

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Executive

25 January 2022

Surrey Heath Physical Activity Strategy

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| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Rebecca Jennings Evans, Places and Strategy |
| Strategic Director/Head of Service | Louise Livingston – Head of Human Resources, Communications & Performance |
| Report Author: | Ben Sword – Engagement, Wellbeing & Events Manager |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Wards Affected: | All |

Summary and purpose

Physical activity levels play a key role in the health and wellbeing of our community and can have positive impacts on wider agendas such as community safety and the climate emergency. In line with regional and national partners, officers are bringing forward a physical activity strategy that highlights priority areas for the next five years where the Council will concentrate its efforts.

The vision of the strategy is to create an environment where all Surrey Heath residents, regardless of age, background or circumstances, have the opportunity to participate in physical activity in a way that works for them.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the proposed physical activity strategy for Surrey Heath, entitled “Moving Forward”, as set out at Annex A to this report, be formally adopted for the 2022-2027 period.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 Being physically active can benefit almost every aspect of our residents’ lives. In their latest report UK Chief Medical Officers reiterated the message that “If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat.”
- 1.2 Physical activity has been proven to have a positive impact on disease prevention, weight management, mental health, social cohesion and better overall quality of life.

- 1.3 Physical activity also represents a great return on community investment. Research has shown that for every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity, an economic and social return on investment of £4 is generated. There is also a proven link between increased activity levels and improved job opportunities.
- 1.4 Despite the many benefits, levels of physical *inactivity* have been increasing globally. Inactivity has been described by the Department of Health and Social Care as a "silent killer", responsible for one in six UK deaths - equal to smoking - and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually, including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone. By increasing activity levels among the least active, we can reduce the burden on local health services.
- 1.5 This strategy, "Moving Forward", has been developed on a variety of information sources nationally, regionally and locally. These include:
- Sport England "Uniting the Movement" and Surrey "Movement for Change" physical activity strategies;
 - Surrey Heath Borough Council Five Year Strategy;
 - "Active Lives" data, a Sport England tool providing a unique and comprehensive view of the nation's activity levels;
 - A three phase engagement process with residents and local groups (see section 9);
 - Knowledge of local issues and historic resident feedback.
- 1.6 The targets within this strategy are also influenced by (and designed to contribute positively towards) Surrey Heath's Local Plan and Climate Change Action Plan, the Frimley Integrated Care System Plan, and Surrey's county Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 1.7 'Moving Forward' will also support the wider project work of the Council and partners such as the "Whole Systems Approach to Obesity" and outcomes from local community support working groups.
- 1.8 Research has shown a number of inequalities in activity levels between different sections of our community. These include by:
- **Area:** According to 'Middle Super Output Area' data (geographical areas similar to ward level), 22% of Old Dean residents class as inactive compared to 17% in Bisley and St Pauls. Whether for financial, time, transport or other reasons it may not be easy for residents in these areas to access physical activity in the same way as others.
 - **Gender:** Women in Surrey Heath had a 6% higher inactivity rate compared to their male counterparts - far larger than the 1.2% gap seen nationally

- **Age:** Data shows the older we get, the more likely we are to be inactive. 51.3% of over 75s in Surrey are inactive compared to just 15.5% of 16-24 year olds. This is a concern given our ageing population.
- **Children and Young People:** During the most recent academic year where results were available at borough level (2017-18), Surrey Heath registered the highest percentage of “Less Active” young people in the county at 38.6% (*NB: these findings should be taken with a degree of caution due to smaller sample size*).
- **People with a disability and/or long term health condition:** While statistical data local to Surrey Heath is limited (sample sizes are too small to draw from), we know that nationally one in four people live with a long-term health condition and that people within this category are twice as likely to be inactive, despite evidence suggesting being active can reduce the severity of some symptoms.
- **Ethnicity:** Nationally, respondents identifying as Asian (excluding Chinese) had a much higher inactivity rate (37.5%) compared to respondents identifying as mixed ethnicity (21.7%) or White British (26%). This suggests there may be cultural sensitivities or barriers that need to be addressed to increase activity in certain communities.

These inequalities are not unique to Surrey Heath, with similar findings highlighted across county and national strategies. ‘Moving Forward’ sets a number of actions designed to help address these inequalities so every resident has the best chance of getting and staying active.

- 1.9 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on people’s exercise habits, with activity levels lower now than they were before the pandemic. Sports clubs, leisure facilities, and community organisations have had memberships and income heavily disrupted, so there is a need to help these organisations to recover.
- 1.10 While addressing challenges, this strategy also sets out to build on existing strengths in the Borough. These include the new Places Leisure Camberley leisure centre, a wealth of green spaces, committed volunteers, relationships with partners and learning from previous projects.
- 1.11 Based on research and engagement with residents, six key themes have been identified which will form the pillars of ‘Moving Forward’. These are “Recover and Reinvent”, “Connecting Communities”, “Making Activity Accessible”, “Stronger Connections with Health and Wellbeing”, “Active Environments” and “Children and Young People”.
- 1.12 Within each theme of the strategy is a table of objectives for delivery in year 1 (2022), followed by a number of wider goals that will be achieved over the duration of the strategy period. Each January, officers will review performance against targets from the previous year and set the action plan for the year ahead.

- 1.13 With a small delivery team, achieving the full range of targets in the strategy will only be possible by collaborating with a spectrum of partners and empowering our communities to deliver physical activity themselves. Moving Forward has been designed around “delivering with” our communities rather than “delivering to”.
- 1.14 Despite national and county strategy running to the end of the decade, a decision was taken to run the Surrey Heath physical activity strategy to 2027 so it aligns with the Council’s five-year strategy and can be refreshed and refocused at that time as required.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Having a strategy for the years ahead will help the Borough Council to identify where its limited resources can be concentrated in order to have the most impact.
- 2.2 By working to a strategy rather than working reactively, the Council can provide more accountability and transparency for the public and improve understanding of the variety of services the Council provides and supports.
- 2.3 If the full document is agreed and adopted, officers will create a shorter summary document for those who need to read and understand the Council’s physical activity objectives “at a glance”. The Council’s Creative Executive will support with the development of a professional public-facing version of the document.
- 2.4 The public document will include images from local sessions and local facilities so that it feels more authentic for residents rather than simply using stock images.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

The Executive may choose to

- 3.1 Formally adopt the Physical Activity Strategy;
- 3.2 Reject the Physical Activity Strategy;
- 3.3 Make recommendations for amendments to the Physical Activity Strategy.

4. Contribution to the Council’s Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 ‘Moving Forward’ will contribute towards all four priorities of the five year strategy, with a particular focus on Environment and Health and Quality of Life, most notably:
 - Improving health and wellbeing
 - Access to leisure and recreation
 - Enhance and improve access to green spaces

- Net Zero Carbon Emissions & resilient to the impacts of climate change
- Improve air quality and air 'inequalities'
- Strong community identity

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The objectives set out within Moving Forward are planned be delivered within existing budgets. The existing budget for physical activity is c.£11k a year.
- 5.2 Officers will continue to work with a focus on leveraging grant opportunities and other external funding to maximise opportunities to improve local facilities and/or delivery.
- 5.3 Delivery of the strategy will be led by the Community Development Officer (Health and Sport) with strategic support from the Engagement, Wellbeing & Events Manager and practical support from the Community Development Apprentice.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

- 6.1 Recognising the financial challenges facing the Council, this Strategy aims to deliver positive outcomes for residents and contribute to the Council's Five-Year Strategy within the existing financial and staffing resources available by working with partners and communities to deliver together, and by continuing to seek external funding opportunities wherever possible.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

- 7.1 Where applicable, data sharing agreements will be in place regarding working with partners and the sharing of data.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

- 8.1 No comments.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

- 9.1 By promoting active travel and encouraging residents to walk and cycle more rather than using cars for short journeys, the strategy seeks to have a positive impact on the local environment and support the Council's climate change strategy, plans for Net Zero Carbon Emissions and better air quality.

Equalities and Human Rights

- 9.2 Addressing health inequalities underpins much of the strategy, with a focus on opportunities to participate regardless of age, background or circumstances. Alongside universal work which will benefit all borough residents, there will be

a number of targeted approaches to support those who would be otherwise less likely to engage in physical activity.

Risk Management

- 9.3 While there is some reputational risk from not delivering the full range of targets, this is balanced by the operational and potential financial risks of not providing service in a strategic way.
- 9.4 There is a potential risk of not being able to deliver on targets if the pandemic (or any other unexpected event) forces restrictions on physical activity as has been the case during periods of 2020-2021.
- 9.5 As targets have been designed around existing budgets, financial risk of the strategy is considered to be low.

Community Engagement

- 9.6 Community engagement is at the heart of the strategy having been built on a widely promoted public survey, a series of focus groups with underrepresented communities, and discussions with fourteen sports clubs and leisure organisations.
- 9.7 The intention of the strategy is to support the community to drive many of the actions themselves rather than a 'top-down' approach with the Council trying to run everything directly, which isn't possible within resource constraints.
- 9.8 Groups consulted within strategy development were intentionally from a mix of backgrounds and included groups such as Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum, Voluntary Support North Surrey, Surrey Adult Social Care, U3A, the Scouts, Surrey Youth Focus, Women's Institute, Disability Initiative and many more. Officers wish to thank all residents and groups that helped inform development of the strategy.

Annexes

Annex A - Surrey Heath Physical Activity Strategy 2022-2027

Background Papers

[Sport England "Uniting the Movement" strategy](#)

[Active Surrey "Movement for Change" strategy](#)