

22 November 2024

Physical Activity Strategic Framework

**Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration,
Economy and Growth**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members with an update on the Physical Activity Strategic Framework for the Wellbeing, Sport and Leisure (WS&L) section within Culture, Sport and Tourism.

Executive Summary

- 2 As the main provider of sport and leisure services across County Durham, the Wellbeing, Sport and Leisure (WS&L) section within Culture, Sport and Tourism has a huge part to play in supporting residents to become and remain physically active.
- 3 In 2023 WS&L reviewed our approach to ensure that we are maximising our resource and reaching those that are the most in need. This led to the development of the Physical Activity Strategic Framework (PASF) (Appendix 2) which set out the principles and priority areas for the WSL service area to support the overarching aim of The County Durham Physical Activity Strategy 2023-28 'Moving Together' (Appendix 3) to support County Durham residents to be more active, enabling them to live longer, healthier, and happier lives.
- 4 To support this strategy, a Moving Together Network was established in September 2024, which sets out a social movement to get people moving more. WS&L is intrinsically linked as advocates of physical activity, providing local services and supporting local communities to get involved.

- 5 The network is at the early stages, but this will bring organisations together with a shared purpose and the PASF has aligned our principles, priorities and resources to support this, defining our part in a bigger system that will embed long-lasting, and transformational change.
- 6 The PASF acknowledges the need to improve access to WS&L services and the need to change our approach, to ensure that we are reaching more people, and meeting their needs. This reflects a service commitment to break down the barriers and stigmas around physical activity, and the perceptions of local authority ran leisure centres being out of date, only offering traditional gyms and swimming pools.
- 7 Our facilities have been transformed in 2023/24 into non-conventional 'physical activity hubs', that are more relevant, accessible and offer something for everyone. This has included new soft play provision, cafes, adventure play, climbing, 10-pin bowling and trampolines, and the Move hub to accommodate older people and those with underlining health conditions.
- 8 Individuals and communities are unique, as are the experiences and challenges that shape them and the next phase is to ensure that our programmes provide the right offer, the right environment, and to upskill our staff to support people to develop the motivation, confidence, knowledge, and capacity to move more.
- 9 The Moving Together Strategy identified four key priority areas:
 - Children and Young People
 - Inclusive Communities
 - Active Environments
 - Health and Social Care
- 10 The PASF has developed five key priority areas that will underpin this work and ensure that it is reflected in our service planning and our service delivery:
 - Customer Engagement
 - Customer Experience
 - Active Environments
 - Programme and Product Development
 - Business Planning
- 11 This will ensure that our priority actions are connected as follows:
 - ❖ Shared research and insight to find out how we can get people to move more and to develop our programmes.

- ❖ Improving support to our target groups on their journey to make positive behaviour changes.
 - ❖ Shared communications to improve our reach to inactive populations.
 - ❖ Links with wider partners to maximise the impact of our indoor and outdoor natural assets.
 - ❖ Support to make our facilities more sustainable with increased use and a more balanced agenda across our commercial and social responsibilities.
 - ❖ Improved learning to adapt our approach and finding solutions to make it easier for those facing the greatest challenges.
- 12 Over the last 12 months WS&L has focused on the planning stages, developing a number of systems and processes to enable the service to benchmark, to review our programme, improve our access to information, and to ensure that the service is better placed to drive the Moving Together agenda.
- 13 Going forward we will continue to develop our service offer and use insight and learning to adapt our approach and finding solutions to make it easier for those facing the greatest challenges.
- 14 The PASF has set a foundation to align this with our key partners and to define our role within this wider system that aims to bring transformational change to people's lives.

Recommendations

- 15 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment upon the information provided in the report.

Background

- 16 As the main provider of sport and leisure services across County Durham, the Wellbeing, Sport and Leisure (WS&L) section within Culture, Sport and Tourism has a huge part to play in supporting residents to start and stay physically active.
- 17 The service provides:
- 14 indoor leisure facilities and one outdoor sport facility

- Outdoor provision to support organised community grass roots sport
 - A Playing Pitch Strategy to protect and develop our open spaces
 - A digital offer to exercise at home, virtual and hybrid classes and an app for easy access to information and bookings
 - Delivery of a range of targeted intervention programmes to engage early years through to older populations in partnership with Public Health
 - Promotion of Active Travel and support for organised Walking, Running and Cycling in our communities
 - An introductory level offer and a 1:1 wellbeing service to support our inactive populations
 - A range of physical activity volunteering opportunities in local communities
 - Support for local athletes at high performance level through the Durham Institute of Sport
 - Support to community clubs through Club Durham
- 18 Despite this offer, physical activity levels are not increasing in County Durham and only 58.7% of adults in County Durham are active (150 mins per week). This increases to 68.5% in our least deprived areas and decreased to 49.5% in our most deprived areas. The average person in County Durham is expected to live in good health until they are 59 years old, 4 years less than the national average.
- 19 In 2023 WS&L reviewed our approach to our service delivery to ensure that we are maximising our resources, and that we are reaching those that are the most in need. This led to the development of the Physical Activity Strategic Framework (PASF) (Appendix 2) which set out the principles and priority areas for the WSL service to support the overarching aim of The County Durham Physical Activity Strategy 2023-28 'Moving Together' (Appendix 3) to support County Durham residents to be more active, enabling them to live longer, healthier, and happier lives.
- 20 The Moving Together Strategy was developed with a number of stakeholders during 2023 and the Moving Together Network was launched in September 2024. This sets out a social movement to get people moving more and WS&L is intrinsically linked as advocates of physical activity, providing local services and supporting local communities to get involved.
- 21 The network is at the early stages, but this will bring organisations together with a shared purpose and the PASF aligns our principles, priorities and resources to support this, defining our part in a bigger system that will embed long-lasting, and transformational change.

- 22 The PASF acknowledged the need to improve access to WS&L services and the need to change our approach, to ensure that we are reaching more people, and meeting their needs. It reflected a service commitment to break down the barriers and stigmas around physical activity, and the perceptions of local authority run leisure centres being out of date with nothing on offer other than gyms and swimming pools. Our facilities have been transformed in 2024 into non-conventional 'physical activity hubs', that are more relevant, accessible and offer something for everyone. This has included new soft play provision, cafes, adventure play, climbing, 10-pin bowling and trampolines, and the Move hub to accommodate older people and those with underlining health conditions.
- 23 Individuals and communities are unique, as are the experiences and challenges that shape them and the next phase is to ensure that our facilities and programmes have the right offer, the right environment, and to upskill our staff to support people to develop the motivation, confidence, knowledge, and capacity to move more.
- 24 To achieve this Moving Together has identified four key priority areas:
- Inclusive Communities
 - Active Environments
 - Health and Social Care
 - Children and Young People
- 25 A Moving Together Network is currently being established to deliver a number of key actions within these priority themes and WS&L will be represented on each working group.
- 26 The PASF has five key priority areas that will underpin this work and ensure that it is reflected in our service planning, and our service delivery:
- Customer Engagement
 - Customer Experience
 - Active Environments
 - Programme and Product Development
 - Business Planning
- 27 This will ensure that our priority actions are connected as follows:
- ❖ Shared research and insight to find out how we can get people to move more and to develop our programmes.

- ❖ Improving support to our target groups on their journey to make positive behaviour changes.
 - ❖ Shared communications to improve our reach to inactive populations.
 - ❖ Links with wider partners to maximise the impact of our indoor and outdoor natural assets.
 - ❖ Support to make our facilities more sustainable with increased use and a more balanced agenda across our commercial and social responsibilities.
 - ❖ Improved learning to adapt our approach and finding solutions to make it easier for those facing the greatest challenges.
- 28 The Moving Together Network will ensure that WS&L is better placed to develop programmes and good practice, adapting a more localised and targeted approach to our service delivery to potentially have a much greater impact.
- 29 Key actions that are supporting this joint agenda to date include:

Inclusive Communities

- ❖ ‘Moving Together in Peterlee’ is a two-year pilot funded by Sport England in partnership with WS&L to support local stakeholders, and residents to have their say and to drive forward positive lifestyle changes in the town. The learning will be used to develop this approach and will hopefully lead to additional investment to develop similar pilots across the county.
- ❖ Our community-based staff resource is now utilised by the Moving Together Network to increase their capacity work with communities, to develop Moving Together Champions and to develop sustainable place based solutions to get people moving.

Active Environment

- ❖ WS&L offers walking, running, and cycling support to local communities to set up and safely run organised sessions. This work is now connected to the ‘Active Environments’ action group to raise the profile of the environmental and the health benefits of Active Travel and using our local landscape for recreational use.
- ❖ Each leisure facility is developing an Active travel Plan to encourage customers and staff to access the site on foot or bicycle.

Health and Social Care

- ❖ The 'Move hub' offers a dedicated gym with power assisted equipment at Abbey, Louisa and Teesdale Leisure Centres.
- ❖ All sites now offer introductory level 'Move' classes, low level team games (walking netball, football etc.) and a 1:1 advice and support programme. This is supported by our NHS, health and social care providers to ensure that our residents with health conditions and disabilities are signposted and receive ongoing support.

Children and Young People

- ❖ The new adventure play offer within the leisure facilities for early years to teens is supported by the wider network to connect the Family hubs, Fun and Food offer, education, young carers and the looked after teams.
- ❖ 'Ready Sett, Go' supports early years physical development and the network has helped to promote sessions with our early years providers.

- 30 Over the last 12 months WS&L has also focused on the planning stages, developing a number of systems and processes to enable the service to benchmark, review our programme, improve our access to information, and to ensure that the service is equipped to contribute to the Moving Together priority groups.
- 31 The next planning steps will be to implement a 'Moving Communities' non-user survey, a Strategic Marketing Plan and to develop a systemic place based approach alongside our partners to ensure that we tackle physical activity inequalities.
- 32 Going forward we will continue to develop our service offer and use insight and learning to adapt our approach and finding solutions to make it easier for those facing the greatest challenges.
- 33 Any movement contributes to a healthier life and being physically active is easier for some people than it is for others. WS&L wants to contribute to changing this, and the PASF has set a foundation to align us with our key partners and to define our role within this wider system that aims to bring transformational change to people's lives.

Contact:

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.