesity, increasing levels of employment skills and employability and reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.
- 4.9. Each of the themes within the strategy have been used as a basis to form an implementation plan to enable monitoring of progress across year 1 of the strategy.
- 4.10. The outcomes within the implementation plan are a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to create a holistic viewpoint of the sports and leisure landscape across the borough.
- 4.11. With the Sport and Leisure team within the Council being quite small, working in partnership with a range of internal and external partners is central to the delivery of this strategy.
- 4.12. The original plan was to create a stakeholder group, made up of key partners to ensure each outcome within the implementation plan could be achieved. However, upon reflection, much of the implementation plan goals across the first year were achieved without the need for arranging specific calendar of physical activity themed meetings.
- 4.13. Officers from the Sport and leisure team were already engaged in a range of regular working groups such as the Lewisham Obesity Alliance, Greener Adaptive Lewisham and the Lewisham Colleges Physical Activity Advisory Board; as well as being engaged in a range of sports and leisure forums and groups. This has allowed the Sports and Leisure Team to achieve the large majority of outcomes without creating another meeting with similar attendees.

5. Year 1 Progress

- 5.1. The year 1 implementation plan contained 60 target outcomes, split across the 3 themes outlined in 4.6 – 4.8. Of the 60 outcomes, the following RAG outcomes have been achieved:

- Green / Achieved – 40
- Amber / In Progress – 14
- Red / Incomplete – 6

- 5.2. The key successes of the implementation plan are in the high proportion of outcomes that have been completed across the year. Further to this, some of the outcomes went a lot better than expected. An example of this is the objective for the leisure centres to provide guidance on the activities that are suitable for older people to take part in across the borough. The actual outcome culminated in a team of older people from Lewisham taking part in the GLL Club Games - a festival of sport created for participation by older adults aged 50+. Lewisham placed 4th across GLL managed boroughs in London and the southeast.
- 5.3. Another example is the support offered to Lewisham Indoor Bowls Club. The user membership for the indoor bowls centre (Kangley Bridge Road) was just over 100 members after the COVID-19 pandemic enforced closure. Through partnership working between Council Officers, the Club and GLL, membership is consistently over 300 each year. This offers a high proportion of Lewisham residents over 60 years of age a great physical activity outlet through the winter months.
- 5.4. Further to the above, the outcome focused on mapping current physical activity across the borough developed into the creation of a physical activity search platform ([Lewisham - Get Active](#)) dedicated to Lewisham activity providers. The platform allows sports clubs and organisations to upload the details of their sessions, enabling residents to locate the activities taking place in close proximity. Activities can be searched by activity type and postcode.
- 5.5. There were some mixed results with regard to supporting the leisure contractors to return to pre-COVID membership numbers. Memberships across the GLL managed facilities have seen a slight increase when compared to pre-COVID numbers. However, recovery on the 1Life contract has been slower than expected.
- 5.6. Some of the contributing factors for this could be the emergence of low cost gyms local to the facility, coupled with a higher than normal turnover of staff in senior management positions. Council Officers have been working closely with the management team to achieve outcomes set out in a service improvement plan.
- 5.7. This has resulted in financial investment by 1Life, to improve key areas of their local delivery:
- Full re-decoration of public circulation areas
 - A full refurbishment of the gym and spin studios
 - Investment in to senior management positions
- 5.8. Membership numbers have steadily been increasing, with Council Officers working closely with 1Life to ensure improvement across the centre continues.
- 5.9. The Amber rated outcomes are rated as such as they are either in progress, or the outcome objective had been slightly amended. An example of this the outcome aimed at establishing a baseline figure for the number of leisure centre staff that come from Lewisham. Whilst this is possible, the baseline figure only highlights a point in time, and with the transient nature of some leisure roles (particularly lifeguards) means that this figure and be arbitrary in nature.
- 5.10. This outcome should be focused on ensuring that all job vacancies should be advertised through local channels as a minimum, to ensure local residents are given the best chance of obtaining roles.
- 5.11. Other Amber rated outcomes are rated as such as the working in achieving them is dependant of external factors such as funding opportunities. An example of this is the outcome aimed at the delivery of a joint physical activity-based crime intervention programme. Conversations have been conducted about targeting the south of the

borough for the programme as there has been an increase in antisocial behaviour in the area around Downham Health and Leisure Centre. Delivery partners have been identified however, funding for the delivery is yet to be identified.

- 5.12. The Red rated outcomes are outcomes that have not been completed. As mentioned in 4.12 & 4.13, the formation of a sport and physical activity stakeholders group was reviewed due to the requirement of this outcome at the time. It was decided that the Sport and Leisure Team were sufficiently linking to internal and external stakeholders for what needed to be achieved through the year 1 plan. This outcome is to be reviewed year on year to ensure resource time is efficiently utilised.
- 5.13. Whilst a physical activity community grants programme would have been desirable. Upon review the identified available funding was spread across a few different initiatives. Identified funds (£10k) contributed to the delivery of the Lewisham School District Football Team and provided match funding for talent bursaries which allow talents young people the opportunity to use or local centre centres for free or at a discounted rate.
- 5.14. The year 2 implementation plan is currently being developed after evaluation of the first year's plan. The year 2 plan will focus on building upon the achievements of year 1.
- 5.15. Many of the objectives in the year 1 plan were aimed at locating clubs and organisations that deliver across the borough and providing a platform for them to advertise provision.
- 5.16. The second year's plan will aim to improve the delivery capacity of our local clubs and organisations. This will include the delivery of a local sports forum, aimed at providing our local organisations with a coordinated voice to enable effective consultation.
- 5.17. This will allow Officers to better coordinate partner resources, including working with London Sport to provide workshops designed around local need.
- 5.18. The formation of the stakeholder group will again be considered.

6. Leisure Centre Update

- 6.1. The Leisure centre update provided to HCSC in February 2023 highlighted a steady increase in leisure centre participation between April 2021 and December 2022. This was due to the positive impact GLL have had in Lewisham since the award of the Leisure Contract in October 2020.
- 6.2. Figure 1 below displays an updated position on leisure Centre participation between January 2023 and August 2024 across the 5 sites GLL manage on behalf of the Council.
- 6.3. Participation across 2023 displayed a strong improvement. There are the usual dips in participation due to seasonality around the school holidays. This is particularly pronounced over the Christmas period.
- 6.4. We this see another increase in activity between January and March 2023. This is normally the period where people tend to join gyms and increase physical activity levels due to new years resolutions. For this reason, the first quarter of the calendar year is normally where we find the highest growth in membership sales.

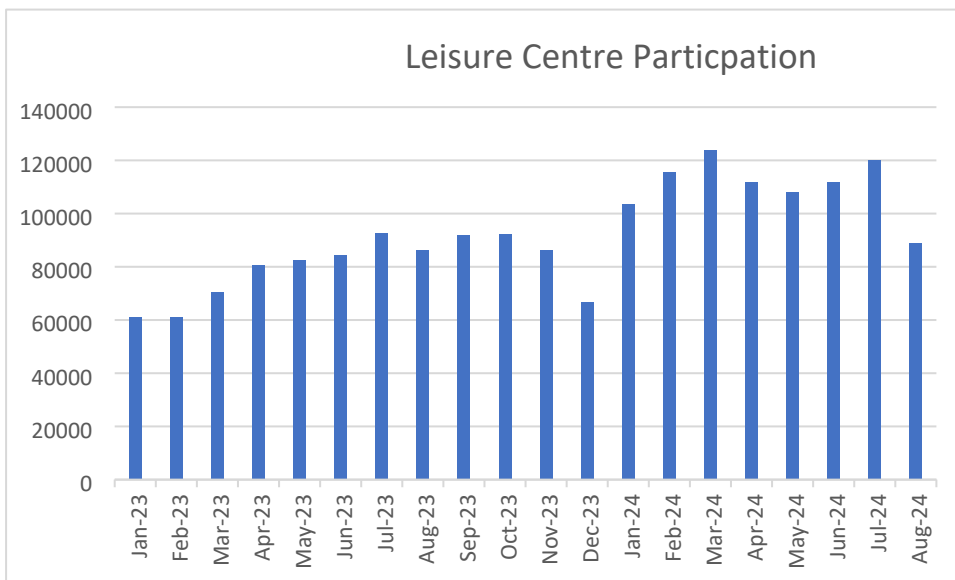


Figure 1. Leisure Centre Participation in GLL Leisure Centres.

- 6.5. Adversely, centre participation at Downham Health and Leisure Centre has not performed at the same rate as the GLL managed facilities. Figure 2 below highlights the decline in participation between January 2023 and June 2024.
- 6.6. Although the decline in participation looks stark, it may not be as drastic as depicted. October 2023 saw a 1Life transition to a new back of house customer relationship management system (CRM). Part of the decline in participation figures can be attributed to the upgrade in software which uses more sophisticated/accurate formulae to record participation (the older system would use a set of assumptions for bigger block bookings such as football matches).
- 6.7. However, it must be noted that there are also some performance related factors that could be contributing to the decline in participation figures.
- 6.8. Some monitoring visits have discovered front of house staff leaving the turnstiles open to manage queues during busier swim school periods. Whilst this can be common across the leisure industry, financial penalties can be applied if officers suspect this is a common practice. Council monitoring is reviewing this conduct on a regular basis.

More positively, as mentioned in 5.7, 1Life conducted a full gym and cycle studio refurbishment in July 2024, resulting in an uplift in membership sales since this point. Officers will continue to work closely with 1Life to support centre uptake by the local community.

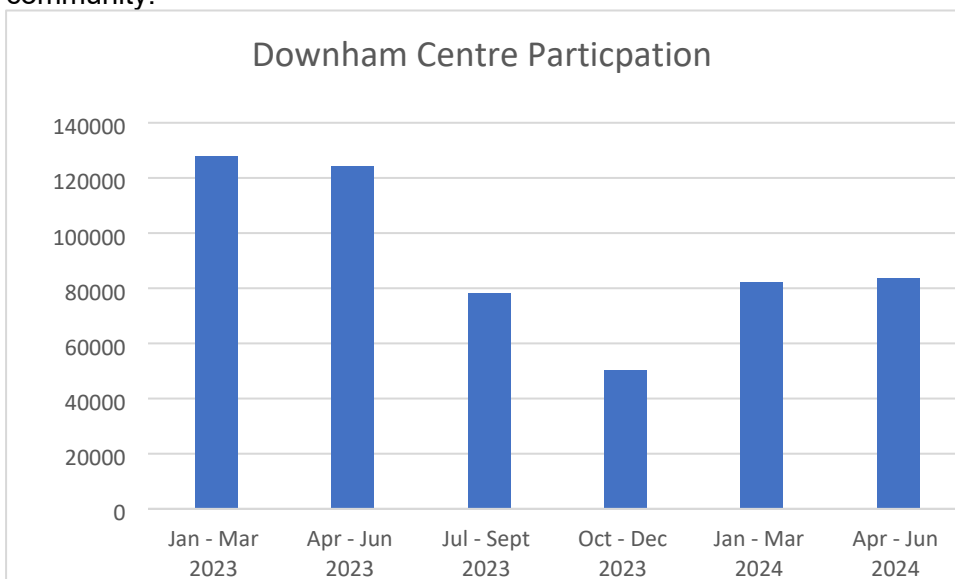


Figure 2. Downham Health and Leisure Centre participation.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

9. Report author and contact

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10. Appendices

- 10.1. Appendix A- Physical Activity Strategy - Year 1 Implementation Plan