



## LOCAL ACCESS FORUM County Durham

### County Durham Local Access Forum

**Date**        **Monday 23 October 2023**  
**Time**        **5.00 pm**  
**Venue**       **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business**

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 July 2023 (Pages 5 - 10)
4. Matters Arising
5. Update following Chair and Vice-Chairs meeting with Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Climate Change  
To receive update Pat Holding / Angela Johnson
6. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)  
To receive an update on LCWIPs by the Senior Active Travel Officer.
7. Moving Together Strategy and Action Plan (Pages 11 - 40)  
To receive a presentation from Kelly Rose, Public Health Advanced Practitioner.
8. National/Regional Issues
  - (i) Agriculture Bill - Environmental Land Management Schemes  
To receive update David Maughan / Brian Hodgson
  - (ii) Natural England – Sharepoint site for Local Access Forum's
9. Update from Rights of Way Team
10. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP 4)
  - (i) To receive and update Angela Johnson / Mike Ogden
11. Public Access to Council-owned Land

12. Northern Saints Trails  
To receive update  
Mike Ogden
13. Stockton & Darlington Railway - Walking and Cycling Routes  
To receive update  
Mike Ogden
14. Bright Water Landscape Project (Pages 41 - 44)
  - i) To receive update from Tom Bolton and;
  - ii) To note the September / October 2023 Programme Manager's Report.
15. North Pennines AONB Partnership (Pages 45 - 50)
16. Membership Update  
To note the resignation of Julie Kirtley.
17. Member Training
18. Work Programme (Pages 51 - 54)  
To consider and update the Work Programme
19. Dates of Meetings for 2023  
**Suggested dates for 2024:**  
  
**Monday 22 January 2024**  
**Monday 22 April 2024**  
**Monday 22 July 2024**  
**Monday 21 October 2024**  
  
**All meetings to commence at 5.00 p.m.**
20. Any other business of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration (subject to the Chair's approval).

Lucy Gladders  
Secretary  
County Durham Local Access Forum  
19 October 2023

**To: The Members of County Durham Local Access Forum**

## COUNTY DURHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

At the Annual Meeting of **County Durham Local Access Forum** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 17 July 2023 at 5.00 pm**

**Present:**

**Pat Holding (Chair)**

**LAF Members:**

Tom Bolton, Pat Holding, Angela Johnson, and Jim Welch

**Officers:**

Mike Ogden, Helen Barber, and Lucy Gladders

**1 Election of Chair**

**Resolved:** That Mrs P Holding be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.

**2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

**Resolved:** That Mrs A Johnson be elected as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

**3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Hughes, J Kirkley, D Maughan and E Wilton.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 April 2023**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2023 following amendment were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**6 Matters Arising**

All matters arising were to be picked up under the subsequent agenda items.

**7 Update from Rights of Way Team (including Lost Ways)**

The Local Access Forum received an update from H Barber, Senior Rights of Way Officer who advised that there were no major updates to report. She explained that work continued to relocate the team from County Hall, noting that the two Definitive Map Officers now having been made permanent was hugely positive for the team.

A further update was provided in respect of Lost Ways, noting that whilst the bulk of applications had now been received some were still being filtering through, however the British Horse Society from whom many of the applications had been received, were understanding of the process and time required to deal with them.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

## **8 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 4**

The Local Access Forum were provided with an update from A Johnson regarding the LAF's proposed response to the consultation which was to conclude on 26 July 2023. It was noted that the sub-group of Local Access Forum members who were allocated this area of work had now provided their comments on the draft plan and the response would be finalised by the Local Access Forum Secretary in conjunction with the Chair.

A copy of the full and final response would be circulated following its submission.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

## **9 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)**

It was noted that this item would be deferred until the next meeting.

## **10 Stockton and Darlington Railway - Walking and Cycling Routes**

The Local Access Forum received an update from M Ogden, Rights of Way Team Leader who explained that further to the update provided at the previous meeting, work continued to progress well, with works now started on existing bridleways and negotiations taking place with individual landowners to ensure that the route could follow as closely as possible to the historic line route, with land being purchased so as to establish, create or upgrade the route.

He furthermore provided an update on the timeline in respect of funding, also noting that it was anticipated that work would be completed on time in line with Levelling Up Funding, with expected completion in March 2024. M

Ogden explained that the route would form part of the 2025 bicentenary celebrations of the original railway.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

## **11 Northern Saints Trails**

The Local Access Forum received a verbal update from M Ogden, Rights of Way Team Leader which provided detail around the projects ambitious plans to expand the trail into North Yorkshire.

Further information was provided regarding staff resources, noting that attractions such as Durham Cathedral and key tourism authorities would need to remain committed to investing in the trail and maintaining standards to ensure ongoing interest.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

## **12 Public Access to Council-owned Land**

The Local Access Forum noted that they were yet to receive a response regarding the additional areas of land identified by the LAF and the group noted their frustration at the lack of communication between the service and the group given the time which had lapsed since the first list of areas had been assessed.

It was suggested that a further request be made via the relevant Head of Service to provide a response and or attend the next meeting to provide and update.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

## **13 Bright Water Landscape Project**

The Local Access Forum received an update from T Bolton regarding the latest report which had been issued by the Bright Water Programme Manager, to the Board for the period covering July / August 2023.

T Bolton explained that the report focused upon several areas of work, namely, Wetland Habitat Creation at Bishop's Fen and Ricknall Carrs, Access and Environment Projects, Archaeology and Heritage and Community Engagements and Training.

The report further highlighted several events which Bright Water were involved in, of interest to the group was the Darlington Heritage Trail with its links to the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Further details were reported in respect of the programme legacy planning, noting matters around funding and evaluation. It was expected that a final Board meeting would take place in October and a further update to the Local Access Forum would be provided at that time.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

#### **14 Notification of Open Access Restrictions**

**AGREED** that the following open access restriction notifications be received for information:

Birk Hatt Moor  
Cotherstone Moor  
Wemmergill Close House Mine and environs

#### **15 Membership Update**

M Ogden, Rights of Way Team Leader noted that following the informal group interview which had taken place ahead of the meeting, he would seek to make appointments to those successful candidates in the following week. Details would be provided of those newly appointed Forum members in due course.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

#### **16 Member Training**

The Local Access Forum were reminded where a training need was identified to raise this with the Chair or Secretary who would were possible endeavour to facilitate.

It was noted that there may be some opportunities also for some refresher training in the future alongside those newly appointed LAF members.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

#### **17 Work Programme**

The Local Access Forum considered and reviewed the Forum's work programme noting that it had been updated to reflect recently completed areas of work and those which were still outstanding or unallocated.

In discussing the topic of DCC Liaison, the Rights of Way Team Leader advised that as the topics covered by the Forum were cross-cutting across

several council teams, he had approached the Corporate Director with a view to him attending either a meeting with the Local Access Forum or meeting on a twice-yearly basis with the Chair and Vice-Chair to which he had agreed. He explained that this would provide an excellent reporting mechanism between the service and the Forum and arrangements would be made for the first meeting to be set up ahead of the next meeting in October.

**AGREED** that the content of the update be noted.

## **18 Annual Report 2022/23**

The Local Access Forum considered the Annual Report which outlined the activity of the Forum for the period 2022/23 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting would, subject to any further amendments be sent to Natural England and other interested parties.

Discussion ensued regarding the publication of the report and whether the Local Access Forum could be doing more to promote the work of the Forum. T Bolton suggested that the report could be circulated more widely, to include for example Parish and Town Councils who would likely have an interest in the document, given their role in local matters.

It was further suggested that an update article to that recently published in the County Durham News would help to raise the profile and highlight this as a good news story.

**AGREED** That the County Durham Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2022/23 be approved for publication.

## **19 Date, Time, and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next hybrid meeting would be held at 5.00 p.m. on Monday 16 October 2023.

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# Moving Together

in County Durham



**Our action plan 2023–28**

# Children and Young People

Key priorities	How do we know we have made a difference
<p>Enable children and young people to move more every day, increasing levels of physical activity at home, school and in the community</p> <p>Ensure equitable physical activity opportunities for children and young people</p> <p>Build and strengthen networks and partnerships to support physical activity capacity building</p>	<p>Increased percentage of Children and Young People (CYP) engaging in physical activity (Sport England Active Lives Survey)</p> <p>Increased engagement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leisure programmes i.e. free swimming, free targeted youth gym membership</li> <li>DCC 'learn to ride a bicycle and safety' programmes</li> <li>Early years framework and training</li> <li>Fun and food activity</li> <li>Active Travel initiatives in schools</li> <li>Active 30</li> </ul> <p>Increased engagement with the Moving Together champions network</p>

## Partnership identified actions

### Short-term

- Children and Young People Moving Together Network will create new (and strengthen existing) relationships with those who deliver, fund or support programmes or services to children and families to maximise physical activity opportunities
- Children and young people partnership to develop support, and streamline resources, for school and community programmes for families
- Develop ways to creatively engage with children, young people, and families to co-produce the design and communication of programmes/interventions
- Develop consistent messages to be shared throughout the children and young people Moving Together partnership network across all sectors and community groups

### Medium-term

- Support the Fun and Food and leisure delivery to ensure that all organisations who deliver sessions have the tools and training to promote healthy movement and physical literacy principles for life
- Support Family Hubs to ensure movement is an embedded part of practice in all hubs, linking with maternal healthy weight and early years, exploring peer support in all communities
- Encourage primary schools to sign up to the free 'learn to ride' bicycle programme
- Engage secondary schools to provide opportunities for vulnerable and inactive students to attend the wellbeing leisure programmes, and identify and share learning from the targeted youth project delivered by Culture, Sport and Tourism





## Long-term

- Using the Early Years Framework, strengthen relationships, support, and engage early year's settings (including childminders) to embed physical literacy principles, and identify actions to ensure physical activity opportunities are maximised in all settings
- Work with County Durham Youth Council and academic partners to understand and identify where change can be made to address the youth consultation findings (equal chance of participation in physical activity, gender inequality, accessible activity, and sport for those with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and equity in access to swimming from early years)

- Engage schools in a review of the School Health and Wellbeing framework to support, further incorporate and promote enjoyment of physical activity e.g., Physical literacy, Active Schools, Heart project, Wellbeing leaders, Life Skills through Sport, Active Travel and Outdoor learning



## Inclusive Communities

Key priorities	How do we know we have made a difference
Empower children and adults to move more every day, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage in physical activity	People are moving more and rates of physical activity increase (Sport England Active Lives survey data/PHOF) County Durham Physical Activity Strategy Committee feedback
Improve knowledge about 'why,' and signposting to 'how' to move more in community settings	Increase in local physical activity community initiatives
Support the development of an 'active place-based' approach to moving more, including local communities, education providers, health and social care providers, and workplaces	Evidence from Moving Together Champions (showing increased movement amongst those who currently move less) Service level evaluations (i.e., Cree movement, We Are Undefeatable, County Durham Community Growing and Food Network)

## Partnership identified actions

### Short-term

- Increase physical activity levels across all communities and settings in County Durham by strengthening engagement, commitment, and collaboration with partners across all sectors and settings
- Local partners and communities to work together to create more local, accessible and enjoyable opportunities to be active.

- Using evidence-based behaviour change models, co-produce targeted communications to promote fair access to opportunities to be active every day



## Medium-term

- Using evidence-based behaviour change models, promote, and communicate increased movement and physical activity to our communities by providing good quality, co-produced information on the importance of physical activity, how to access opportunities
- Increase inclusive participation and engagement with County Durham leisure facilities
- Support voluntary sector organisations to have the tools they need to improve and promote the benefits of, and access to, physical activity opportunities
- Work with communities to make outdoor spaces and facilities accessible for all, particularly those from vulnerable groups (gender inclusive, unemployed, people with long term conditions and disabilities, and older people, including dementia friendly environments)
- Support community-led programmes that are designed by local people, using evidence-based behaviour change approaches to better understand capability, opportunity, and motivation to move more
- Work with communities and the voluntary sector to maximise community growing and gardening opportunities
- Continue to build on Sport England Active Partnerships 'place based' work to test and evaluate 'whole system approaches' to increasing activity levels on a small area level to inform wider rollout across County Durham

## Long-term

- Work together to remove systemic inequalities to strengthen opportunities to move more in our communities, ensuring everyone understands how and where they can both engage in physical activity and participate with others to do so
- Strengthen partnerships between physical activity stakeholders and workplaces through local workplace health initiatives and the County Durham Better Health at Work Award BHAWA, supporting businesses and other organisations to create conditions which make it easier for employees to move more
- Work with local workplace health initiatives and the County Durham BHAWA to ensure a workplace physical activity offer is both accessible for smaller business and targeted to those organisations where need is greatest
- Develop and share case studies from local businesses that have successfully incorporated moving more into their day-to-day working environments
- Engage and support local employability programmes and services so that they have a better understanding of the role moving more can play in helping people back into employment



Key priorities	How do we know we have made a difference
Increase active travel and opportunities for walking, wheeling, and cycling	Increase in numbers of residents walking, wheeling/cycling: as measured through national surveys (i.e. Sport England Active Lives and Government active travel statistics)
Engage communities, NHS, social care providers, schools, and workplaces in Active Travel programmes	Increased sign up from schools to Healthy Weight framework, County Durham Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) and Active Travel priorities
Build active urban design into planning policies	Health impact assessment completed for all relevant planning applications  Improvements to paths via the 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan' deliverables

## Partnership identified actions

### Short-term

- The Active Environment Moving Together network will create new (and strengthen existing) relationships with those who plan deliver, fund or support improvements to infrastructure and active travel initiatives to help incorporate daily movement into travel plans
- Build Active urban design into planning proposals
- Support and promote delivery and engagement with programmes to increase cycling (i.e. bicycle training, borrow a bike and recycle bicycle programmes)

### Medium-term

- Deliver the actions within the Durham County Council Local Walking and Cycling Delivery Plan
- Support the delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan ensuring inclusive accessibility of paths for all ages and abilities
- Work with local communities to co-produce community-led sustainable Active Travel programmes and messaging
- Adopt a test and learn approach to play street schemes with County Durham Sport Active Partnership (supported by Sport England)

- Develop and share consistent messaging to progress a citizen's approach that reinforces the importance of looking after our natural assets when using them for physical activity

### Long-term

- Review and deliver a renewed Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan
- Maximise uptake of Active Travel by encouraging organisations in County Durham to contribute to local policy development
- Influence decision-makers in the design and creation of green spaces and accessible community facilities



# Health and Social Care Settings

Key priorities	How do we know we have made a difference
<p>Increase knowledge and confidence of Health and Social Care professionals regarding physical activity benefits to patients and health outcomes</p> <p>Embed 'Green social prescribing' across County Durham</p> <p>Embed Active Travel plans with local NHS colleagues in line with England NHS sustainability policy</p>	<p>Increased uptake of training amongst health and social care staff</p> <p>Increase in GP and health professionals joining Moving Together champions network</p>

## Partnership identified actions

### Short-term

- To increase movement for health, strengthen and develop existing and new relationships between health and social care settings and the wider physical activity network in County Durham
- Promote physical activity awareness and training as a standard part of health and social care practice

### Medium-term

- Support approaches to '[Green Social Prescribing](#)' across the county to ensure that more people explore County Durham's natural assets to help them move more.
- Support local mental health services to increase movement and physical activity with both inpatient and community services
- Support all health and social care settings to share consistent and appropriate physical activity messages targeting all patients ages and groups
- Work with academic partners and health and social care colleagues to develop the local evidence base on 'what works well' in County Durham

### Long-term

- Health and social care staff to develop knowledge to enable them to build strength-based conversations about movement and physical activity into their practice, and ensure they can signpost patients to a range of opportunities in the local community
- Work with NHS colleagues to embed Active Travel plans in line with NHS England sustainability policy
- Develop and share case studies showing our residents from varying backgrounds, ages and groups enjoying and benefitting from local physical activities

# Moving Together

in County Durham



## Our Physical Activity Strategy 2023–28



# Acknowledgements

Moving Together in County Durham has been developed in close collaboration between:

Public Health Team, Durham County Council

County Durham Sport

Wellbeing, Sport and Leisure Service, Durham County Council

The strategy and its action plan could not have been produced without valuable contributions made by the people and communities in County Durham, as well as many local stakeholders from a range of public, private and community sector organisations including:

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

North East and North Cumbria ICS

Durham University

Youth Voice Durham

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, North East

Association of Directors of Public Health North East Sector Led Improvement

Wellbeing for Life

County Durham Area Action Partnerships

Investing in Children

Food Durham

Sport England

Age UK County Durham

We Are Undefeatable

County Durham Housing Associations

VCS Alliance

Durham Community Action

Living Streets

OASES

There are many other members of our developing Moving Together Champions Network whose insight and perspectives have been crucial to this strategy's development.

Thank you to the students at East Durham College for their hard work and creativity in designing the 'Moving Together in County Durham' logo that is displayed throughout the strategy and associated documents.



# Forewords

Welcome to 'Moving Together in County Durham' – our strategy to develop and promote a culture of moving for all who live, work, study in and visit County Durham.

Regular activity is not just about physical fitness, it also includes a wide range of benefits that extend to our general wellbeing. Increased activity not only reduces the risk of many physical health conditions, but it also helps to boost self-esteem, reduce stress, and increase energy. It is also a great way to meet other people and bring communities together.

Furthermore, we must not forget the beneficial effect that moving more can have on our environment. Durham County Council is now in the second phase of its Climate Emergency Response Plan, which is committed to reaching Net Zero by 2030. One of this strategy's priority action areas is active travel, which can make a significant positive impact on carbon emissions.

We have a lot to be proud of in County Durham. Our history, landscapes, scenery, people, and sense of community make this a really unique place. Whether visiting our countryside, dales, coastlines, or parks, there is a tonne of opportunity to get together with family, friends, and neighbours to reap the benefits of moving more outdoors.

Whilst many people across our county live active lives, engaging in physical activity is more difficult for some people than others. A key objective of this strategy is to ensure that everyone has a chance to move more, and that we are all motivated to do so, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, social situation, or health status.

A central theme of this strategy is 'working together;' calling for collaboration and collective action to effect real change. Many of you have told us how we can work towards an inclusive, active County Durham, and you have taken time to tell us how we can best achieve this goal. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude for your contribution to this important work.

My call to action is that we let this strategy serve as a catalyst for change. That we recognise the role we can play in making County Durham a place where everyone is empowered to build more movement into their daily lives. I call on communities and organisations across the county to become Moving Together Champions – to join our movement to build activity into our day-to-day lives.

Let's get together to make County Durham a place that thrives on moving more for healthier and happier lives!

**Councillor Chris Hood,  
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult & Health Services,  
Durham County Council.**



Councillor Chris Hood,  
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for  
Adult & Health Services,  
Durham County Council.



Working collaboratively to change the range of environmental and social factors that stifle the development of a healthy and active nation runs through all our partnerships in County Durham. However, as a County, we face persistently stubborn health inequalities. This new strategy offers us the chance to have a greater impact by challenging our principles and approaches to physical activity policy making - by seeing it as a part of everyone's agenda and not only about attracting more people into existing sport and leisure opportunities.

The innovation that can come from such an integrated partnership approach offers us all an exciting opportunity to explore what works and to learn from communities about how local resources can be better utilised to support improved health and wellbeing.

Whilst we are all aware that eating well, socialising and exercising are helpful to improved health, Moving Together is not simply about individual responsibility and behaviour change. It is a recognition that housing, green spaces, poverty and the availability of good quality food, social connections and accessible opportunities for leisure all play their part. This strategy encourages a collective commitment from communities, professionals and policy-makers to work together to change the way things are done; ensuring that the different parts of the system work in harmony to make moving an easy choice.

By being open to new ways of working, listening to communities and by tackling obstacles to a healthy and active life in a holistic way, we can ensure that everyone in County Durham can find physical activity opportunities that are fun, free, friendly and close to their neighbourhoods- supporting their ambitions for a healthy lifestyle.

As the local Active Partnership (supported by Sport England to tackle inequalities in sport and physical activity), County Durham Sport looks forward to the opportunities for learning and improvement that this strategy offers us.

**Maxine Rhodes,  
Managing Director, County Durham Sport.**



Dr Maxine Rhodes,  
Managing Director,  
County Durham Sport.



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# Introduction

We call our strategy 'Moving Together in County Durham' to show that every way we move counts towards our physical and mental health and wellbeing. Whether by walking, wheeling, or cycling to the shops, doing domestic chores, gardening, walking by the sea, playing in the park or playing football, it is all movement that contributes to a healthier life.

Daily activity can help us feel good in many ways, and now more than ever we see the importance of moving more each day. Findings from the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, showed us that physical activity is not only important for wellbeing but can lower the risk of ill health, and support recovery from illness.

So many people in County Durham are already active. In 2021/22, around 60% (260,200) of adults across the county were active for at least 150 minutes each week (Active Lives Survey 2022, Sport England). It remains, however, that some people face more challenges than others to include physical activity into their daily lives. The ways we enjoy moving can be different for each of us; whether participating in chair exercises, taking gentle steps, enjoying walking programmes, accessing gym facilities, engaging in competitive sports or meeting with friends and taking activity in the open air. We want these opportunities to be accessible to all.

County Durham is a great place to be active! Communities across the county have many assets that help us to be physically active, including green and blue spaces, clubs, and walking and cycling routes, as well as a wide range of local leisure centres, sports clubs, and organised activities. Our communities and visitors enjoy our unique countryside and coastal landscapes, and benefit from them when undertaking a range of outdoor active pursuits. Moving Together in County Durham will show how we can work together to ensure that we can all make the most of what the county has to offer.

## *We all have a role to play!*

We want County Durham to be a place where everyone who lives, works, studies, or visits can take the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of living an active life. We also want to ensure that those who are least likely to be physically active are supported to move more.

No one organisation in County Durham can achieve this strategy alone, so this work is a partnership approach which places our people and communities at its heart. It is underpinned by the [County Durham Approach to Wellbeing](#); involving communities in decisions that affect them, to ensure that people of all ages across County Durham are motivated to move more, and have access to inclusive opportunities to be more active.

*“ I'm now steadier walking and have more stamina, this is all thanks to the Gentle Walks programme. ”*

Gordon Ridpath, Member of Gentle Walks



### Note

For the purposes of this strategy, activity or movement are used to refer to all kinds of physical activity, including active living (e.g., stair climbing, walking, and wheeling), sport, planned structured exercise and informal, incidental activity.

The word 'system' is used to refer to the many people, organisations and factors which influence physical activity and is defined in the strategy. The ['Building blocks of good health'](#) show how many factors impact on our ability to be active in our daily lives.

# Our vision, mission, and core principles

## Our Vision:

County Durham residents will be more active, enabling them to live longer, healthier, and happier lives.



## Our Mission:

Bringing people and organisations together with a shared purpose of helping everyone in County Durham.

- **County Durham is a wonderful place to live with unique beauty**, but many of us are not active enough for good health
- **Building activity into all parts of our lives** will help us connect with our communities to be healthier, happier, and stronger



### Community

The heart of 'Moving Together'  
People and places are our greatest power



### Collaborate

We are stronger together  
Every individual, community and organisation sharing the vision



### Engage

Thinking big together  
Creatively engaging and joining people together at every place and level



### Focus

Creating equal chance together  
Together removing challenges to make sure everyone has an equal chance to have better health



### Celebrate

Recognising success together  
Sharing and nurturing our community's success across the County



### Learn

Changing and learning together  
Listening and adapting to the needs of all our people and communities

You can read more detail about our core principles in Appendix One.



# Moving Together to reduce health inequalities



## Fairness for all

Our health (and our healthy life expectancy) can be determined by the circumstances in which we are born, where we grow up, our education, and our work. Any unfair or avoidable differences in health across our populations, and between different groups are known as 'health inequalities' or 'health disparities.'

We all have a right to live long, healthy, happy, and productive lives; however, there are some significant gaps in the number of years some of us will live compared to others. Those living in the most affluent parts of the county can expect to live around 8.5 years longer than those living in our most disadvantaged communities. There is also inequality in how healthy those years will be. For example, men and women born in County Durham can expect to live in good health for about 4 years less than the England average.

Whilst our behaviours, such as what we eat, how often we are physically active, and whether we smoke, all have a huge effect on our state of health and wellbeing, achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be challenging for many within our population. We know that there are many positive health benefits associated with moving more and being physically active; however, many people do not meet national [physical activity guidelines.pdf](#).

Being physically active will be easier for some people than it is for others, and we want to change this. Everyone in County Durham should be able to be more active, and we want to ensure that our homes, communities (including our community assets), schools, colleges, and workplaces help everyone to move more.

The Sport England Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021-22) shows there are differences in individual's physical activity levels from different groups (i.e., long-term conditions/disabilities, Black, Asian, minority ethnic groups, socio-economic status).



## % population inactive (less than 30 mins per day) by other inequalities: Nov 2021 – 22

Characteristic	Least deprived (IMD* 1-3)	Most deprived (IMD 8-10)
Socioeconomic group	20.5	38.9
Disability/long-term condition	36.8	47.1
Asian (excluding Chinese)	23.0	38.4
Black	28.7	34.3
Chinese	26.9	27.1
Mixed	16.3	23.1
Other ethnic group	26.3	40.2
White (British)	20.2	32.9
White (Other)	19.1	27.0
Higher education	15.2	22.5
No qualifications	44.6	57.8
Employed	15.9	27.7
Unemployed	28.2	41.9
Long term sickness	52.1	62.0

\*Indices of multiple deprivation

Around 63,000 County Durham residents have a long-term condition or disability, and the average person in County Durham is expected to live in good health until they are 59 years old. Increasing movement can help people live healthier for longer, so a key objective of this strategy is to ensure that everyone is afforded the opportunity to move more in their everyday lives.

Every minute of movement counts towards better health. Whilst many of our residents incorporate some physical activity into their days, nearly a third are active for less than 5 minutes per day. This can be seen in the table below which shows the difference in inactivity levels according to age and socioeconomic status:

**% population Inactive (less than 20 mins per day) by age: Nov 2021 – 22 (Sport England Active Lives)**

Age group	Least deprived (IMD 1-3)	Most deprived (IMD 8-10w)
5-15	27.2	34.2
16-34	14.7	27.3
35-54	15.3	33.0
55-74	20.0	38.3
75+	42.0	57.0

***Opportunities for physical activity must be fair and accessible to all, giving everyone an equal chance to be active.***

This strategy recognises that this not solely a result of individual choice. Moving Together in County Durham is a framework for partnerships to give priority to our most vulnerable groups. Striving to remove barriers to moving more and making it easier for those facing the greatest challenges to improve activity levels and contribute to improved mental and physical health and wellbeing. Through this approach, together we will reduce inequalities.

Physical activity is about more than just health, it should be fun, enjoyable, and help bring people and communities together. We understand the positive impact that can be achieved by helping everyone to be more active, and we are working together to help build active communities by promoting the benefits of moving more, and constantly striving to remove any barriers to participation at all levels.

Increased activity levels for our most disadvantaged people can not only contribute to reducing inequalities in healthy life years, but it can also improve general wellbeing and contribute to work readiness and increased productivity in the workplace. We will consider how this can be achieved in our ‘priority action areas’ later in this strategy.

**“ Being active has many benefits not only physically, but mentally. Having a strategy like Moving Together ensures structure and outlines what should or will happen to have a definite impact.**

***Moving Together isn’t just for sporty people, it’s for everyone and aims to fight the stigma stopping everyone from exercise, – allowing us to move together. ”***

Durham Youth Council





# We are County Durham

County Durham is one of the biggest counties in England, with a diverse geography comprising many locations in which we can reap the benefits of outdoor activity. Indeed, our county attracts many visitors for this purpose. We are well known for our natural assets, including stunning [countryside and landscapes](#), hills, dales, rivers, waterfalls and coastline. These are such an important part of our current and future physical activity environment. Our public rights of way span around 3,500km, we have three country parks, 25 nature reserves, 150 miles of accessible railway paths, and 285 square miles of accessible green space.

## Where we live:

- 14,565 businesses
- 12 green flags for parks and open spaces
- 2 in 5 residents living in rural areas
- 12 miles of coastline
- 150 miles of former railway path
- Durham world heritage site

## Our Services:

- 223 early years and primary schools, 31 secondary schools, 4 colleges
- 9 enhanced mainstream schools and 11 special schools
- 1 university
- 15 council owned leisure centres
- 63 GP practices
- 124 pharmacies

## Our Communities supporting each other:

- 411 sports clubs accessing support
- 59 active community champions
- Around 115 active volunteer leaders in walking, running and cycling
- 600 people attending sessions ran by the Cree\* network last year
- Over 3,000 Voluntary and Community Sector organisations

\*A Cree is County Durham's version of Australia's Men's Shed. Crees aim to engage with those at risk of suicide by tackling social isolation and self-harm through skill-sharing and informal learning to promote social interaction. Although Crees were originally aimed at men, some have developed for women and young people.

Spending time outdoors in our parks, woodlands or on the coast can improve our wellbeing, and it is recognised that 'green environments' are linked to reduced levels of depression, anxiety and enhanced energy and quality of life at all ages. Those who access outdoor leisure activities regularly benefit from reduced blood pressure, less chance of heart disease and are more likely to maintain healthier weight (Green space review OHID, 2020). Here in County Durham, we have many opportunities for such outdoor activities on our doorstep!

There is an abundance of evidence to support the role of such natural assets to increase activity levels, improve our physical health and wellbeing, and increase social connections.

*Walking is the most popular activity in County Durham. In 2020/21, the average adult spent 249 minutes walking for leisure or travel per week.*

Source: Sport England Active Lives Adult Survey 2020/21

# How active are we?

Physical activity can hold different meanings for different people, based on their individual circumstances, goals and preferences. For example, many may engage in physical activity for health and fitness reasons, whilst others may be motivated by recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Some may exercise as a form of stress relief, whilst others might use activities as an opportunity for social interaction and connection.

It is important to realise that any amount of movement is better than none, and of course, more is better! We will look at this later in this strategy.

## What do we know about physical activity levels in County Durham?\*

### Active (adults) at least 150 minutes a week

- 59% met this minimum guideline
- This increased to 68.5% in our least deprived areas and decreased to 49.5% in our most deprived areas
- Gap of almost 20% between least and most deprived areas of County Durham

### Inactive (adults) less than 30 mins per week

- 30.8% were inactive
- This increased to 38.9% in our most deprived areas and decreased to 20.5% in our least deprived areas
- Gap of just over 18% between our most and least deprived areas.

### Active (children and young people) on average 60+ mins per day

- 36.9% of children and young people met this minimum guideline
- Academic year 21/22

### Active (children and young people) on average less than 30 mins per day

- 31.7% are active for less than 30 minutes per day
- This increases to 37% for those children and young people living in our most deprived areas and decreases to 27.7% for those living in our least deprived areas.
- Academic year 21/22

### Opportunity (adults Nov 20/21)

- In County Durham, around 73% of people either agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that they had the opportunity to be physically active.
- This dropped to 68.5% for those living in our most deprived areas and increased to 83.4% of those living in our least deprived areas.

\*Sport England: Active Lives Survey, Adult data and Children and Young People Activity Data, 2023.



# Why moving matters?

## *Some is good, more is better!*

Being active has so many benefits to our health and our environment. Moving, physical activity and sport can change lives, not only by supporting good physical health, but also by making us feel happier, helping us to be more productive in our personal and working lives, and even by improving quality of sleep.

Around 8.5% of those living in County Durham have a diabetes diagnosis, whilst 17.2% live with high blood pressure. Furthermore, 15% of the population have heart disease, whilst 2.4% have suffered a stroke event. Moving more can reduce the risk associated with many of these conditions, and where there are opportunities for all groups to move together, communities can thrive, and this brings many benefits. Moving with others, for example, can prevent social isolation, which in turn can reduce the risk of both cardiovascular disease and dementia.

## Moderate or strong evidence for health benefit

Children	Adults	Older Adults
Bone health	All-cause mortality	Falls
Cognitive function	Stroke and heart disease	Frailty
Cardiovascular fitness	Hypertension	Physical function
Weight status	Type 2 diabetes	Social isolation
good mental health	8 cancers	
	Improved mental health	
	Cognitive function	
	Dementia	
	Quality of life	
	Sleep	
	Weight status	

Movement is good for all, and we know that some of the greatest benefits will be achieved by supporting those who are currently inactive. Regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, economic status or ability, we want all residents of County Durham to have accessible, safe, and convenient choices to help them move more. This strategy supports everyone to be active, whilst recognising that some barriers to increased activity may not be within an individual's own control.

While there are [recommended levels of physical activity for adults and children](#), even 5-10 minutes of movement at a time can be effective as a long-term goal for people starting from low levels of movement. In today's society, where people's lives are busy with many competing priorities, even small amounts or bursts of movement throughout the day will be of benefit. For example, taking the stairs instead of the lift or walking to the local shop instead of driving.

# Our communities are at the heart of Moving Together

## Benefits for the whole community

Walking, cycling, group activities, sport and play bring a whole host of benefits to our communities (OHID, 2020).



### Physical wellbeing

- Longer and healthier life years



### Mental wellbeing

- Feel good
- Helps memory and long term mental health



### Individual development

- School readiness
- Productivity and independence



### Social

- Better quality of life
- Sense of belonging and togetherness
- Road safety
- Reduced loneliness



### Economic

- Improved employment
- Community
- Wealth building
- Work productivity
- Reduced sickness absence



### Environment

- Cleaner air
- Suitable travel and places
- Reduced CO2 emissions
- Healthier environment

Our people and communities are County Durham's biggest assets. We have worked together to understand and recognise diverse needs, and to identify those local assets that help people to be more active. We will continue to ensure that local environments support people to move more – whether that is where they live, work or play - as well as by supporting communities to become more connected to better enable this to happen. We call this a 'whole systems approach' and will consider this in more detail later.

*'The more an environment consistently promotes healthy behaviour, the greater the likelihood that such behaviour will be adopted and continue'*

World Obesity Federation

We have used local data, insight from our communities, and evidence-based approaches will help us to focus our efforts on those with greatest need - supporting those who move least to move more. Building on consultation and co-production of this strategy, we will expand on the good work already taking place across our communities to encourage people to become more active.

Making it easier to be active every day and achieve healthy weight is everyone's business, which can be better achieved by making changes together. Local businesses, Health and Social Care organisations, education providers, early years settings, children services, VCS organisations, libraries, employment services and programmes, can all make positive change.





## Moving Together with a purpose

This strategy sets out a vision and mission that encourages everyone to join a movement and make a change. It is not simply a list of actions, because we recognise it is time to think differently and listen to the changing needs of our communities. Those actions needed to achieve our goals are driven with, and by, our residents and communities, and this strategy highlights how we can and will make change together.

## Moving Together is everyone's business

Engaging leadership across the system is important to the success of the Moving Together vision. A key focus of this strategy is to collaborate with partners in all sectors who support people to live healthier lives, whether that is in workplaces, schools, play, or community support groups. Our aim is to ensure all partners are equipped to help those they work with to move more.

“ *Blue Gym is an activity programme designed to get participants active in blue space to benefit their physical and mental health. Being in coastal and river environments offers the opportunity to reduce the amount of ‘noise’ in people’s minds and focus on the environment around them rather than their own problems* ”

Sarah Campbell,  
Community and Volunteer Manager,  
National Trust



## Healthy weight for all

We know obesity cuts lives short and contributes to many conditions including type 2 diabetes, depression, anxiety, and cancer. Having excessive body fat not only increases disease risk, but can also impact on mobility, work productivity, social engagement, the enjoyment of healthy relationships.

In County Durham 24% of reception age children, and 40% of children in Year 6 are living with overweight including obesity. Among adults, this figure increases to 71%. (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2022).

It is important to understand that our surroundings have a huge impact on our ability to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, and it can be misleading to believe that obesity is an individual problem, as more than one hundred factors contribute to a person having obesity (Lawrence et al 2022). Willpower and people have not changed, but our environments, the systems we live in have. For example, fewer of us are active at work, as technology encourages us to sit for longer periods. It can be easier to rely on the car for short journeys or take the lift rather than the stairs. This is why we must continue to work together to ensure that where possible, our physical environment shapes our individual behaviours – maximising all opportunities to increase activity levels and levels of healthy weight.



**“** We build and nurture our physical literacy throughout our lives, forming our initial love of movement in the early years and through our school life. It is important that we know and understand the barriers that increase disengagement, reduce motivation, and prevent our children and young people from accessing movement. Where we can reduce barriers and improve inclusive opportunity we can build and empower individuals to self-select to be active, however that may look. Every movement counts!

*From parents, school leaders and business managers, to politicians and policy makers, every stakeholder can contribute to the societal shift overall and a journey to reducing sedentary behaviour. ”*

Kate Stephenson  
Education Durham, Education Advisor and Specialist Physical Education,  
School Sport and Physical Activity Advisor





# Supporting change through a whole systems approach

Opportunities to move during the course of our daily lives have changed a lot in the past few decades. Compared to times when people walked and cycled to their workplaces or school, we now see more reliance upon cars and personal transport. Rapid developments in digital technology mean that we can now buy almost anything online and have it delivered to our homes. More people now work from home, so it seems more challenging than ever before to make movement part of our daily lives.

This means that is now more important than ever to look at how we can work together as a system to make it easier to build more physical activity into our daily lives.



Our system is built upon relationships between our people, our communities, our organisations, and our infrastructure. We live and work in communities that are rich with assets and resources, and by working together we can all use these to develop effective solutions to improve our health and wellbeing and make moving more a part of our lives.



# How we will work together to achieve our goals

We have collaborated with local people, communities, and a range of organisations in County Durham about how we can improve opportunities to increase movement and physical activity in County Durham. Feedback has helped us to produce a framework that shows how we will work together to achieve our goals.

## Moving Together Framework for Change

### Vision

*County Durham residents will be more active, enabling them to live longer, healthier and happier lives*

### Our core principles



### Our priority action areas



### Focus on 'the asks'

1. Create accessible, enjoyable, and inclusive opportunities for play, recreation, and physical activity for children and young people at home, school, and community settings.
2. Build a 'Moving Together in County Durham' culture that increases opportunities for everyone to move more and ensure the benefits of physical activity are promoted across all settings.
3. Increase accessibility to active travel for all who live, work/study in, and visit County Durham, and ensure active principles are considered in all local policies concerning the built and natural environment

Our framework for change is informed by the Moving Together vision and mission. It is based upon what you have told us is important, and how we should focus our joint resources to effect the biggest change.



# Moving Together Champions

We cannot do this alone! We are creating our goals with the help of Moving Together Champions who represent our local communities, and a wide range of County Durham organisations who are invested in combatting inactivity and promoting the benefits of moving more. These include education, health and social care providers, a range of voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as those from our local institutions of further and higher educations.

*A Moving Together Champion is a person, community, group, business, or organisation who is committed to supporting those they can influence to move more each day. They:*

- Understand the importance of being more active to improve health outcomes of all those who they may influence
- Take specific actions to embed the 'Moving Together' core principles into their everyday practices
- Promote the benefits of being active, by sharing consistent messages to all who will benefit, with a particular focus on those who face biggest challenges to move more

Champions will share resources and insight, promoting good practice and celebrating success as the movement develops. As the network grows, so will our progress towards a healthier and more active County Durham.

**“** *OASES (Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists) is a charity based in Esh Winning that works with young people, schools and families to support global sustainability and outdoor learning, encouraging young people to get outside, get active and enjoy nature in their local environment. We are consequently delighted to be part of Moving Together, and we offer lots of programmes that will support this agenda, from family gardening to orienteering, Forest schools to Active Learning.* **”**

Joanne Appleby,  
OASES CEO



**Growing**



**Active Learning**



**Orienteering**

## Our priority action areas

Local people, organisations and physical activity stakeholders gave their views through a variety of consultations, surveys, roundtables, and focus groups, and identified the following priority areas for action:

- Children and young people
- Inclusive communities
- Active environments
- Health and social care settings

You will find more detail on each group in our action plan, including our ambitions and key priorities.

### How do we know we have made a difference?

Measuring outcomes in systems and behaviour change can be challenging; however, County Durham has very well-established collaborations that are well placed to ascertain and monitor system connectivity, growth in our common purpose, and achievement of our joint Moving Together ambitions.

Local consultation has informed our action plan. As well as measuring quantitative performance through national indicators and datasets (Sport England Active Lives, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Public Health Outcomes Frameworks), local stakeholders will monitor cultural and systems change through existing and developing networks such as the Physical Activity Strategy Committee, the Healthy Weight Alliance, the County Durham Children and Young People's Partnership, the Early Years Framework, the Active Environments Partnership, the County Durham Care Partnership, as well as through other health improvement initiatives that are focussed on improving levels of physical activity and healthy weight.

Data and information will be reported on an annual basis through the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board.

### What can we do?

The strategy encourages individuals, organisations, community groups, clubs, and wider partners to collaborate by creating a plan that will help more people in County Durham to be active. This is why we have developed some key core principles to help focus and support individual and organisational action.

We have also identified key priority areas that, as a network, we will focus upon. They have been informed by local evidence and feedback from partners from across the system. These priority areas will help our key partners to coordinate and align approaches towards helping people to move more.

Making it easier to be active every day and achieve healthy weight is your business, our business, and everyone's business, and this can be better achieved by making changes together!

We can all work to make County Durham a place where there are lots of opportunities to move more. Our people, our communities, our local businesses, our health and social care providers, our education providers, our VCS organisations – indeed, any organisation in County Durham - can all make positive changes to help us move together!

## Our core principles



**Community**



**Collaborate**



**Engage**



**Focus**



**Celebrate**



**Learn**

### Community

Our people and communities are County Durham's biggest asset. We will collaborate with communities to support and empower our most disadvantaged and vulnerable, helping them to live healthier, longer, more active lives. We will help people develop the motivation, confidence, knowledge, and capacity to move more, and explore why regular movement is important.

Working with our communities is a central driver to the success of the strategy. What drives this work is building on community strengths and empowering people to understand what matters to them in the context of increasing activity levels. Communities have been involved in developing the principles of the strategy through consultation, and we have co-produced an action plan to agree how change will be achieved.

The key is a bottom-up approach with the emphasis on 'people, organisations, community groups, and clubs working together.' Close work and engagement with local communities will add to our existing knowledge, so that we can develop new insight on the issues and barriers people face in relation to moving more. We will co-produce solutions with local people and partners so that we can create meaningful ways to help people move more and increase their activity levels.

Sport England's Sport Outcomes Evidence Review (2017) demonstrated the impact of building stronger communities by bringing people from diverse backgrounds together via participating, volunteering and spectating, improving community links, levels of cohesion, and social capital. Improving residents' sense of belonging, increasing levels of social trust, and feeling more connected to neighbourhoods and communities are also recognised as key factors in building a strong sense of community.

## Collaborate

Key to creating system change is a focus on people and local communities, supported by close collaboration and shared decision-making with County Durham organisations.

County Durham will adopt and continually develop a whole systems approach to increasing movement and physical activity. This will help our people and communities work with local organisations to better understand their needs and ideas, help identify where the need is greatest, identify opportunities for change that will support regular movement, and build upon the existing vibrant physical activity culture across the county.

The strategy encourages partners from all sectors to work as a network, so that they can use their experience and expertise to make progress and achieve long-term, positive, and sustainable change.

This strategy will encourage people of all ages to move more. This 'life course approach' acknowledges that people have different levels of movement throughout different stages of their lives, and that these stages can be influenced by many internal and external factors. We want to collaborate with partners, communities, and organisations to help people overcome any such barriers and make positive lifestyle changes.

## Engage

*There is no single answer or solution to help all ages move more across County Durham. In order to increase movement and promote physical activity, partners need a shared sense of purpose and an alignment of resources so they can work together.*

There are many ways to become involved with the implementation of this strategy so that you can maximise its impact:

- Share it with the organisations, groups, clubs, and people you work or collaborate with
- Adopt and embrace its key principles
- Help others to move more. Ask someone else (a neighbour, family, colleague, friend, patient) what matters to them, how they would like to get moving more, and find out how you can best support them
- Be an advocate or role model for change – help to grow the momentum of this strategy and build regular movement into your day
- Consider how regular movement features into your organisation's policies, and put it on the agenda in your work or community
- Connect with partners – whether in person, virtually or through social media to access resources and share information



## Focus

### *Encourage and support those within our communities who are least active to move more to help address the inequalities that currently exist*

We know that life chances and health are determined by the conditions which a person is born, grows, lives, works, and ages. Social and physical environments are known to directly influence the opportunity to move more and do more physical activity, so we need to work together to reduce barriers to active lifestyles.

Safe transport environments, for example, influence how children integrate walking and cycling into their daily routines, and enable older aged adults to maintain their autonomy. So, without such systems, the opportunity for active travel could be much more limited.

Although everyone, regardless of age, gender, language, ethnicity, economic status, or ability, should have accessible, safe, convenient opportunities to be active we know this isn't always the case. We will focus efforts where the need is greatest to reduce those inequalities that impact upon activity and health. Our data tells us that some of our communities experience worse health outcomes than others and we want to support all residents to live more active, healthier lives.

## Celebrate

### *Inspiring everyone in County Durham by sharing the passion, opportunities, and assets*

We want this strategy to help identify and celebrate progress and success and inspire others to join in and take action. By being asset-focused we will acknowledge the different strengths and nurture movement leadership across the County

## Learning

### *Using evidence supported by local conversations*

Capturing what is working well across the county, and learning from elsewhere, is very important. We must focus on positive change – no matter how big or small, and always consider where such change is possible.

Creating long term change takes time. A combination of data (such as the number of people active) and local engagement will help us to measure the impact of this strategy. However, learning about the experiences of our people, and our network of partners, will also help us to monitor progress. A combination of data, case studies and practical examples from communities across the county will be key to continually improving and maximising our current physical activity opportunities.

This strategy will be monitored and reviewed through the creation of a strong network across County Durham, we will capture and share learning so that we can best understand what motivates our communities and helps our people to become more active. We will focus our efforts on working together to create the best possible environment that will help people to move more.

Partners and communities are encouraged to regularly share case studies to highlight success and learning. A partnership approach to evaluation will involve celebrating and sharing when things go well, and learning and trying again when things aren't so successful.

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format:



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Audio,



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54548 AHS





**September / October 2023 Programme Manager's Report to:**  
**Discover Brightwater Board; DWT Trustees;**  
**National Lottery Heritage Fund**

**Wetland Habitat Creation Bishop's Fen and Ricknall Carrs**

- Due to long-term sickness within DCC Planning department, a new planning officer has been allocated to our wetland planning applications. This has led to further delays and the determination by the Planning Committee has now been pushed back to early December. A number of minor queries raised by consultees are being addressed by the team, working with Litchfields, our planning consultants. An orientation site meeting with the DCC planner is scheduled for October.
- ITTs for both sites have been published and a number of responses have been returned. A document asking tenderers to revise their quotations and to phase elements of the construction to align with existing (and potential additional) funding has been issued to ensure that construction work can commence in the spring, once planning permission is in place, without scaling back our long-term ambitions for the sites.
- A request for additional funding support of £200k from the EA has had an initial positive response and we are awaiting the appropriate funding agreement documentation to be processed.
- A recent meeting was held between Theakston's and DWT and solicitors are drawing up the final draft of the licence agreement. Once planning permission is granted, any final amendments to this agreement will be made and then signed. This will then enable us to award the construction contracts and to submit our draft completion documentation and evaluation reports to NLHF as part of a formal request to extend the Brightwater delivery deadline beyond the current March 24 deadline.
- **Great North Fen - Ricknall Carrs – Preston and Morden Carrs** DWT have successfully leveraged in approximately £5million from a variety of sources including Natural England, DCC, Bannister Trust and others to acquire and manage additional land in this area as the next phase of The Great North Fen and to use for the purpose, initially, of providing credits for developers needing nitrate nutrient neutrality credits in the Tees catchment area and for the sale of Biodiversity Net Gain Credits.
- The Sedgewicks' neighbouring farm at Ricknall, following assessment funded by Brightwater, are placing a tranche of land into a Countryside Stewardship Scheme – this will contribute to the delivery of our targeted hectare of land in the

Brightwater area brought into such schemes and will generate elements of the match funding identified within the terms of the LCAP.

### **Access and Environment Projects**

- **South Park Sensory Walk for Visually Impaired People** – Working with access charity Going 4 Independence and the Darlington Botanical Society and Field Club, and Darlington Borough Council, Groundwork are currently exploring using some of the current underspend to help design and deliver an appropriate route from the entrance of South Park to the existing sensory garden in the centre. We are in discussions with NHLF for permission to proceed with this project.

### **Archaeology & Heritage**

- All main field works now complete together with final reports which are soon to be uploaded on to the Discover Brightwater website as part of DigVentures' work in creating the platform for the Eco-Museum

### **Village Atlas Projects**

- The first drafts of all 8 Village Atlases have now been created. These vary from very detailed with academic elements to those with a less researched and more populist feel.
- A series of launch/promotional events is in planning over the next few months.

### **Darlington Heritage Trail**

- DBC town centre manager is now leading on the production of the Darlington Heritage Trail and is able to consolidate the work and remaining funding from Brightwater (via Groundwork) together with Towns Fund monies to develop and complete this project using an app which the town is using for a range of uses including preparations for the 2025 200<sup>th</sup> celebrations of the Stockton to Darlington Railway. The initial 'beta' version of the app has now been developed.

### **Great North Fen**

- Ricknall Carrs and Bishop's Fen will effectively be the first phase of The Great North Fen.
- DWT have been successful in obtaining funding and support to acquire additional land in the vicinity of Ricknall Carrs (see above)
- Discussions are ongoing with the Skerne Catchment partnership, The Rivers' Trust North East Water Catchment Hub at Durham University and NWG about Skerne Development post Brightwater. A Skerne Catchment Development Officer, Stephen Thompson from Durham Wildlife Trust has been seconded to NWG to further develop a catchment-based approach to improvements for the Skerne. Early work has included engagement with local landowners and tenants to explore the creation



of a 'Farming Cluster' for the Skerne. We are also exploring the possibility of making a bid to the EA's new Natural Flood Management funding scheme

### **Eco-Museum**

- We are working with DigVentures to work on the development of their map-based platform with links to the various Brightwater digital assets. All work from the Village Atlases and the Deep Time project will be validated and merged with the DCC historic environment records and that the platform will be fully compatible with the Durham History Centre Project. This would be funded from underspend within the Groundwork staffing budget and others which have not been fully utilised due to absences following maternity leave and delays in recruiting staff to deliver the work.
- Following the end of Discover Brightwater the current agreement is that Durham Wildlife Trust will manage the Eco-Museum until such time that the new Durham History Centre is able to incorporate the Brightwater Eco-Museum materials within its digital archives.

### **Match Funding, Book balancing and Reporting**

- The programme manager and finance officer continue to work ensure that all deliverables, outputs and outcomes are addressed. All match funding elements have been identified together with additional funds which have been leveraged in to pay for additional work outside of the LCAP and for supporting additional costs. The finance office is due to end his contract at the end of October 2023. Currently all claims, accruals and forecasts are being updated to enable colleagues at DWT to continue to manage and monitor the programme until completion. The Programme Manager, will continue to work part-time for DWT from November 1 2023, including overseeing the successful completion of the Discover Brightwater programme.
- We currently plan to have completed everything with the exception of the Wetlands projects by the end of March 24. Once planning permission has been granted for Bishop's Fen and Ricknall Carrs a formal request for a further extension will be made to NLHF (see above)
- – who have been kept informed of the current developments with regards to planning. Both the Eco-Museum and Great North Fen Legacy Projects will continue beyond this time.
- At present we have received (or are due to receive) more than sufficient match and additional funds to complete the delivery of our agreements and we are currently compiling a range of completion documents with appropriate evidence for funders.
- **Evaluation** Evaluation video interviews are being assembled from a number of stakeholders to form part of a video to outline the impact of Brightwater and some of the lessons learned. It planned that the Evaluation workshops postponed from May will now take place this autumn when suitable dates have been agreed between the evaluator, the programme team and key stakeholders.
- **Close Down and Celebrations** Due to the further delays in the planning process to the wetlands projects, we are aiming to have a penultimate **Board Meeting /Lunch at the**

**County Hotel, Aycliffe Village on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024.** This will provide an update on the closing stages of the programme including confirmation of the timescale for the completion of the remaining elements of Discover Brightwater including the opening of the Ricknall Carrs and Bishiop's Fen sites. A final celebration, including visits to the wetland sites, is proposed for the summer of 2024 as a close down event. The date to be confirmed nearer the time.



**NORTH PENNINES AONB PARTNERSHIP**

**ACCESS and RECREATION WORKING GROUP**

**&**

**PENNINE NATIONAL TRAILS NORTHERN WORKING GROUP**

**MINUTES**

**9<sup>th</sup> August 2023.**  
Talkin Tarn

**1. Welcome, introduction and apologies**

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Mike Ogden - Durham County Council (Chair)	Jo McAllister - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Simon Wilson - North Pennines AONB Partnership	Jane Hayes - North Pennines AONB Partnership
Duncan Lovatt – Northumberland County Council	Shane Harris - North Pennines AONB Partnership
Molly Jones - North Pennines AONB Partnership	Sarah Tooze - North Pennines AONB Partnership
Sara Schultz – Natural England	Sarah Hudspeth - North Pennines AONB Partnership
David Gibson – Cumberland Council	Mike Murden – Durham County Council
Jim Welch - Durham Local Access Forum	Geoff Wilson – Cumbria and Lakes Joint Local Access Forum
Heather Procter – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	Aimee Lee - North Pennines AONB Partnership
Jack Ravenscroft – North Pennines AONB Partnership	
Lorna Lazzari – Northumberland National Park Authority	
Fiona Knox - North Pennines AONB Partnership	
Ron Lyon – Disabled Ramblers	
Hazel Wainwright – Westmorland and Furness Council	
David Benson – Westmorland and Furness Council	

## **2. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **3. Matters arising**

The group discussed attendance by other NE staff. Sara and others to update later re Coast to coast.

## **4. National Trails update – Heather Proctor**

HP updated the group on the split of responsibilities with Jo.

Update from JoM. Spine Race – Over the past 2 years participants of the virtual Spine Race have donated towards the repair work needed on a section of the Pennine Way on Dun Fell and this project is now underway (confirmed completed at the meeting). We are hoping to do some joint promotion of the work with the Spine Race in due course. We're conscious that due to the appearance of the groundworks immediately after completion and the importance given to the 'look' of work on social media, it may be beneficial to wait to photograph the site once it has bedded-in slightly, hence not rushing to put something out too soon.

Countryfile Magazine – The August edition of BBC Countryfile Magazine features a 14 page article on the Pennine Way which we have contributed to. The trail is given the title of 'England's Finest Trail' on the front cover banner and includes some great photography along the length of the trail.

Social Media – currently aiming for a minimum of 1 post a week. It doesn't sound much but ensures we maintain a presence without it dominating our work. Social media can be time consuming to manage and ensuring content is useful and relevant is important. Our audience seem to respond well to updates on maintenance projects (for example the recent work on the approach to Bellingham) and the work of volunteers on the trail, so if there are any stories that we can cover then please get in touch.

Outdooractive – We have bought in to an agreement with Outdooractive to upload walks/rides on the Pennine Trails on to their platform. The aim is to update some of our circular walks and rides and provide GPS mapping. Work so far has focused on the 'Try a Trail' routes which were created around 15 years ago as these rely on the downloading of PDF documents from the website and the information on the PDFs, whilst useable, is not up to date. Each walk or ride is being checked before it's published, new photos taken and new descriptions written. A link is provided from the National Trails website to the relevant Outdooractive page. The intention is to have walks on offer along the whole length of the Pennine Way.

Circular and linear walks – We have uploaded some more of the North Pennines AONB walks to the website so there are now 10 shown in total. These will not be put on Outdooractive as they're produced by North Pennines AONB Partnership but if they appear on an app or

any GPS platform in the future and there's any ability for us to link to or promote this then it would be great to add this to the website. We'd particularly like to be able to offer more accessible walks and this is something we're keen to look in to further. Ron mentioned that there will be a good number of routes already on Outdooractive submitted by members of the Disabled Ramblers.

Online survey - Hope that the online survey will be back on the website in the autumn and enable us to capture important data on how the trails are being used. It's likely to be available for a 3-4 month period of time and will be relevant to anyone who has walked any length of the Pennine Way over the previous 9-12 months. Questions are similar to those asked in previous surveys (to enable some comparison of data) but there will also be questions around the use of public transport and more questions around trail condition.

60th anniversary – Will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the official opening of the Pennine Way in 2025 and have been looking at numerous options for activities. A short list is being created and we hope to present this at the next partnership meeting in October. If anyone would like to make a suggestion for events or activities to be considered then please get in touch as the more ideas we have at this stage the better. Anything/everything is up for consideration at the moment!

**Action. All to consider ideas for 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities, please contact Jo or Heather.**

HP advised on details of the Pennine National Trails budget. All the NE grant and most of the other money has been allocated to date. Hope to be fully spent. Have additional accessibility money coming next financial year. Have done some work to identify walks to improve using the accessibility funding. 10 locations have been identified along the Pennine Way with potential due to infrastructure present. Discussed Bowlees options, MO advised that the emerging Durham ROWIP has a target of 10 new accessible routes. Jim advised on issues of least restrictive option and reasonable adjustments, mentioned the audio interpretation that was installed at Derwent Reservoir, it would be good to monitor how well they are used. Question about need for match funding on sections off Pennine Way where routes are circular. Molly asked about how the routes would be marked to the right audience. Not yet fully considered but definitely something to consider and work with partners to address. Ron mentioned the need to be careful that routes are realistic for audiences. Heather advised that there is an ambition to develop a photo trail for the Pennine Bridleway with the Experience Community. Sara mentioned the grading options already available including By All Reasonable Means. Ron offered his support.

HP advised that the fulfilment of the Northern section of the Pennine Bridleway is a priority, now rolled into 'completing the Pennine Bridleway' covering all the strategic issues on the route, with a completion target of 2031. First task is a letter to NE and others to raise awareness and establish a plan.

**Action. Heather to draft a letter and circulate to Highway Authorities.**

A69 crossing of the Pennine Way was discussed. The Champion who covers that section has raised the issue on a number of occasions. There is no formalised crossing. It is an intimidating point. Whilst there is no evidence of accidents, it is not a pleasant crossing. The group agreed that it would be worth looking at the Pennine Journey route that uses a nearby underpass.

**Action. Section to be checked on next survey.**

Combined signposting raised by volunteer where the Pennine Way and Hadrian's Wall Paths coincide, and signage is not clear. The group discussed the option of adding both waymark discs as appropriate and identify particularly problematic location. Jim mentioned that at times he is asked about the condition of rights of way around the area, highlights the need to consider people visiting from other areas.

## 5. Roof of England Walk

SW advised that the preferred route is all but finalised. Delivery of routes is now being built into funding bids (or will be improved by association). The next major step other than obtaining funding is the main direction text for the guide that Shane will be leading on. Jim mentioned BBC 4 walks programme Open Country and wondered if they had ever been to the North Pennines.

**Action. Simon will circulate details to Hazel and Dave B. Simon to check with Sarah H about Open Country programme.**

## 6. Access for All update – Simon Wilson

SW updated the group on the range of things that have been delivered using the Access for All funding. All has generally gone well though a greater lead in time and funding for staff would have been a bonus. Fiona and Simon updated on recent work with the Experience Community on photo-trails and films. MJ updated members on the progress and success of the Outdoor Mobility Network (Trampers). We feel it has been a great success with excellent feedback. The network has opened-up opportunities for people who faced significant barriers. Jim mentioned text to audio apps that are now available as is photograph description software. Ron mentioned the list of available Trampers on the Disabled Ramblers website and asked that the Disabled Ramblers are marketed at Trammer venues. Simon asked members for capital only activity ideas for the fund for next financial year when it becomes available again.

**Action. All to consider options for works. Molly to send details of the Trampers to Ron, contact ron@disabledramblers.co.uk.**

## 7. Update on 'North Pennines National Landscape' branding

SW advised that the new National Landscapes rename/rebrand of AONBs is likely to take place November. We will have a new logo (one of a national set). The change will be a significant piece of work for us.

## 8. Project and scheme updates

FK advised that within the Fellfoot Forward LPS, we have been developing what we term slow trails, which are shorter walks developed from older East Cumbria Countryside Project trails and with community consultation. There are 6 routes that have been developed. Individual trail guides will be available in due course as print, on the new hybrid app and available as GPX files. Have had support from access authority colleagues and Ron. Opportunities for accessibility will be maximised. We hope that by Autumn they will be ready. We have a draft film for Talkin Tarn that has been produced by the Experience Community. Also looked at Long Meg stone circle and Castle Carrock (that will be included in a phototrail). We have also looked at accessible infrastructure. One spin off is likely to be some form of accessibility project around Geltsdale. David B and Jack are likely to lead on improving routes in the south. Fellfoot 40 route is being worked on, a 40 mile bike route that



runs as a figure of 8 through the Fellfoot Forward Scheme area. A tender is out for the product work. The Scheme will end in March. We were gifted the Cumbria high level walks and we will make them available again and we will look at doing communication work in due course. MO asked about the changes at Long Meg. FK advised that it is going well and a new sign has gone in at Long Meg car park discouraging overnight stays and interpretation/orientation is planned.

MJ advised that the road crossing improvements at Bowlees are planned for next week. Other TeesSwale access works are continuing as reported before.

JR advised that the Middleton parish works are coming to an end. Has been doing some work on the Weardale Way and Pennine Way People Project is going well with works planned through the year.

## 9. Updates from members

SS advised that the King Charles III England Coast Path is going well with more stretches open. Has been working between Cleveleys and Pierhead with colleagues at Sefton. Has been working closely with colleagues in Northumberland to finalise the whole of the Coast Path in the County and a launch event is planned at the end of August. Busy working with others to establish partnerships. Sara does not have any information about the comprehensive spending review. Static budget impacts and the difficulties of rising prices were discussed.

David G advised that there are a lot of orders being prepared for the Coast Path at the moment. Also doing work with the Eden Rivers Trust, working up an application to NLHF for funding. Move to unitary is still ongoing.

David B advised that for the emerging Coast to Coast development there are 3 sets of meetings. On the stakeholder group there are a range of organisations represented. Wider benefits are a key concern (nature, community, business). Hartley to Yorkshire is the section of concern for the North Pennines. It is likely to be a dedication and commons consent. Might be up to 2km of mill flagging to go in. There will also be a clapper bridge to go in. There will be an access audit to advise on accessibility opportunities. At Peeping Hill on the Pennine Way, the new gate and people counter has gone in. On Dun Fell, there is more work that could be done following the recently completed works. Still some works to complete outside Alston on the Pennine Way. The waymarking activity at Alston with volunteers went well. Attended the MOD Warcop Access group and has passed contact details to MO.

LL reported that maintenance work is going well. All works are now done in Wark Forest

RL has a calendar of activity planned for the year and is minded to put something together for the Eden and North Pennines. Any ideas would be welcomed (accessible but adventurous routes up to 8 miles, preferably circular). Parking is a key matter to consider (20 vehicles including motorhomes).

**Action. All to consider routes and contact Ron.**

MO advised that the new Durham ROWIP has gone through statutory consultation and will be going to cabinet. Northumberland are also looking at a review. Mike mentioned his role on the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme Panel, including access.

**10. AOB**

SW mentioned the new research reported today that walking under 5000 steps per day can have health benefits at any age.

**11. Date, time and venue of next meeting**

Weds 6<sup>th</sup> December on Teams

County Durham Local Access Forum  
Work Programme October 2023

Topic	Role	Member (Lead) and Group	Task	Target Date
Co-ordinate LAF Activity	Prepare agendas, chair meetings, coordinate links with other bodies	(Chair)/ Vice-Chair	Prepare agendas for quarterly meetings. Liaise with secretariat. Chair meetings, prepare minutes with secretariat	2-3 weeks prior to mtgs.
DCC Consultations	To respond to consultation documents	Chair/all		
Bright Water Landscape Project	Member of Board of Partnership	T Bolton	Ensure successful delivery of access elements	4 year programme commenced July 2018 – last Board meeting to take place October 2023.
Coast Path Partnership	Represent the LAF at meetings and respond to consultations	(A Johnson)		To note that this group has not yet formally established.
Public Access to Council owned land	To consider sites for permissive access	(P Holding) T Bolton G Hughes A Johnson S Robinson (Head of Corporate Property and Land)		
Regional LAF Liaison	Represent the LAF at regional meetings with other LAFs and Natural England	Chair/Vice-Chair	Attend meetings as and when required	
DCC Liaison	To meet with a Senior Officer twice yearly to discuss current LAF business	All		
ROWIP 4	Support Officers to deliver ROWIP	(G Hughes) Pat Holding Angela Johnson Tom Bolton		
County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan	Coordinate LAF involvement			
North Pennines AONB Access and Recreation	Represent the LAF	Jim Welch (1 vacancy)	Represent the LAF at meetings 4 times a year and report	

Working Group			back on issues as and when necessary	
Pennine National Trails Northern Working Group	Represent the LAF	Jim Welch (1 vacancy)	Represent the LAF at meetings 4 times a year and report back on issues as and when necessary	
Government Consultations	Respond on behalf of the LAF	(Chair)/all	As required	
Annual Report	Completion of Draft LAF Annual Report	A Johnson	Co-ordinate updates from members on individual work streams	
Working with Public Health	Represent the LAF at local meetings and lead on any consultation	J Welch	Attend quarterly meetings of the Healthy Weight Alliance Group	
Common Land	Liase with DCC on issues around the protection of Common Land and respond to consultation on applications for deregistration	(T Bolton)/J Welch		
2026 – Lost Ways	To explore ‘lost ways’	Sub-Group:- (A Johnson) D Maughan P Holding G Hughes		
A66 North Trans-Pennine Route Project	To represent LAF at meetings of the non-motorised user workshop and stakeholder reference group	David Maughan/Angela Johnson		
Durham Woodland Revival	Point of Contact	(Geoff Hughes)	Await information on success of funding application	
Tees-Swale Project	Point of Contact	David Maughan		
Heritage 100	Point of contact	Jim Welch		

Walks				
Darlington and Stockton Railway – Walking and Cycling Opportunities		David Maughan		
Campaign for Temporary Footpath Diversions – Walker Safety		David Maughan		
Slow Ways	Await developments	Geoff Hughes		

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