



Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy

Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy 2013-2017

September 2013

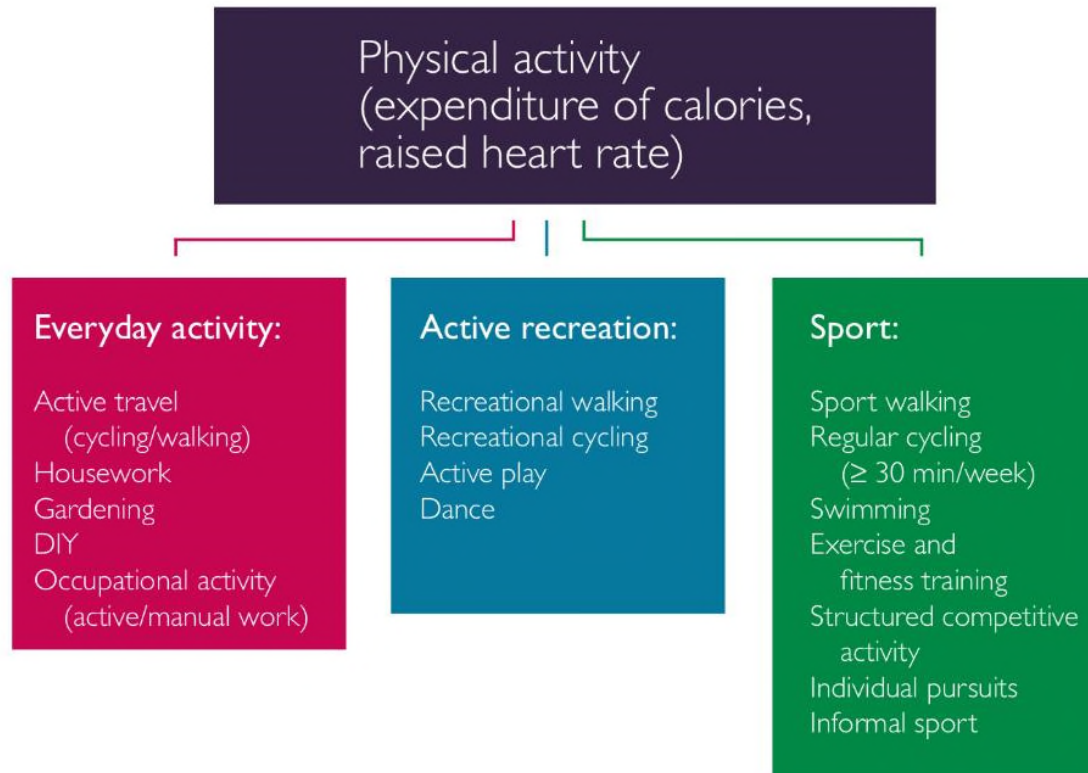
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Physical Activity is essential to a healthy lifestyle. The evidence to support increasing physical activity amongst our local population to improve health outcomes is compelling. Everyone can benefit from appropriate physical activity. The majority need to be more active more of the time; the greatest benefit is to those going from no or low levels of physical activity to moderate levels. Sustaining appropriate levels of physical activity throughout their life course into older age can increase people's healthy life for longer. It is independently better for individuals and economically better for social care and health budgets. Central Bedfordshire has a wealth of built and natural facilities which provide opportunities for physical activity. A coordinated, cross sector approach to physical activity is essential to increase participation, reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life of our residents.

Central Bedfordshire Council Executive Committee has sought the creation of a leisure strategy in order to adopt a holistic approach to the provision of sport, leisure and recreation facilities and opportunities across the Council's area. The aim of the strategy process is to assess current facilities and services, estimate future demand and thereby create a strategy which will assist the authority to deliver and facilitate good quality, sustainable, demand-led facilities and services. Chapter 4 will inform residents and partners about making step change in behaviour while assessing levels of activity and inactivity. We will identify the way people access and use leisure services and facilities in Central Bedfordshire with the intention of improving our services and increasing physical activity amongst our residents.

The scope of the leisure strategy comprises three facility-based chapters which incorporate a range of indoor, built facilities together with open spaces and outdoor playing pitches, and in the fourth chapter it seeks to marry the facilities currently available, and those identified as being required, with the types of physical activities needed to support Central Bedfordshire's residents in pursuing a healthy active lifestyle.

In this context physical activity includes all forms of activity, such as 'everyday' walking or cycling to get from A to B, active recreation not undertaken competitively, such as working out in the gym, dancing, gardening or families playing together, as well as organised and competitive sport.



Be Active Be Healthy – A Plan To Get the Nation Moving

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The Leisure Strategy

Five chapters will comprise the Leisure Strategy. The chapters are:

- Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy
- Chapter 2: Recreation & Open Space Strategy
- Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy
- Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy
- Overarching Leisure Strategy

In accordance with Government policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, each chapter of the Leisure Strategy will carry out an assessment of the current provision of identified leisure facilities across Central Bedfordshire in 2012/13, and estimate the respective leisure requirements which result from the growth in Central Bedfordshire's population up to 2031. The strategies for Chapters 1 to 3 will each be Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) which will detail an approach to facility standards and future facility requirements to be met through the planning process and will form material evidence and policy to inform the Council's emerging Development Strategy.

The purpose of the Leisure Strategy is to support the securing of new and improved facility provision, identify needs and priorities, address inequalities of provision, inform investment strategies of the Council and other bodies, provide a basis for management reviews and ensure that residents of Central Bedfordshire have access to good quality leisure activities as well as leisure and recreation facilities which enable them to be physically active and make healthy lifestyle choices. The Leisure Strategy does not include an evaluation of Central Bedfordshire Council's capital or management role in the delivery of some of the facilities in this chapter.

Each element of this strategy has been prepared to provide guidance to assist all parties involved in the delivery of the Council's leisure requirements. It is intended that some parts will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents following adoption of the Council's Development Strategy proposed for early 2014. Until then this document as the Council's Leisure Facilities Strategy will attract some weight in decisions reached on planning applications.

Chapters 1 to 3 of the Leisure Strategy is derived from policies in the emerging Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire in particular Policy 22 Leisure and Open Space Provision which identifies general requirements for provision.

In addition to the emerging Development Strategy the Leisure Strategy has also had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and has been prepared in line with the methodology set out in the former planning policy guidance note PPG 17 and Sport England good practice guidance.

Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy will provide a strategic approach to physical activity together with a detailed programme of activities.

1.2 Leisure Strategy Development

The development stages for all Chapters within the Leisure Strategy are set out below:

Audit & Assessment - Stage 1 of each chapter will comprise an audit and assessment which gathers evidence using the relevant methodology and research tools for each chapter. Facility inspections and stakeholder feedback will then be combined with the audit evidence to detail both the current and future provision required to meet the sport and recreation needs of Central Bedfordshire residents now and to 2031.

Issues & Options Report - Stage 2 is the Issues and Options Report which will present the key findings arising from the audit and assessment of each chapter and highlights the main issues affecting provision now and in the future. These key issues will be presented for consultation with a range of options to address the issues.

Strategy - At stage 3, the preferred options will be identified and developed into policies relevant to that Chapter for approval by the Council's Executive Committee.

This document represents this stage of the process for Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy.

Action Plans – Stage 4 will be the preparation of an action plan to accompany each of Chapters 1 to 4. This will detail the delivery of the requirements identified in the strategy.

1.3 Purpose and Scope of the Leisure Strategy

The strategic purpose of the four chapters comprising the Leisure Strategy is to provide a framework for the prioritisation, provision and development of sport and recreation facilities and opportunities in Central Bedfordshire. By highlighting deficiencies and opportunities for improvement, it will set the context for decisions about the priority and delivery of local provision up to 2031.

The key drivers supporting the development of the Leisure Strategy for Central Bedfordshire are:

- To create a robust evidence base on which to base planning policy/standards
- To identify appropriate locations for new/improved leisure provision to target need
- To secure appropriate leisure facilities & S106/CIL contributions, to accompany new development
- To inform Central Bedfordshire Council's capital expenditure on new/improved facilities within its ownership
- To support Central Bedfordshire Council's responsibility for public health from April 2013 by ensuring sustainable, high quality sport and physical activity infrastructure and opportunities are provided to enable residents to live active lives, prevent ill health, improve overall health & wellbeing, and reduce costs.
- To ensure the number of adults taking part in sport and physical activity remains above the national average

Leisure Strategy: Scope

The scope for each chapter of the Leisure Strategy is detailed within the respective Audit and Assessment Reports. The following summaries the scope for each chapter:

Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy – built, indoor sport and leisure facilities

Chapter 2: Recreation and Open Space Strategy – a range of open spaces (excluding sports pitches)

Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy – outdoor sports playing pitches

Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy – a range of sports and recreation activities undertaken indoors and outdoors

1.4 Planning for Sport and Recreation

National Guidance

In June 2006, the Audit Commission's report; "Public sports and recreation services – making them fit for the future" made a number of criticisms regarding the strategic planning of facilities, resulting in poor provision in terms of location, quality and failure to meet changing needs and customer expectations. The report's recommendations identified a need to ensure that local authorities improved their strategic planning of sport and recreation provision by assessing current and future needs, collaborating with other sectors and working across boundaries in the procurement, planning and delivery of services. In addition, there was a need for local authorities to appraise options for facility provision in a transparent way, testing the market to ensure that the best options were identified.

As the traditional means of facility funding such as the Lottery and Building Schools for the Future (BSF) diminished, new investment was occurring via Section 106 developer contributions, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and more recently the Community Infrastructure Levy; in order to maximise potential benefits of such investment Local Authorities required a clear strategic vision and direction.

The advent of a new planning system required Local Authorities to prepare Local Development Frameworks, and lessons learnt from early examinations of these suggested that a comprehensive needs and evidence base was necessary to ensure that future requirements were planned for accurately. This approach is reinforced in the current Government planning policy set out in the new National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to protect the environment and promotes sustainable growth. Each council is required to prepare a Development Strategy which will be the main planning document for its local authority area, and sets out the overarching spatial strategy and development principles, together with more detailed policies to help determine planning applications. It also requires that supplementary strategies produced to support the Development Strategy should comprise, or lead to, defensible planning guidance for sport, including an improved evidence base for

the identification of the level of developer contributions required to meet the Council's strategic objectives for sport.

Sport England Guidance

Strategy production also conforms to guidance provided by Sport England that strategic planning for sport is essential in delivering appropriate facilities in the right location. In particular, this work is supported by Sport England, and benefits from the lessons learned as the result of its Facilities Improvement Service. This assisted local authorities to improve the ways in which they plan for sport and recreation, enabling them to use key strategic planning tools such as Active Places Power which will allow authorities to develop a robust understanding and assessment of need which will then underpin local authorities planning for sport.

Local Policy

At a local level, Central Bedfordshire Council is a relatively new unitary authority formed in April 2009 which inherited a range of legacy policies from its predecessor authorities. In order to adopt a consistent approach to sports facility provision and provide a robust evidence base for its emerging Development Strategy, the Council identified the need for a comprehensive evaluation of leisure provision.

Health Agenda

There is increasing recognition that raising levels of physical activity provides a clear route to improving public health outcomes. The Department of Health has produced a number of reports and initiatives, 'Be Active, Be Healthy', 'Stay Active, Stay Healthy' and 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' which identify and promote the link between activity and health improvements.

Central Bedfordshire Council will work in partnership with a number of organisations to enable and coordinate the delivery of a range of physical activity programmes. By assessing the current national and local policies and strategies relating to health improvements and participation in physical activity, the physical Activity Strategy will create a practical link between current strategies and future activity

opportunities, to enable Central Bedfordshire residents to access facilities and services which allow them to lead more active lives.

PART 2

CHAPTER 4 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

2.1 Scope

This document comprises Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy

The scope of Chapter 4: the Physical Activity Strategy encompasses a defined range of physical activity opportunities and facilities available to the wider community, providing a snapshot of the activities available, the type of facility where physical activity is offered and the type of person who is currently taking part.

Activities include;

- Walking
- Cycling
- Running/Jogging
- Seated Exercise
- Dance
- Keep Fit Classes
- Gyms
- Sports opportunities

The range of locations where activities take place:

- Village and Community Halls
- Leisure Centres
- Sports Clubs – that have their own grounds
- Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Military Defence establishments – where public access is available
- Children Centres
- Golf clubs
- Sheltered accommodation and care homes

Activities that are available within countryside, recreation and open space have been audited and consulted on as part of chapter 2. The Issues and Options report for chapter 4 has drawn upon this information and taken consideration when planning the strategic objectives. As part of stage 4;

Action Plans, the physical activity action plan will detail how chapters 2 and 4 will cross over and work together in the future.

There are a range of activities where Central Bedfordshire Council has less influence on, because they are either specialist sports/activities involving a small percentage of the population, requiring purpose built, 'destination' facilities, or are activities which people can undertake as part of their everyday lives, including :

- Gardening
- Housework
- Ice skating / snowboards / skiing
- Paragliding
- Hotel – sport and physical activities eg Zumba
- High Ropes
- Private Health Clubs
- Centre Parcs – Central Bedfordshire
- Extreme Sports
- Parkour (free running)

However, information regarding adult participation in sport and active recreation at all locations, including those where Central Bedfordshire Council has less influence continues to be recorded.

2.2 Methodology – Chapter 4 Physical Activity

Chapter 4 has been prepared by Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Services in close association with Sport England and a range of officers and members of the Central Bedfordshire Council as set out in the Development of the Strategy in Part 1 of this report:

- Stage 1 - An audit and assessment comprising a review of national and local health, population and physical activity data, national and local participation and facility data, and local stakeholder consultation, including data and information gathered in the development of Chapters 1-3.
- Stage 2 - Analysis of the audit and assessment evidence to identify a range of key themes and issues which are set out in the Chapter 4 Physical Activity Strategy Issues and Options report.
- Stage 3 - Development of emerging strategic priorities which address the key issues for Central Bedfordshire Council, and form the basis of the Physical Activity Strategy.

As a result, the Audit and Assessment Report and the key findings detailed in the Issues & Options Report are drawn from a combination of detailed desk-based research and consultation with leisure key stakeholders from across all 4 Chapters.

A Communications Plan was prepared which defines the opportunities when a variety of stakeholders would be updated and consulted on the progress of each strategy.

The list below highlights the major consultation opportunities for Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy. At each stage consultation responses have been incorporated in the development of this chapter. A summary of consultation responses is included in Part 4 of this strategy.

- April –June 2013 – Stakeholder Consultation Events
- July 2013 – Audit & Assessment Report and Issues & Options Report including on-line consultation, Central Bedfordshire Council Member consultation and stakeholder consultation.

The list below sets out the principles behind the audit and the different methods and tools used to capture information.

Population data including:

- Population figures supplied by Central Bedfordshire Council, and other socio economic and demographic data were taken from Sport England's Local Authority profiles.

Department for Health strategies, research and data which identify and promote the link between activity and health improvements including:

- Healthy Lives Healthy People (Strategy for Public Health England);
- Start Active Stay Active (Chief Medical Officer: Report on Physical Activity for Health identifying physical activity guidelines)
- Be Active Be Healthy (A plan for getting the nation moving – Olympic Legacy);
- Public Health Outcomes Framework.
- National recommendations for Physical Activity for Health (World Health Organisation)

Central Bedfordshire Council strategies which represent the overarching policies which direct the Council's approach to medium and long term development of the health and wellbeing of our residents including;

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Healthy Communities Strategy
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Delivering Our Priorities

Public Health

From April 2013 Central Bedfordshire Council assumed responsibility for Public Health in its area. Central Bedfordshire Council will embed these new public health functions into all our activities, tailoring local solutions to local problems, and to improve health and reduce inequalities. Priorities and work streams have been identified throughout the process of the joint strategic needs assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Extensive use of Sport England's strategic planning tools for sport, as follows:

- Active People Survey, the largest survey of sport and active recreation in Europe that identifies how participation varies from place to place and between different groups in the population. The NI8 measure reports the percentage of the adult population (16 years+) in a local area who participate in sport or active recreation for at least 30 minutes on 3 or more days a week.

Local Sport Profile, a profile showing how people take part in sport and patterns of organised sport across the English regions. The toolkit also provides data specific to Central Bedfordshire and includes information such as coaching and volunteering information and sports related expenditure.

- Facility Benchmarking, national comparisons of leisure facilities on a range of performance indicators including access, finance and customer service.
- Market Segmentation data, providing detailed analysis of participation levels and latent demand in Central Bedfordshire. This toolkit also helps us understand the attitudes and what motivates people. We can also analyse behaviours of different demographic or population groups. This information will allow us to deliver interventions that are most likely to engage them, offering more of a targeted service.
- **Local surveys including:**
 - Online public survey of local adult population participation in physical activity.
 - Face to face meetings with a range of internal and external partners.
 - An assessment of Village and Community Halls to consider facilities and types of physical activity taking place including future aspirations of facility owners as part of Chapter 1.
 - Consultation regarding the quality, accessibility and quantity together with future aspirations on the use of recreational open space as part of Chapter 2.

2.3 Vision and Objectives

Vision

The vision for Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy is to:

Enable a coordinated network of high quality, accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire residents both now and into the future, through the combined efforts of the Council and other providers.

Objectives

The specific objectives for Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy:

- To enable a balanced and consistent approach to the provision of physical activity opportunities for all ages and abilities, which takes into account all needs and demands.
- To support the delivery of public health outcomes.
- To promote principles of high quality and sustainable programmes of activity.
- To guide the investment strategies of Central Bedfordshire Council and other potential providers.
- To ensure the number of adults in Central Bedfordshire taking part in sport and physical activity remains above the national average.

PART 3 CONTEXT

3.1 General Context

The Central Bedfordshire-specific contextual information supporting Chapter 4 is detailed in the Audit and Assessment Report. The following summarises the main background data and issues that underpin the strategy.

Population

The main characteristics of the local population at present are:

- Central Bedfordshire is the largest local authority in the East region, with a population of over 255,000 in 2010.
- Central Bedfordshire is classified as predominantly rural with just over half of the population living in rural areas.
- There is a slightly higher proportion of males than average, although females are still in the majority
- There are more people than average in the 16-19 and 35-49 age groups, and fewer people in the 25-34 age group
- There is more than the national average of pensioners (though fewer than the region)
- There are a very small proportion of non-white residents (4% compared with the national average of 11%)

- There are a smaller proportion of disabled people (7% compared with the national average of 11%).

The main changes that are estimated to occur to 2022 are:

- The overall population is expected to increase by about 35,000 people to over 290,000, representing a 14% increase over 2010
- There are projected increases in all age groups in absolute terms but wide variations in percentage increases – large increases in the 10-14, 55–64 and 65+ groups, and smaller increases in the 0-4 and the 15-34 groups (the latter being main sport playing age group)
- The number of people in the ‘active’ age groups (i.e. mainly 5-44) is estimated to rise by about 8,000 people, but this only represents a 6% increase compared with the 14% increase in the overall population.
- The number of people in the ‘inactive’ age groups increases by 21%. It is estimated that by 2022 the number of people within the ‘active’ population is actually less than those who are ‘inactive’ (47% active/53% inactive compared with 51/49% in 2010)
- The demographic changes alone suggest that (participation and other changes aside) future sports facility provision broadly needs to increase by 6% by 2022 compared with the present, not the 14% increase estimated for the overall population increase
- Conversely the increase in the ‘inactive’ population means that there is a need to consider other facilities and activities for the ageing population – there will be an additional 27,000 people over 45 and approximately 15,000 between 45 and 74

3.2 Other Socio Economic and health data

- The cost of primary and secondary care due to physical inactivity nationally in 2009/10 totalled £900m. Locally it totalled £3.6m.
- Participation in regular physical activity reduces the risk of the six most prevalent non communicable diseases: coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, depression, and improves a range of health outcomes including living longer, cardio respiratory health, metabolic health, weight management, musculoskeletal health, cancer and mental health.
- Life expectancy is about average (79 for men, 82 for women)
- Over the last 10 years, all causes of mortality rates have fallen. Early death rates from cancer and from heart disease and stroke have fallen.
- Unemployment (5.8%) is below the average rate for the region (6.6%) and England (7.5%)
- Central Bedfordshire has a low deprivation score (from the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and is ranked in the best 20% of all local authorities in the country in terms of overall deprivation

3.3 Participation in Sport and Active Recreation

Data taken from Sport England's latest Active People Survey (2011/12), showing 3 x 30 minutes sessions or more of moderate intensity activity per week, conclude that:

- Almost half (48%) of the Central Bedfordshire population are inactive. Physical inactivity is described as doing no or very little physical activity at work, at home, for transport or during discretionary time and not reaching physical activity guidelines deemed necessary to benefit public health.
- Broadly similar levels of activity were maintained in Central Bedfordshire between 2005/6 and 2011/12 (22 -22.5%)
- Activity levels in Central Bedfordshire are generally slightly higher than the regional (21.9%) or national average (21.4%)
- Against our comparator unitary authorities, levels of adult participating in 30 minutes of activity 3 times a week are lower than 3 authorities in that group (Cheshire West and Chester 34.6%, Bedford 33.9%, Cheshire East 28.1%)
- Male activity levels (26.9%) are much higher than female (18.1%) and higher than the national average (25.2%)
- Female activity levels are slightly below the national average (18.9%), and have declined slightly since 2005/6
- Other differences in regular participation levels exist, with disabled people, lower socio economic groups and some black and ethnic minority groups taking part less.

PART 4

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Full details are set out in the Physical Activity Audit and Assessment Report. This provides detailed information in accordance with the methodology identified above.

These key issues can be summarised as follows:

4.1 National and local health and participation data

- There is a wealth of national research that shows participation in regular physical activity reduces the risk of the following six most prevalent non communicable diseases: coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, depression, and improves a range of health outcomes including living longer, cardio respiratory health, metabolic health, weight management, musculoskeletal health, cancer and mental health.
- Participation rates locally are slightly higher than the national average, but nearly half of the population are inactive. Moving people from inactive to active is a key priority for improving public healthy outcomes.
- Participation rates differ between a number of socio economic and demographic groups. A main aim will be to redress balances in participation where differences occur.
- Central Bedfordshire has a large population with more people in the young adult and middle aged group and more than the national average of people over 65. This demographic distribution suggests that a wide range of opportunities may be required to accommodate different needs of the differing age groups.

- The population over the next few years is likely to increase significantly, but the increase particularly in the 50+ group is likely to mean that the 'active population' will increase only slightly. There will be an increasing need to address the demands of an older population for physical activity, particularly in respect of supporting healthy lives.
- The population is mixed in terms of its market segments, with three of the main groups having higher than average activity rates. The main groups with low activity rates in sport are not well represented in Central Bedfordshire. Future participation is likely to remain buoyant, but continued analysis and targeting of facilities and services is needed to address the less active groups.
- Latent demand data shows a significant proportion of adults want to start playing sport or do more, but for the barriers which are often related to social or economic inequalities.

4.2 Local stakeholder consultation

- There are a diverse range of opportunities available to take part in physical activity both on a formal and informal basis with a wide range of providers in high quality built and natural settings. However, much of the activity is uncoordinated leading to duplication, competition and add hoc opportunities to take part.
- Some funded activity is short and time limited which limits its impact and is not sustainable.
- Identified barriers to participation for vulnerable groups and their carers include accessing information about the type of activity available, its location, and price and how to book.
- Activities on offer are not always targeted to the demographics of the local population or specific vulnerable groups in order to best address health inequalities.
- For some customer facing staff there is a gap in knowledge, understanding and experience in working with vulnerable groups and individuals.

PART 5

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The key issues from the audit and assessment identify a number of linked emerging strategic priorities for consideration which seek to address the identified barriers to participation, directing resources to help make physical activity a normal part of life in Central Bedfordshire for everyone. We will do this by working in partnership with the wide range of stakeholders in sport and physical activity to create a coordinated and more effective offer.

5.1 Strategic Priority 1

Communication and Awareness

Improving internal and external communication and raising awareness of the wide number and range of physical activity opportunities that already exist so that residents are aware of, and can influence future delivery.

Why this is important:

Stakeholder consultation has identified a lack of knowledge about what physical activity opportunities exist, where they take place, and how to book. Specifically, lack of information is a barrier for groups who participate less in physical activity. Improving awareness of the opportunities that already exist to engage in physical activity will help people to take the first steps to being physically active. It is important to provide the public and partners with the appropriate information about the activities that are available and the benefits for leading an active lifestyle. We will provide relevant information about our services and engage in social marketing campaigns as prioritised by relevant partners to promote engagement in sport and physical activity.

What this will look like:

- We will work with our partners to build up a shared knowledge-base to support effective partnership working and develop stronger inter-agency links with a range of internal and external stakeholders. This will be delivered by the Community Physical Activity Network.
- We will develop regular communication between organisations, (both internal and external), staff and our Members to communicate physical activity opportunities in our communities.
- We will use and publicise existing databases for local people to search for clubs and activities in their area. These services rely on providers uploading details of the activity onto the site, and this will require significant promotion and support with our partners.
- We will develop a comprehensive prospectus of services and activities will help people with long term health and social care needs to choose services that allow them to benefit from a healthy lifestyle and have more control and choice over their care and support.
- We will make use of the social media and other methods of communication that will be relevant to particular target groups such as doctor surgeries, children centres, community halls, and residential care homes
- We will use tools such as Market Segmentation toolkit to facilitate better communication with our customers

5.2 Strategic Priority 2 Coordination

Coordinating physical activity opportunities, partnership activity and funding to maximise value, impact and long term benefits for those involved.

Why this is important

- There are diverse opportunities provided by a wide range of organisations. However, there is often a lack of coordination of work and commissioning. Funding streams for sport and physical activity have often led to targeted, time limited projects that are not coordinated or linked with other activities. This has meant that activity has had less of an effect than might be hoped and successful projects have not always been effectively mainstreamed. By working towards shared local priorities with those involved in sport, physical activity, health, social care, education, voluntary organisations and public services in Central Bedfordshire we will help to build support for promoting healthy, active lifestyles which address health and participation inequalities.

What this will look like

- We will set up a Community Sport & Physical Activity Network to improve the coordination of projects and activities at a local level to maximise value, impact and long term benefits for those involved. This will also enable our existing external partners to have more of a central and direct route into Central Bedfordshire services where we will be able to share knowledge, develop ideas, and provide updates on current projects and funding opportunities.
- We will continue to improve and develop the GP referral system that supports people to participate in physical activity with clear and appropriate pathways for sustainable lifestyle change that GPs can continue to be confident in.

- We will host an event for organisations to come together at on an annual basis to discuss common issues and opportunities.

5.3 Strategic Priority 3 Access

Limiting the barriers that people face when choosing to participate such as physical access, price and targeted pathways.

Why this is important.

There is clear evidence of the inequalities in health and levels of participation for parts of the community. The Director of Public Health report 'Inequalities in Central Bedfordshire' summarises that men who live in the 20% most deprived areas live an average of 7 year's less than those who live elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire; for women the difference is over 5 years. Differences in regular participation levels exist, with women, disabled people, lower socio economic groups and some black and ethnic minority groups taking part less. Despite the wide range of providers and physical activity opportunities, activities on offer are not always targeted to the demographics of the local population or specific vulnerable groups in order to best address health inequalities. A significant proportion of adults want to start playing sport or do more, but for the barriers which are often related to social or economic inequalities.

What this will look like.

- Our approach to planning facilities and amenities for physical activity are set out in Chapters 1-3 including built facilities, recreation and open space and playing pitches. This will ensure that the sport and physical activity infrastructure is appropriate for local communities to engage in regular physical activity. A detailed action plan will identify who and how we will encourage our residents to use these facilities.

- The Council's Health and Wellbeing Board will provide overarching strategic direction for the promotion of physical activity and healthy, active lifestyles. In this role the Board has identified nine priority work streams targeting specific groups who need particular support . The physical activity strategy will create plans to break down barriers to participation. We will take direction from the priorities identified by the Health & Wellbeing Board. The priority work streams are:
- Improving the health of looked after children
- Safeguarding and quality of care
- Reducing childhood obesity
- Reduce teenage pregnancy
- Improve outcomes for frail older people
- Promoting independence and choice
- Helping people make lifestyle choices
- Improving mental health for children and their parents
- Improving mental health for adults
- The Council has six leisure facilities operated under contract. Leisure centres are a resource for the whole community and we will use those contracts to promote and deliver broad public health and wellbeing outcomes with a view to meeting the evidenced needs of the local community to be healthy and active, with a particular focus on those who are inactive or experience particular barriers to participation.

- In partnership with our sustainable transport and countryside access teams we will promote a range of physical activity opportunities, particularly those that are most likely to move people from being inactive to active such as walking, jogging, and cycling on a regular basis and to integrate these kind of outdoor activities into the exercise referral pathways that are currently being developed.
- Communities and organisations across Central Bedfordshire have village and community halls and other facilities that are available to communities but are underused. We would like to see programmes of activity devised for these sites and will work with communities to set up sustainable programmes of activity where it will not detract from existing facilities.
- Schools are at the heart of our communities. With many schools becoming academies it's important that we work positively together so that community access can continue to develop further and deliver benefits for the local community..
- Price can have a significant influence on levels of participation and the social benefits from activity. We propose that our decisions should take into account the effect of price on participation. This may include subsidising particular groups.
- We propose to work with key partners to ensure that activities programmed meet the needs of groups that experience barriers to participation and target resources at areas where it can be shown that support will improve equality of opportunity and sustainable, long term lifestyle change.

5.4 Strategic Priority 4

Positive Outcomes

Assessing the impact of participation in physical activity with consistent robust data to evidence broad health and wellbeing outcomes.

Why this is important.

Tracking participation and measuring the impact that it may have on lifestyle and health outcomes provides valuable evidence of the effects of physical activity which incentivises individuals to make long term lifestyle changes and enables longer term sustainable programmes of activity which attracts partner support and funding. Importantly, it helps us target our resources.

What this will look like.

We will use information to assist with identifying gaps so that we can target activity more effectively. We will develop information systems to ensure we are getting the maximum benefit from them.

The following examples are;

- Leisure facility management programmes that allows the centres to manage bookings, activities and membership. We propose that we take advantage of this system to enable us to monitor the current type of user and identify gaps of non users. This will provide us with the information of who we should be targeting.
- Technogym Wellness System and My Wellness Key – This is the current system used within some of our leisure facilities. This system can be used to monitor and track progress and impact of customer accessing physical activity session. We are able to develop these programmes to track and monitor all the community programmes that may take place out side of the leisure facility setting. The Wellness system can monitor participation levels as well as measuring improvement in

health such as weight, blood pressure and body mass index (BMI) and provide a method to report back to GP's and key stakeholders such as Public Health Team.

- Market segmentation – a tool for analysing the factors that engage/disengage different groups of people with physical activity and understanding the likely preferences of a given group
- Impact analysis – developing our understanding of the social, economic, environmental and health effects of various interventions to demonstrate the benefits.
- Research into health and sports – a wide range of agencies produce information about trends in health and wellbeing and participation in sports and physical activity.
- Central Bedfordshire information – a great deal of research has been carried out at a national level, but it is important to understand what this means in practice for our communities.

5.5 Strategic Priority 5

Workforce Development

Ensuring that customer facing staff have the appropriate skills and awareness to work with a range of customers with varying needs.

Why this is important

High quality opportunities to engage in physical activity will ensure longer term participation. Some of the current activities provided are producing barriers for customers due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of customer facing staff.

What this will look like.

- We will work with our partners to provide an annual training and development plan that provides opportunity for existing and new customer facing staff. The following are some of the partners who we would look to work with in developing a training programme on an annual basis; MIND – mental Health, Families United Network – Disability, National Governing Bodies, Leisure Management Operators. This will support our staff and partners to better promote and develop sport and physical activity opportunities and improve access.
- We will incorporate opportunities to increase and raise awareness of the apprenticeship offers within our leisure facilities and work with our leisure management operators to provide work experience opportunities for people with specific needs.

PART 6

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is envisaged that the proposed community sport and physical activity network will review the strategy's action plan on an annual basis comparing achievements against actions and accounting for new opportunities and circumstances. The network will produce an annual report of progress which will also allow any slippage to be recognised and actions rearranged accordingly.

PART 7

NEXT STEPS

Increasing physical activity opportunities will require a joint effort across and between sectors and organisations. No single agency or organisation has overriding responsibility for providing, developing and promoting physical activity. This strategy is designed to help increase coordination between organisations and strategies.

At a more local level to ensure leadership and coordination of activities is the creation of a Community Sport & Physical Activity Network as specified in Strategic Theme 2 – Coordination. This Network will enable effective coordination of projects and activities at a local level to maximise value, impact and long term benefits for those involved. This will also enable our existing external partners to have more of a central and direct route into Central Bedfordshire services where we will be able to share knowledge, develop ideas, and provide updates on current projects and funding opportunities.

The Community Sport & Physical Activity Network will be led by Leisure Services and include representatives from key partners involved in promoting and delivering physical activity. The network will then drive the strategic themes identified in this strategy supported by annual action plans specifying the programme of delivery.