

DECISION-MAKER:	Health and Wellbeing Board		
SUBJECT:	Southampton 'We Can Be Active' Strategy Progress Report		
DATE OF DECISION:	13 September 2023		
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR LORNA FIELKER CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS, HEALTH AND HOUSING		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
None			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
<p>This paper is a progress update of the We Can Be Active (WCBA) Strategy commitments following the first year of implementation. Progress is described through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is asked to consider how we celebrate the strengths, address the weaknesses and threats, and take advantage of the opportunities to support continued delivery.</p> <p>As part of a continual improvement process, the WCBA Action Plan will be updated with proposed actions from the Board and in co-production with the Physical Activity Alliance.</p>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	For the Board to consider the SWOT analysis on 'We Can Be Active' progress and decide, and support, further actions for continued progress.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	An update of the action plan is recommended as the means to address the weaknesses and threats of implementation, and to take advantage of the identified opportunities.		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
2.	None.		
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)			
	Background		
3.	Physical inactivity is the 4th leading risk factor for global mortality. People who have a physically active lifestyle have a 20-35% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and stroke compared to		

those who have a sedentary lifestyle. Regular physical activity is also associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and colon/breast cancer and with improved mental health. Southampton has lower rates of physical activity than the national average across the life course; for instance, in 2021-22 only 41% of children and young people met the UK Chief Medical Officers' recommendations for physical activity (an average of at least 60 minutes moderate to vigorous intensity activity per day across the week) compared to 47% nationally¹. It is, therefore, important that we support our residents to be more active.

The development of the [We Can Be Active](#) (WCBA) Strategy in 2021, was led by our local Active Partnership, [Energise Me](#), who are funded by Sport England. Its development over a 1-year period involved collating insight and evidence, engagement with the public and stakeholder organisations and a co-design phase across the Integrated Care System (ICS), including Southampton. Around 30 organisations in Southampton were involved in the engagement process including SCC departments, CCG, NHS Trusts, Universities, and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.

In March 2022, the WCBA Strategy was adopted by the Southampton Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) as the new physical activity strategy for the city, replacing a strategy that was developed in 2017. The WCBA Strategy has 5 themes:

- a. Positive early experiences for our children and young people
- b. Opportunities that meet our needs and interests, are accessible and easy to find
- c. Places and travel routes where we all feel safe and are encouraged to be active
- d. Support to help get started or keep moving when we feel we can't do things alone
- e. Bold leaders working together to create happier healthier communities

As the WCBA Strategy is high level, the HWB agreed that a Southampton-specific action plan should be developed to support its implementation. This was done through co-production with stakeholders, including members of the Southampton Physical Activity Alliance (a forum for all those in the city with an interest in supporting people to be more active). Leads for each action, from within SCC and externally, were identified and agreed in August 2022. Since then, progress on the actions has been reported and monitored on a quarterly basis.

In winter 2022 the SCC Strategic Leisure Group agreed a new leisure mission for the city which includes improving health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities, through 'fit for purpose' leisure services and 'spaces'. A review of council policies in Spring 2023 found that the leisure mission aligned with the WCBA Strategy. A Leisure Action Plan is now being

¹Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Physical Activity Profiles [Physical Activity - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

	<p>developed to set out how the aims of the WCBA Strategy can be achieved through leisure. Strategic leadership of both leisure and physical activity by the Director of Public Health ensures alignment rather than duplication of the two Action Plans.</p> <p>This report describes the results of an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) after the first year of implementation of the WCBA Action Plan. Appendix 1 presents a table to summarise the SWOT analysis.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider how we celebrate the strengths, address the weaknesses and threats, and take advantage of the opportunities.</p>
4	<p>Strengths</p>
	<p>4.1 Positive early experiences</p> <p>This theme aims to enhance children and young people’s experiences of physical activity, to embed activity in early years setting and school life, and to increase affordable opportunities for moving more in areas with high proportions of inactive children and young people.</p> <p>Over the year, positive progress has been made in the number of early years setting taking part in the Healthy Early Years Award (HEYA); this has increased from 74 in January to 81 in July.</p> <p>There has also been good engagement in active travel in school settings, with 15 schools having Modeshift STARS accreditation for excellence in School Travel Planning and, across the city, 13 permanent School Streets which turn roads into pedestrian/cycle zones at pick up and drop off times, creating a safe space for people to walk, cycle or scoot.</p> <p>Engagement with children and young people is happening through various existing forums such as The Agency, the Pathways for Health project and, through the Child Friendly Southampton initiative, young people in the city voted for ‘healthy’ as one of their six priorities/“badges”.</p> <p>The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) has supported thousands of children during school holidays and has now been extended to cover half term holidays too. HAF providers must offer activities on a daily basis that meet Physical Activity Guidelines.</p> <p>Energise Me have run a pilot Change Champions programme at St Annes School. This built on the This Girl Can national campaign and helped girls to create positive change in their schools, particularly relating to PE, so that they felt more confident and supported to be active.</p> <p>4.2 Opportunities that meet our needs</p>

This theme seeks to promote activities that are happening across the city, making them easy to find, and also to develop opportunities for activities that better meet people's needs through effective consultation.

Over the year, colleagues in SCC Communications have promoted physical activity, with a particular focus on the accessible leisure offers in the city (e.g. accessible cycling, [Forever Fit](#) at Bitterne and [Exercise Referrals](#)). Additionally, through the Physical Activity Alliance, we have encouraged the use of Energise Me's [Get Active](#) online directory of activities for both providers and people looking for activity opportunities in the city.

The [Active Through Football](#) programme offers opportunities for moving more that are different to traditional football activities, such as chair based exercises for older residents.

Last year we used the Public Health Grant to offer an Active Communities Fund for local organisations for time limited projects or seed funding for long-term initiatives to support communities to become more physically active. For example, the Priory Road Community Group used the fund for chair-based exercises at their lunch club; they reported this was "a lively focus on stimulating movement, weight-bearing for all including those with disabilities. It is a time of enjoyment and is well attended.

4.3 Places and travel routes

This theme aims to promote active travel and increase the range of places in the city for residents to be active through transforming under-utilised spaces and increasing safety (and perceptions of safety).

The SCC Transport Delivery Team is working on improving district centres (starting with [Bitterne precinct](#)) so they are greener and tidier and, therefore, more attractive for active travel. Active travel Zones (e.g. [Woolston and Itchen](#)) have been co-designed with local communities and are at various stages of implementation. Additionally, an [Accessibility Forum](#) has been established to consult with community representatives on transport projects and identify places where the public realm is in need of improvement for disabled people.

Southampton has an amazing abundance of green space, with almost the whole city being within 10 minutes' walk of a local park or open space². A ranger team (six staff) is now in place, and they will focus on management of The Common and Greenways to improve habitats, access and pathways to encourage increased public use of these semi-natural areas. This year two more of our [parks](#) have been awarded Green Flag status, meaning eight in total have now reached this international standard.

² [Fields in Trust Green Space Index](#)

The [Good Gym](#) initiative is now running in Southampton. This brings together volunteers who run, walk or cycle to help out community projects, often with environmental tasks such as litter clearing or gardening.

4.4 Support to help get started

The way that we talk about physical activity is fundamental to supporting people to get started so this theme includes actions around the terminology that we use and the promotion of opportunities that challenge perceptions of who can be active.

Communications colleagues from SCC and Energise Me gave a powerful presentation to the Physical Activity Alliance on the imagery and language we should use to make activity accessible and inclusive.

A Physical Activity Navigator was funded for 12 months in May 2022 by the SCC Public Health Team, to provide specialist physical activity advice and support to people referred to the SO:Linked social prescribing service. An independent evaluation of this pilot project found that providing people with person-centred support helped them be more active in a way that suits them. It created a trusting environment where they could share some of their wider concerns and get the help they needed. Having a specific post raised the profile of physical activity opportunities as a pathway for social prescribing and encouraged referral partners, other organisations and the wider voluntary sector to think about moving more and what their role and their part in it is.

Increasing confidence in activities such as cycling and swimming is also an important aspect of this theme and there have been successes in these areas over the past year such as Cycle Confidence Training, 'Pedal Party' events and swimming lessons for African men at Bitterne leisure centre.

4.5 Bold leaders

This theme aims to get organisations working together to champion physical activity and to support people to move more in a way that suits them. A key strength is the Physical Activity Alliance which is currently a partnership of 38 organisations (100 individual members) across Southampton; these include Communicare, Energise Me, Active Nation, Saints Foundation, University of Southampton, and Southampton Solent University – all of which have sent representatives to every meeting over the past year. Meetings are themed and held quarterly, sometimes virtually and sometimes in person, with an average attendance of 30. Recent themes have been places, older people and cost of living. Members regularly feedback about the value of the Alliance for sharing information and generating ideas.

This theme also has an action to encourage employer organisations to take responsibility for enabling employees to be active. Progress has been made on this in relation to active travel through SCC's Sustainable Travel team such via Workplace Travel grants for employers to provide cycle storage, training and other support.

	<p>Energise Me have held three 'Bold Leaders Learning Sessions' focused on people within our communities, and nationally, who are bold leaders, to support both paid and voluntary organisations and workforce.</p> <p>The adoption, and growing recognition, of the WCBA Strategy across SCC is demonstrated but the alignment of the Leisure Strategic Action Plan with its five themes.</p>
5	Weaknesses and threats
	<p>The current financial challenge, not just within SCC but also for providers of activities across the city through increases in inflation and utility costs, is a threat that impacts on all themes of the WCBA strategy. Rising costs of living are likely to present additional barriers to physical activity for our residents through both direct costs and indirect costs, such as travel and childcare. The impacts are greatest for the most disadvantaged communities and, therefore, are likely to exacerbate health inequalities³.</p> <p>Cost of living was the theme of the Physical Activity Alliance meeting in January 2023, and the discussion covered strategies to support residents to still be active, such as 'pay what you feel sessions', accepting cash payments and collaborating with other providers so that activities for children could be offered at the same time as activities for parents.</p> <p>Each theme of the WCBA Action Plan has some areas that are more challenging to progress and, therefore, present 'weaknesses' or gaps in achieving the Strategy's aims; these are described below.</p> <p>5.1 Positive early experiences</p> <p>Despite some innovative engagement with children and young people, there has been limited co-design of physical activity opportunities during the first year of the WCBA Strategy. This could be considered as part of the Child Friendly City initiative, acknowledging need to carefully consider resource requirements (see section 5.1 on Opportunities).</p> <p>5.2 Opportunities that meet our needs</p> <p>Members of the Physical Activity Alliance regularly report that information on activities is hard to find even though there are various online directories detailing the available opportunities. As an Alliance, we encourage the use of the Get Active directory as it uses open data standards meaning the information is easily shared with other directories in the city such as SO:Linked. However, many providers are still not uploading their information to any directories which may be due to a variety of reasons, not least because of the resource required to update information on activities that change fairly frequently. Additionally, due to digital exclusion, online portals are not a solution for many people, especially some of our most inactive groups in the city.</p>

³ [The impact of the cost of living | Sport England](#)

	<p>Over the past year we have consulted on various aspects of leisure in the city (including St Mary’s Leisure Centre and improvements to some of our tennis court). However, there has been limited co-design of activities, particularly with inactive groups.</p> <p>The April Physical Activity Alliance meeting was themed around ‘supporting older people to move more’ and members had a great deal of enthusiasm for this. A key action was for the Alliance to feed into the Southampton ‘Age Well Strategy’, however, due to staff changes, this work has not progressed.</p> <p>5.3 Places and travel routes</p> <p>Funding cuts and resource pressures have reduced availability of Cycle Confidence training and although a community developer worker has been appointed through British Cycling this is particularly for developing the Outdoor Sports Centre as a hub for cycling.</p> <p>Supporting the community to make use of, and improve, under-utilised spaces has seen limited progress over the past year and this has been through one-off projects rather than strategically.</p> <p>5.4 Support to help get started</p> <p>The Physical Activity Alliance has limited representation from our local partners in health and care. This presents a weakness in terms of supporting inactive groups to get started, especially those with a long term illness or disability. There is a need to find better ways of engaging health and care partners in the Alliance, in a way that works best for them.</p> <p>5.5 Bold leaders</p> <p>We have made limited progress this year in engaging with local businesses. As above, we need to identify better approaches to engage with this sector in ways that work for them.</p>
6	Opportunities
	<p>6.1 Positive early experiences</p> <p>Our young people have selected ‘healthy’ as a priority for the city’s Child Friendly programme and the developing action plan includes a focus on opportunities for activity, therefore, aligning with the goals of the WCBA Strategy. This presents an opportunity to engage children and young people in the co-design of activities that suit them.</p> <p>6.2 Opportunities that meet our needs</p> <p>A new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being developed for Southampton which this offers an opportunity to engage with relevant stakeholders and make progress on developing physical activity opportunities to help promote mental wellbeing.</p>

Sport England are developing a 'Place Expansion' funding stream which builds on the Local Delivery Pilots funded in 2017. The details are yet to be announced but, through working with Energise Me, this could be a way of funding innovative work and co-designing opportunities for activity in some of our priority communities.

In terms of supporting our older residents to be active, the Integrated Commissioning Unit are reviewing the Ageing Well Partnership which may offer an opportunity to raise physical activity up this agenda. Additionally, there may be scope for collaborating across Hampshire and Isle of Wight. Hampshire County Council, for example, has the [Live Longer Better](#) programme which aims to embed physical activity as an essential part of older people's lives and includes training of the social care workforce and establishing of communities of practice.

6.3 Places and travel routes

Sport England have developed new [Active Design Planning Guidance](#) which we can use in the following ways to make our environments more conducive to physical activity

- Incorporating Active Design principles into the relevant policies of the new Local Plan
- Reviewing planning applications to encourage more Active Design features
- Integrating Active Design principles into public realm and master planning projects

The threat posed by the cost of living situation, also presents an opportunity as active travel is a more affordable option. For instance, Sport England recently reported that 20% of adults are walking/cycling to get to places rather than using the car⁴. To support this, there is an opportunity with SCC Transport Delivery Team to identify priority travel routes and public spaces for improvement.

A Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) for our leisure offer in the city is being commissioned. The SOPM is a Sport England tool to inform investment decisions into facilities and services. It will review the delivery options available to SCC for its leisure facilities across the city, including the three core sites (The Quays, Bitterne and Chamberlayne). The results of the SOPM will facilitate discussions with Sport England and National Governing Bodies about the availability of funding.

6.4 Support to help get started

We now have an opportunity to build on the Physical Activity pilot, using the findings from the independent evaluation. For instance, the evaluation highlighted an ongoing need to change perceptions of what physical activity is, and the benefits of moving more, among a range of stakeholders involved in health, wellbeing and social care. More work is needed to get the message to more groups and more places about the benefits of

⁴ [The impact of the cost of living | Sport England](#)

	<p>incorporating some movement into their activities and to help people understand the broad range of activities that ‘count’ as being physically active.</p> <p>There are also opportunities for engagement with our health and care partners. For instance, we now have one Social Prescriber on the Physical Activity Alliance and have recently had discussions with Steps2Wellbeing, our local NHS talking therapies service, about implementing recent guidance on Physical Activity in Talking Therapy⁵.</p> <p>Additionally, the Hampshire & IoW VCSE Health & Care Alliance (HIVCA) offers further ways for our voluntary sector partners, with an interest in physical activity, to link with the Integrated Care System. Furthermore, training (e.g., via Clinical Champions) is available to support health and social care staff in championing moving more. Finally, Energise Me can support Primary Care organisations to adopt the Active Practice Charter which supports patients and staff to be more active.</p> <p>A further opportunity to support people to get started is an idea from SO:Linked for ‘Warm welcome’ standards for activity providers. The providers would sign up to the following three standards to support people using a facility or taking part in an activity for the first time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an induction • Ask what support a person needs • Offer a free first session <p>There may be opportunity to require providers to offer these kinds of support through their contractual agreements with SCC. However, promotion is needed to encourage other smaller providers or voluntary organisations to take part.</p> <p>6.5 Bold leaders</p> <p>Physical activity has co-benefits for business through healthier, happier employees and reduced sickness absence. Therefore, there are incentives for businesses to support their employees to be more active which we could explore through our partners, such as Go Southampton, and through expanding on the work of the Active Travel Workplaces team.</p> <p>Additionally, we could provide greater support to our local community and voluntary agencies to apply for external funding for projects that support residents to be more active. At the same time encouraging community leaders to be WCBA Champions.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
7.	None
<u>Property/Other</u>	
8.	None

⁵ [Sport and physical activity - Transformation Partners in Health and Care](#)

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
9.	No legal implications
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
10.	
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
11.	None
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
12.	None

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Table summarising the Southampton We Can Be Active (WCBA) Strategy and Action Plan Strengths, Threats, Weaknesses and Opportunities after the first year of implementation.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None.
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents We Can Be Active Strategy Other Background documents available for inspection at: We Can Be Active Strategy available at: We Can Be Active Strategy for Hampshire and Isle of Wight - Energise Me	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)