

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELLNESS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY PANEL REFERRAL:

REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, WELLNESS AND CULTURE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Scrutiny Committee with the Panel's findings and recommendations in relation to the following commissioned item:

Towards a Policy for Raising Participation in Physical Activity and Sport

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 13th February 2014, the Scrutiny Committee received a report on the work being undertaken to develop a policy position for participation in physical activity, leisure and sport. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee would commission the Public Health, Wellness & Culture Scrutiny Panel to act as the consultative group to gather views and comments to contribute to the consultation on the policy.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Panel held a meeting on 6th March 2014 to consider a proposed policy for raising participation in physical activity and sport. The policy proposes a new strategic direction and one which involves partners in achieving shared priority outcomes for the people of Sunderland.
- 2.3 The Panel was informed that the challenge now facing the council is to create the conditions for more people to become more active on a more regular basis, whether through informal activity such as going for a walk, cycling, swimming, or in more formal activity such as joining a sports club or gym. Adopting a strategic approach to improving participation levels will enable the council to maximise the impact that sport and physical activity has in Sunderland.

3. Feedback from the Public Health, Wellness & Culture Scrutiny Panel

- 3.1 The Panel considered whether the proposed vision statement is appropriate, sufficiently aspirational, or alternatively whether it is unachievable. We considered the scale of the consultation to be carried out and the proposed objectives.
- 3.2 The proposed title of was recommended to be changed from 'Raising Participation in Physical Activity' and Sport to 'Active Living'.
- 3.3 The proposed vision - that Sunderland becomes:

'a city where everyone is physically active as they can be, the outcomes of which will be improvements to everyone's health and wellbeing, levels of skills and attainment and those communities in most need, benefiting from being physically active'

The Panel considered that this was too wordy, not user-friendly and should be simplified around a revised 'Active Living' title.¹

- 3.4 The following objectives were proposed for the policy:
- Have a better understanding of residents' needs in order to ensure and enable a range of universal, targeted and specialist health and wellbeing services
 - Build capacity within communities to ensure that voluntary and community organisations can provide opportunities to be active
 - Improve people's understanding of the benefits of physical activity
 - Ensure that opportunities to be physically active are key drivers for connecting residents to public, private or voluntary sector sport and leisure provision
 - Ensure stakeholders recognise the importance of providing and protecting green space, playing pitches and "places to play"
 - Improve partnership working with schools to ensure that young people have the opportunity to acquire basic sport skills for future participation in sport and physical activity through the school curriculum and in community/club settings
 - Build capacity within sports clubs and physical activity groups in order to seek funding and promote growth
 - Contribute to Sunderland's reputation as a sporting city.
- 3.5 The Panel suggested that the objectives should refer to "getting everyone active" and be less prescriptive.
- 3.6 The Panel agreed with the range of outcomes which are proposed as :
- Everyone has the opportunity to:
 - take part in the sport or physical activity of their choice
 - reach the highest standard of sporting excellence
 - Improved resident health and wellbeing
 - Strong and sustainable local sport clubs and volunteering networks
 - More young people have the opportunity to acquire basic sport skills and improve their physical literacy
 - Embedded and enhanced community spirit, with more communities empowered to do more to help themselves
 - More places to be active and more residents participating in activities
 - More residents being aware of how and where to access sport and physical activity
 - Residents will have a greater understanding of the benefits of physical activity and sport.
- 3.7 The Panel noted that outdoor spaces such as the seafront are very well used and membership of walking clubs is growing. People do still need accessible, usable public spaces close to home and park areas are an important facility to be supported through the Core Strategy. Friends and families can influence individuals and a 'getting everyone active' approach could include a buddy system.
- 3.8 In relation to consultation on the policy, the Panel was informed that a Stakeholder Event would include a wide spectrum of partners and key stakeholders including all Elected Members.

¹ It is noted that the process is currently paused in order to revisit the position statement with Public Health

- 3.9 The Panel felt it was important to include GPs and include their views on schemes such as 'Exercise on Prescription'. There is also scope to use video screens in GP surgeries to include information about daily exercise. The Panel also requested that Gentoo be included as a stakeholder.
- 3.10 The Panel felt that a simple but effective method of communication is to display information in public places, for example, on public stairways showing how many calories are used climbing stairs. This could help to build exercise into a daily routine.
- 3.11 The Panel made additional comments on the consultation: The Panel suggested that targeted consultation is carried out with those who are not active to find out why. Based on the NICE recommendation stating that 30 minutes of walking is enough for most people, it is important to find out the barriers to taking even a small amount of routine physical activity, for example lack of time, cost, or poor body image in public facilities. The Panel cited a programme used in Darlington 'Get everyone motivated' which may be adapted and used locally.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The Panel recognised that the approach is not about facilities for wider coverage, although it was noted that spaces must be accessible and usable within local areas.
- 4.2 It was also noted that the success of the physical activity strategy would need to be measured at points in time and through the evaluation of health benefits and that elected members should be able to see evidence of activity in their own wards

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Public Health, Wellness and Culture Scrutiny Panel would recommend to the Scrutiny Committee that the following comments are made in relation to the proposed policy:
- a) That the title is amended to 'Active Living';
 - b) The proposed vision should be revised around a simplified 'Active Living' title;
 - c) The proposed objectives should refer to "getting everyone active" and be less detailed;
 - d) Consultation should include clinicians, Gentoo, and targeted consultation towards residents who do not undertake any physical activity;
 - e) The strategy should specify how it will measure success and health benefits.