

## **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

**18th March 2020**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Physical Activity and Sports Strategy - Update</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mark Deaville - Deputy Leader &amp; Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Sports</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Robert Wilks - Principal Officer (Leisure and Recreation)</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>All</b>

#### **Appendices Attached – None**

#### **1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 To update the Panel on the progress of the Council's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands'.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel;
- Note the progress made to deliver the Council's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.

#### **3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 In August 2017, Cabinet approved a new physical activity and sport strategy called 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands'. The main thrust of the strategy was to use an evidence based approach to enable the Council and other partners from across Staffordshire Moorlands, support people to become more physically active.
- 3.2 The strategy was developed in order to be the catalyst for change. To frame an understanding that physical activity levels of people and communities do not stand in isolation, but that they are intertwined with many other influencing factors which affect everyone's life, and that we need to understand this better if we are to have an impact.

3.3 Building on this, the strategy sets 5 strategic objectives for focus, underpinned by an acceptance that partnerships and collaboration would be the key to having an impact in the future;

- 1) Supporting the inactive to become more active,
- 2) Addressing the inequalities in physical activity and sport engagement,

**a:** Women and girls, **b:** People with a limiting illness or disability, **c:** People aged 55 years and over, **d:** People in lower social grades (NS SEC 5-8), **e:** Children and young people aged 5 to 18.

- 3) Establishing a 'place based approach' with strategic partners focussing on Leek North, Biddulph East, Cheadle, Forsbrook, Cellarhead and Endon
- 4) Maximise physical activity and sporting opportunities using the outdoor and natural environment,
- 5) Supporting our existing club and voluntary sector base to build local capacity.

3.4 Headline data regarding physical activity levels in the Staffordshire Moorlands, referenced in the strategy document, are taken from the Active People Survey (2012-16). This survey was replaced by the Active Lives Survey from 2016 onwards meaning there are some differences and conflict between measures. For this reason the information shown in the table below is from the Active Lives Survey only.

Measure	Nov 15/16 data set	Nov 17/18 data set
Inactive (< 30mins per week)	34.8%	33.3%
Active (150 mins or more per week)	52.5%	56.7%

3.5 Over the 3 year period, results of the survey suggest that inactivity levels are slowly reducing. The survey also suggests that a greater number of people are active for more than 150 minutes per week. Whilst this picture is encouraging, fluctuations in results from the Active Lives survey has been noted elsewhere, therefore it is important that Members also look beyond the numbers.

3.6 This report seeks to ensure members recognise the progress and contribution being made by SMDC together with its partners, in delivering the strategy at a community level. This is further explored in sections 7-10 of the report where examples of work completed or currently underway is provided in much more detail.

- 3.7 A summary of key results from projects completed or underway includes:
- 1,975 participants (adults and children) from Leek North have taken part in a variety of activities seeking to address and improve levels of inactivity,
  - Increased outreach work undertaken by leisure centre staff in our priority places in partnership with SMDC and local community partners,

- New netball sessions were created at Brough Park and Biddulph Valley Leisure Centres which are attracting approximately 75 women and girls on a weekly basis,
- Lex Leisure installed a new 3G football facility at Brough Park Leisure Centre which has seen bookings grow by over 50%,
- Over 1,500 people participate in the “steps to health” programme across the Moorlands run by Lex Leisure which supports people with health issues or limiting illnesses,
- 553 participants (adults and children) from Biddulph East have taken part in a variety of activities seeking to address and improve levels of inactivity,
- Over £1.1 million worth of capital improvements to parks and recreation facilities at a range of locations across the Moorlands,
- Allocation of approximately £35,000 of grants over the last 3 years to support 235 different applicants from across the District,
- Officers are supporting a number of priority projects, including; Leek Town FC and Ball Haye FC two clubs who have aspirations to improve their facilities.
- Provision of the annual Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Awards to celebrate the contribution and achievements of clubs, coaches, team and athletes from across the Moorlands.

3.8 In addition to the above, there are a number of priority actions identified in the Councils Corporate Plan (2019-2023) as listed below that provide a focus for the forthcoming year, building around some of the work streams featured in this report.

- Review the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in order to integrate communities and sports clubs into the delivery of its objectives.
- Develop and implement an ongoing indoor leisure facilities improvement plan focused on improving the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Develop and implement an outdoor leisure facilities improvement plan focussed around the “sports village” concept.
- Develop a plan to improve Brough Park and John Hall Gardens.

3.9 It therefore remains a priority to ensure that efforts to deliver the strategy and reduce levels of inactivity remain interconnected to broader work streams across the Council and with other sectors which can have influence peoples activity levels across Staffordshire Moorlands.

#### **4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 This report links to Aim 1 of our Corporate Plan “To help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work”.

**ANDREW P STOKES**  
**Executive Director (Transformation) and Chief Finance Officer**

**Web Links and  
Background Papers**

Aug 2017 - Cabinet report - Strategy for Physical Activity & Sport  
Open Data - <https://www.openactive.io/>  
Together Active - <https://sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/>

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**6. Detail**

- 6.1 In June 2016, members were provided with a report outlining the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's new Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity. Following this, Sport England launched the 'Towards an Active Nation' Strategy in the summer of 2016
- 6.2 In August 2017, Cabinet approved a new physical activity and sport strategy called 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands'. The main thrust of the strategy was to use an evidence based approach to enable the Council and other partners from across Staffordshire Moorlands, support people to become more physically active.
- 6.3 An extremely broad range of influencing factors contribute to if, how, when and where people are physically active, and it is important to note that despite a significant amount of resource and effort expended by local authorities and other partners over the past decade inactivity levels have been increasing.
- 6.4 Accepting this, the strategy was developed in order to be the catalyst for change. To frame an understanding that physical activity levels of people and communities do not stand in isolation, but that they are intertwined with many other influencing factors which affect everyone's life on a day to day basis, and that we need to understand this better if we are to have an impact.
- 6.5 Building on this thought, the strategy sets 5 strategic objectives for focus underpinned by an acceptance that partnerships and collaboration would be the key to having an impact in the future;
- 1) Supporting the inactive to become more active,
  - 2) Addressing the inequalities in physical activity and sport engagement,
    - a: Women and girls, b: People with a limiting illness or disability, c: People aged 55 years and over, d: People in lower social grades (NS SEC 5-8), e: Children and young people aged 5 to 18,
  - 3) Establishing a 'place based approach' with strategic partners, in areas including Leek North, Biddulph East, Cheadle, Forsbrook, Cellarhead and Endon,
  - 4) Maximise physical activity and sporting opportunities using the outdoor and natural environment,
  - 5) Supporting our existing club and voluntary sector base to build local capacity,

- 6.6 Measuring the success, or demonstrating the impact of both the strategy itself and SMDC’s contribution towards delivering the strategy is not straightforward. Sport England Active Lives survey commenced in 2016 following release of the national strategy referred to in section 6.1. This is recognised as a statistically robust measure involving a survey of 500 residents aged 16 years and over, who are randomly selected and asked validated questions related to their activity levels and wider lifestyle habits.
- 6.7 Baseline data regarding activity levels in the Staffordshire Moorlands and that are included in the Staffordshire Moorlands strategy document are taken from the Active People Survey (2012-16). This was replaced by the Active Lives Survey from 2016 onwards meaning there are some differences and conflict between measures. For this reason measures shown in the table below are from the Active Lives Survey only and reflect the most recent data release by Sport England.

Measure	Nov 15/16 data set	Nov 17/18 data set
Inactive (< 30mins per week)	34.8%	33.3%
Active (150 mins or more per week)	52.5%	56.7%

- 6.8 Over the 3 year period results of the survey suggest that inactivity levels are slowly reducing. The survey also suggests that a greater number of people are active for more than 150 minutes per week. Whilst this picture is encouraging, fluctuations in results from the Active Lives survey has been noted elsewhere, therefore it is important that Members also look beyond the numbers.
- 6.9 In order for Members to recognise the progress and contribution being made by SMDC together with its partners in delivering the strategy at a community level. The information below has been summarised under each heading from the 5 strategy priorities listed in section 3.3 of this report.

**7. Priority 1&2: Supporting the inactive to become more active and addressing the inequalities in physical activity and sport engagement**

- 7.1 Leisure centres form an important aspect of delivering the strategy both in terms of retaining people who are already active, for engaging people who are currently inactive, providing a base for club training and health programmes.
- 7.2 Influenced heavily by the new strategy, the specification for the current operating contract with Parkwood Leisure, which runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, includes a clear direction for greater engagement with priority groups and places identified in the strategy.
- 7.3 The Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a comprehensive report from Parkwood in October 2019 which summarised their overall performance to date, including some specific detail as to how they are working to address strategy priorities:

- **Increased outreach work** undertaken by leisure centre staff in priority places in partnership with SMDC and local community partners aligned to the strategy,
- Development of new 3G football facility at Brough Park Leisure Centre which has seen bookings grow by over 50%,
- **Over 1500 people** participate in the “steps to health” programmes across the Moorlands which supports people with **health issues or limiting illnesses**,
- New netball sessions have been created at Brough Park and Biddulph Leisure Centres and are attracting approximately **75 women and girls** on a weekly basis,
- **New disability sessions** in partnerships with Buxton and Leek College have been established at Brough Park Leisure Centre.

7.4 As summarised in the table below, annual attendances at the Councils Leisure Centres have been on the rise steadily which broadly demonstrates that Parkwood Leisure are engaging more people in physical activity year on year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance figures</b>
2016-17	884,887
2017-18	889,204
2018-19	895,493
2019-20 (to end of Jan '20)	720,433

7.5 As of June 2019, Parkwood now provide a more detailed breakdown to show how these attendance figures relate to the key demographic groups identified in the strategy. This will enable the Council to create a baseline for future measurement in order to help ensure that the provision of Leisure Centres not only cater for the existing customer base but also focus further attention on engaging those demographic groups which participate least.

7.5 Linked to this, Open Data is a national web platform which enables residents to search for and find local physical activity and sporting opportunities, similar to how you would search for a flight or hotel room. At present, there isn't a single source which holds this information locally, therefore we are supporting Parkwood Leisure to open their data and make it accessible on the national web platform.

7.6 During 2020, there will be a marketing campaign coordinated by Open Active, the host organisation working in collaboration with partners across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, including SMDC to promote this to residents with the aim to make it as easy as possible to find opportunities to be active.

7.7 Following a report to the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel in October 2019, work is also progressing to develop a future facility and investment plan for the Council's leisure centres to ensure they remain appropriate, accessible and important places for where participation in physical activity and sport takes places.

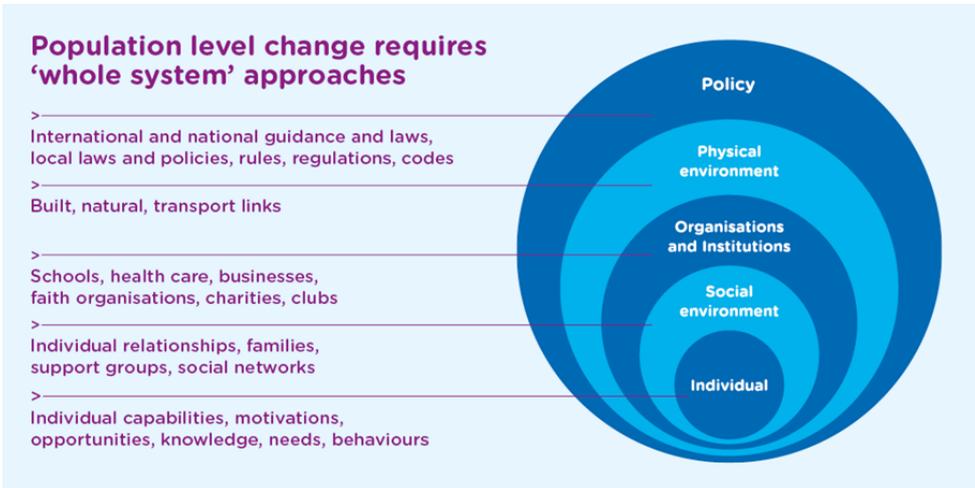
7.8 It is expected that it will take approximately 1 year for consultants appointed to work with SMDC to complete the investment plan, with a detailed report identified for review by Members during the winter period of 2020-21.

**8. Priority 3: Establishing a 'place based approach' with strategic partners**

8.1 There are pockets of Staffordshire Moorlands where residents experience poorer than average health outcomes. Increasing physical activity behaviours among residents in these areas will contribute significantly to improving those outcomes and to the overarching priorities in the strategy.

8.2 A traditional approach where an organisation with limited or no connection to the place, parachutes in and 'does to' people is unsustainable and has been proven not to work. Instead, we are working to form long term and more meaningful relationships with voluntary/community organisations that have a greater connection to the place, especially where they already work with and have the trust of residents. Often these organisations are better positioned to have conversations about physical activity and as a result, can develop locally driven opportunities which residents are more likely to engage with.

8.3 Since 2016, work has been developing in the Haregate area of Leek to build relationships and engage with local residents through a network of partners with a vested interest in the place, including the local Community Centre, schools and statutory and voluntary groups. The group gives consideration to the widest factors which have an influence on people behaviours. The diagram below summarises the types of issues considered as part of the approach to place based working.



8.4 Various engagement sessions have been created by this group in order to develop a better understanding of the people and place. SMDC officers have taken a lead role in developing these with the learning taken from them to help shape the future work.

<b>Engagement sessions</b>	<b>Attendances</b>
Active Students (Partnership between Leek High School and Brough Park Leisure Centre and Fit Bodies Gym)	570
Bhangra dance classes at Haregate Community	170

Centre	
Children's summer holiday engagement sessions	665
Sporting Communities and @21 football sessions at Brough Park Leisure Centre	420
Leek Tennis Club school to club link	150

- 8.5 Similar to the approach in Haregate, we have also spent time building relationships with local partners in Biddulph (east), and a range of engagement sessions have been developed for key priority groups.

<b>Engagement sessions</b>	<b>Attendances in 2019</b>
Kids active	98
Kids yoga	237
Adult fitness (over 50's)	218

- 8.6 These sessions have helped build an understanding of what local people would participate in if given the opportunity and this insight has been used to inform a piece of work recently commissioned to a local community organisation which will see them recruit a part time member of staff to work with the community more extensively and develop more opportunities for residents to be active.
- 8.7 Following a recent review of the Service Commissioning team, it has been recognised that the resource allocation to support place based working/projects is insufficient. Cabinet has since approved an additional post be created with an aspiration this role will extend the place based approach into other areas in the Moorlands referenced in the strategy such as Cheadle, Forsbrook, Cellarhead and Endon.
- 8.8 The insight and learning gained through the approach in both places to date has been essential in shaping future delivery of this part of the strategy. We are already establishing that it is not the 'typical' barriers which prevent people from being active, but more locally driven issues which need to be understood and supported rather than assumptions being made.
- 8.9 A more localised approach to addressing inactivity takes time to evolve and by virtue of this, demonstrating the impact of the approach is not easy especially when in the first instance the focus is on building relationships and trust. We are learning to develop new ways to capture the value of the contribution we are making over and above monitoring the number of participants attending sessions and we will include a summary of what emerges in future reports to Members.
- 8.10 Together Active are one of 43 Active Partnerships that exist across England which work with local partners to create the conditions for an active nation using the power of sport and physical activity to transform lives. SMDC along with all other local authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent make an annual financial contribution towards the running costs of Together Active and In return receive a variety of support, advice and resources which enable

SMDC and other local partners engage more people in physical activity and sport.

**9. Priority 4: Maximise physical activity and sporting opportunities using the outdoor and natural environment**

9.1 The built environment, parks and open spaces and outdoor sports facilities have a huge influence on how active our lives are on a day to day basis. As a consultee on planning applications for 20 dwellings or more, the leisure and recreation team work closely with colleagues in planning and regeneration to ensure consideration is given to how housing developments are designed and local facilities are provided to ensure they are active and connected places to live.

9.2 Time has been invested to help build a more integrated approach to Planning around these aspects, especially in relation to the use of Sport England’s Active Design principals and the development of a robust evidence base that is now used to secure developer contributions (via section 106 agreements) which is targeted to provide and improve local leisure and recreation infrastructure such as parks, play and recreational sports facilities.

9.3 Since adoption of the strategy, the leisure and recreation team has either delivered directly or supported, via project management assistance, over £1.1 million worth of capital improvements to parks and recreation facilities at a range of locations across the Moorlands. The improved facilities are important local assets which provide increased opportunities for children, young people and families to be active on their doorstep. A summary of these are listed in the table below;

<b>Location</b>	<b>Project/Improvements</b>	<b>Value</b>
Halls Road, Biddulph	New junior and toddler play area	£90,000
Hot Lane, Biddulph Moor	New children’s play area	£60,000
The Wentlows, Upper Tean (on behalf of Checkley Parish Council)	New children’s play area	£50,000
Tean Road Recreation Ground, Cheadle	New junior and toddler play area, outdoor fitness equipment, MUGA and tennis courts	£280,000
Brough Park, Leek (2018)	New skate park with floodlights	£230,000
Brough Park, Leek (2020)	New toddler and junior play, MUGA and Tennis Court refurbishment	£420,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,130,000</b>

9.4 In February 2020, Cabinet approved proposals to redevelop Brough Park and John Hall Gardens, including to significantly expand the junior and toddler play offering in order to create a destination level play facility that will attract people from across the communities of Leek and beyond. The existing Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and two tennis courts will also be relocated and refurbished to provide a high quality, sport and recreation facility within Leek that is free an accessible to all.

**10. Priority 5: Supporting our existing club and voluntary sector base to build local capacity**

10.1 Sports clubs and groups are vital in retaining and growing participation levels across our communities. To help build local capacity, Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Council alongside the Sports Councils in Leek and Cheadle, has managed and allocated awards totalling approximately £35,000 over the last 3 years to support 235 different applicants from across the District.

10.2 This funding has been used by clubs and groups to engage new people in physical activity and increase sporting opportunities in a wide variety of sports. Grants have been used to recruit and train more coaches and volunteers which in turn enable clubs to provide more opportunities and become more sustainable. Grants have also supported individual athletes to help cover training, equipment and travel expenses, with a focus on supporting people on low incomes and which are competing at a high level. A summary is included below;

<b>Category</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20 (to date)</b>	<b>Category totals</b>
Individual	£9,762 (31)	£7,621 (26)	£7,979 (26)	£25,362
Club	£1,918 (6)	£2,227 (4)	£1,003 (3)	£5,148
Coach	£1,178 (4)	£1,042 (5)	£2,972 (10)	£5,192
<b>Annual total</b>	<b>£12,858</b>	<b>£10,890</b>	<b>£11,954</b>	<b>£35,693</b>

(..) number of applications

10.3 There is a clear disparity between the amount of funding allocated to individuals in comparison to clubs and coaches. This summary was presented at a recent Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Council meeting and it was agreed that a series of changes would be implemented from 1st April 2020 to encourage a more even spread of funding between categories, with a particular focus on supporting the demographic groups identified in the strategy.

10.4 The Staffordshire Moorlands, Cheadle and Leek Sports Councils also form an extremely important support network for existing clubs across the Moorlands. SMDC Officers are working to re-establish the Biddulph Sports Council and it is positive to report that a meeting is planned for 25th March 2020 with a range of clubs due to be in attendance.

10.5 Each year SMDC in partnership with the various Sports Councils organise the annual Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Awards which celebrate the contribution and achievements of clubs, coaches, teams and athletes from across the Moorlands. Whilst there is a strong focus in this report on the work we are undertaking with partners to reduce inactivity levels, it remains important to focus on and celebrate the success of individuals and groups who are already active and that are making a valuable contribution towards delivering the strategy.

- 10.6 Officers are working across the Moorlands with clubs, and national governing bodies of sport to develop improved community facilities, especially where improvements are required or where there is a significant demand for new or increased facilities.
- 10.7 As part of this work and In order to understand what improvements are required to community facilities and in order to assist with securing external investment against priority projects for SMDC and partners, we have developed an extensive and extremely useful suite of supporting strategies and plans.
- Playing Pitch Strategy 2017
  - Open Space Strategy 2017
  - Local Football Facilities Plan 2018
- 10.8 Using the evidence base contained in these strategies and plans, officers are supporting a number of priority projects, including Leek Town FC and Ball Haye FC. Both clubs have aspirations to improve their facilities but in order to achieve this, they require support to work through a complex set of issues to assess their feasibility. It is anticipated that firm and realistic plans for the execution of both projects will be completed before the end of 2020 or the early part of 2021.
- 10.9 In 2017/18 a new corporate performance indicator was introduced which captured the amount of external funding that SMDC secured or helped to secure towards delivery of the strategy through existing volunteer and community structures. A summary of is included in the table below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
17/18	£75,000
18/19	£50,000
19/20 (as of Dec 19)	£2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£127,500</b>

- 10.10 It is anticipated that performance in this area will remain positive given the work that has been undertaken to develop the Council strategic evidence base, operational processes (especially regarding securing section 106 contributions) and work with partners to develop projects such as those referenced in section 10.8 of this report.

## **11. 2020 and beyond**

- 11.1 Overall, delivery of the strategy since its adoption in 2017 has been positive with a number of significant achievements being made that contribute towards each of the main priorities.
- 11.2 There are a number of actions identified in the Councils Corporate Plan (2019-2023) that are listed below, which provide a focus for the forthcoming year and building around some of the work streams featured in this report:

- To review the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in order to integrate communities and sports clubs into the delivery of its objectives.
- To develop and implement an ongoing indoor leisure facilities improvement plan focused on improving the health and wellbeing of residents.
- To develop and implement an outdoor leisure facilities improvement plan focussed around the “sports village” concept.
- To develop a plan to improve Brough Park and John Hall Gardens.

11.3 It remains a priority to ensure that the efforts to deliver the strategy and reduce levels of inactivity remain interconnected to broader work streams across the Council and with other sectors which can have influence peoples activity levels across Staffordshire Moorlands.