

# Health and Wellbeing Board

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## **Active Leicester Strategy – Turning the Tide on Inactivity**

Date of meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Lead Officers: Andrew Beddow and Jo Atkinson,  
Leicester City Council

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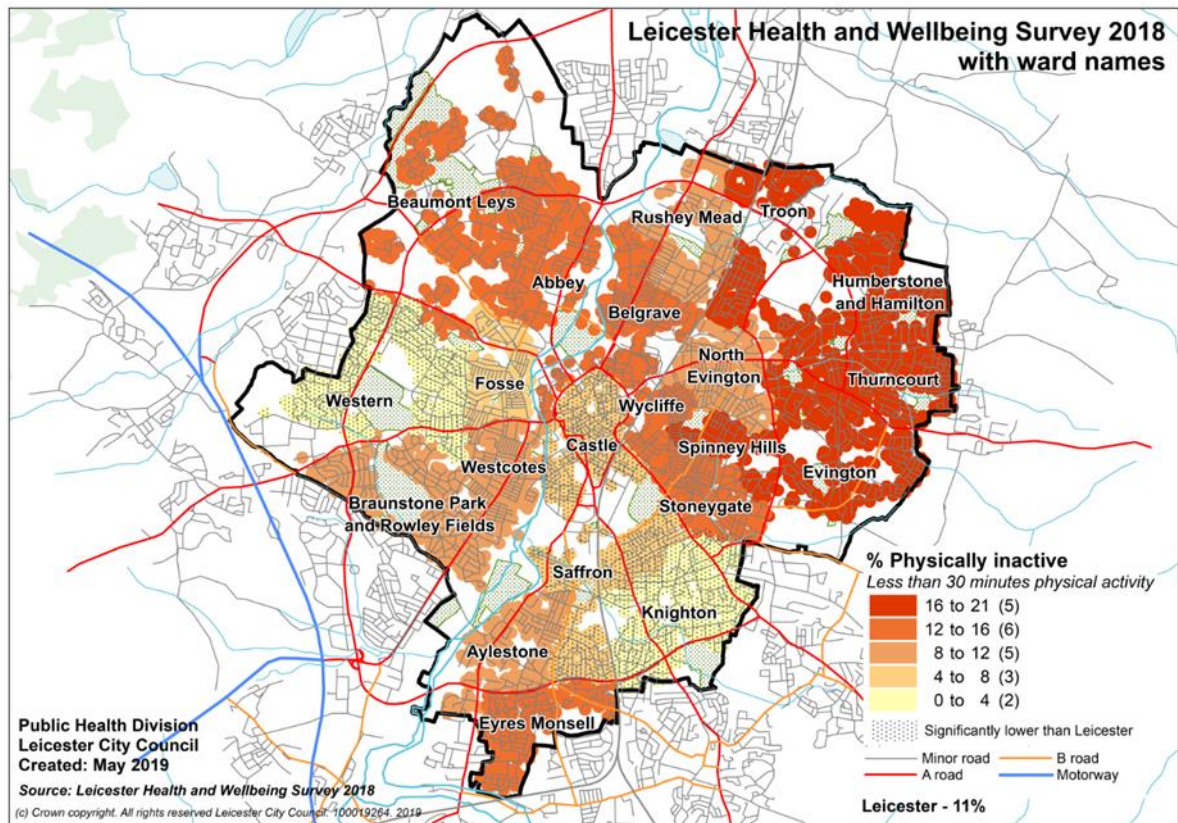
## Useful information

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<b>1</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>1.1</b>	The Active Leicester strategy strives to support individuals, communities, partners, and businesses to experience increased opportunities to be physically active.
<b>1.2</b>	This paper provides a summary of the public facing version of the strategy, that was circulated to board members in the summer 2023.
<b>1.3</b>	The city has 35% of its population who are inactive / sedentary. This is significantly worse than the national average of inactivity, at 25.8%. Long term inactivity can be linked to numerous health conditions. This places an additional strain on healthcare resources. Therefore, by targeting this population, supporting them to move more will provide a healthier, happier and more prosperous population.
<b>1.4</b>	This strategy has been developed in partnership with public health, and a wide range of stakeholders, partners, professionals, community groups and forums. This has ensured that the priorities of the strategy reflect and respond to the priorities and needs of the population and addresses the barriers that many residents face, in relation to becoming more physically active.
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Active Leicester – Turning the Tide on Inactivity</b> , is a five-year strategy for stakeholders and organisations working in the field. It focuses on the city’s most inactive population through an approach called proportionate universalism. This approach recognises that the city has a strong universal offer for physical activity and sport. There is a wealth of opportunity in the city from public spaces to leisure centres, to the club infrastructure to the commercial operators. However, access to these services / assets is not always equal. Therefore, through this strategy Active Leicester’s ambition is to shine a light on these inequalities and target resource to where it is most needed.
<b>1.7</b>	The strategy is a guidance document. It is designed as a blueprint for organisations to target resources to where there is most need in the city. There is no budget allocated to this strategy. Therefore, the aim is for organisations to adapt existing resources or to use the strategy to draw down investment.
<b>1.8</b>	The report also shines a light on Sport Services (also known as Active Leicester’s) response to the strategy, with a pilot approach that is being adopted at Aylestone Leisure centre to increase activity levels for the most inactive. Sport Services operates the council’s stock of leisure facilities with 7 leisure centres, athletics track and a golf course.
<b>1.9</b>	The report will also outline an opportunity being offered by Sport England, as they expand their Place Based working funding programme to a further 80-100 locations across England.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recommended actions/decision.</b>
<b>2.1</b>	The Health and Wellbeing Board are reminded to note the contents of the strategy and provide comment to help shape the emerging action plan.
<b>2.2</b>	The board are asked to comment and feedback on Active Leicester’s approach to piloting a physical activity hub at Aylestone Leisure centre.
<b>2.3</b>	The board are asked to consider the opportunity for further collaborative work through the Sport England Place Based working initiative.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Despite the highly publicised benefits of physical activity, most adults in the UK do not meet the minimum recommendations of doing 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of moderate intensity activity (such as brisk walking or cycling) or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity each week.

Nationally, nearly 3 in 10 adults do not meet this guideline. The story is worse in Leicester, with approx. 35% of the child and adult population being physical inactive, which is doing less than 30 minutes moderate exercise a week.

**3.2 Figure 2. Inactivity (<30 minutes per day) by ward in Leicester, 2018**



**3.3 Active Leicester Strategy – key principles**

This strategy is for stakeholder’s and organisations working within the sport / physical activity sector in the city. It is proposed to provide a framework and guidance document to support them to deliver where Active Leicester feels it is most needed.

Small changes to the ways organisations work can go a long way to tackling inactivity when combined with similar, likeminded organisations. Therefore, Active Leicester would ask organisations to critically evaluate their practices and see what small changes can be made.

The key principles that we ask organisations to adopt, as a way of working towards the strategy include:

1. To focus resource (full or part) on the city’s inactive population, with a focus on:
  - People in bad health (including mental health) or living with a disability or limiting health condition.
  - Women and Girls.
  - Residents with no formal qualifications and tend not to be working.
  - Residents who reside in the East of the City and associate with being Black/Black British or Asian/Asian British.
  - Older adults, aged 65+

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To focus resource for generational change, for the cities under-five and school age population.</li> <li>3. To focus on activity that is informal, local to where people live, which is recreational in nature, and an activity type that promotes participation with family and friends.</li> <li>4. Engage, listen, support, and empower the local community. Utilising the role of community-based leaders and partners, whom have an in-depth knowledge of the community, and can support with the creation of sustainable activity models.</li> <li>5. Create and engender collaborative working, by partners, to deliver appropriate and tailored communications which facilitate long-term behaviour change, along with the sharing of resources, to where it is most needed, where inactivity exists.</li> </ol>
<p><b>3.4</b></p>	<p><b><u>Action Plan</u></b></p> <p>Since the launch of the strategy in July 2023, Active Leicester have been facilitating the development of an action plan. As previously mentioned, there is no funding or budget allocated to this strategy, therefore, partner (internal or external) engagement must take a different approach. There is a level of galvanising, collaborative and creative thinking that is required.</p> <p>A key message from the consultation conducted as part of the strategy development, back in 2021, was the amount of good work that is already being undertaken by many partners in the city. However, stakeholders don't often communicate their work. Therefore, opportunities for improved messaging or collaboration are missed.</p> <p>Following this feedback and the level of resource required to develop and facilitate an action plan, officers felt that it should be split into two phases. The first phase is with internal council departments, moving out to external partners in phase 2.</p> <p>During the development of phase 1, officers in Active Leicester took the strategy on a road show with around ten different council departments. They have raised awareness of the strategy, discussed opportunities for collaborative working and attempted to tease out tangible actions for the strategy.</p> <p>Following this first phase of discussions, an action plan is emerging with some examples shared in the next points.</p>
<p><b>3.5</b></p>	<p><b><u>Active Leicester Response - Health and Wellbeing Hub Pilot</u></b></p> <p>Active Leicester operates 7 leisure centres, a golf course, athletics track and range of outdoor sports provision. In response to the new Active Leicester Strategy, we are developing an approach at one of our centres to become a health and wellbeing hub.</p> <p>It will attempt to balance the need to provide an excellent leisure experience, alongside a shift towards creating community wellbeing hubs, that will enable people to become active, by working in a more holistic way, that supports behaviour change.</p> <p>Active Leicester is looking to break the mould of a traditional leisure operation, which can be seen to market the products to the motivated community, where the customer service is transactional and where there is limited partnership working to reach out to the sections of the community that really need the benefit of being active. We also, want the leisure centre to be the go-to place for social prescribing.</p>

The pilot centre is Aylestone Leisure Centre. This site was chosen for its facility mix, being a large leisure centre with a good mix of activities (swimming pool, sports hall and health and fitness suites). The centre also resides close to one of the most deprived wards in the city, Saffron, which also has high levels of inactivity.

Over the last 6 months, officers have been developing the concept of a health and wellbeing hub. They have considered what could be provided with little or no resource. As a result, the following is being tested:

1. In partnership with the housing team, Active Leicester will provide free access for a small cohort of inactive adults 16+ to the leisure centre services, for a 6-month period. This will include:
  - Free gym, swimming, sports hall, exercise classes.
  - Free family swimming.
  - Bring a buddy to exercise for free (gym, swim, classes, sports hall).
  - Additional support provided through enhanced touch points with the client.
2. Enhanced training for staff to ensure an empathetic, warm, and supportive environment is created for new people starting their exercise journey.
3. Improved marketing and communication to the people in Saffron, adopting a behaviour change approach. Also, utilising the communication networks within housing, education, local community, VCSE, health and GP practices to improve engagement and reach.

In the later phases, once the service has been able to test and learn from the above approach then Active Leicester will expand the scheme, reaching out to local partners and clinicians to refer people into the centre.

### **3.6 Sport England Place based working initiative.**

In November, Sport England announced an expansion of their investment into local communities across England to ensure those in greatest need can be physically active.

This place-based systemic work will see Sport England utilise the learning from their existing 12 Place Partnerships (formerly Local Delivery Pilots) and network of 43 Active Partnerships across England, to foster relationships with local organisations and leaders to overcome the specific barriers to physical activity that exist in their communities.

This new way of working directly supports the government's **Get Active** strategy, which has set ambitious targets of getting 2.5 million more adults and 1m children active by 2030 to tackle the disparities in activity levels across society.

This extension of place-based working will be targeting the greatest resource to areas with highest inactivity levels and other social need indicators. They are investing £250m of National Lottery and Exchequer funding into place-based work, with **£190m** of this focused on an additional **80-100** places which have greatest need.

Leicester features highly on the data set for need and therefore, officers within Active Leicester, Public Health and colleagues at Active Together are in early discussions about a Leicester bid.

There is an opportunity with this project to test a systemic place-based working approach in Leicester, for the benefit of increased physical activity levels. Therefore, utilising Sport England data set, along with an overlay of Public Health data, officers intend on identifying 2-3 different locations in the city.

This project will require the bringing together of a range of partners to initiate change, including partners from public and statutory services, community, voluntary, not for profit and private sectors.

An example of Place Based working, with previous investment from Sport England can be found from Essex. As an early partner in the Local Delivery Pilot programme, Active Essex set out to increase physical activity in some of the counties most deprived wards. Since 2019, they adopted a proactive approach to understand asset-based community development and use it to underpin their work, and so far, there have been several positive outcomes.

They describe that if leadership can be distributed to the local community, then they will take responsibility and ownership of creating opportunities to reduce physical inactivity. They have the local experience, meaning they understand the needs and wants of their local community. To date £20m has been invested into Essex LDP, funding 123 different grant projects. Further detail can be found by visiting: <https://www.activeesseximpact.org/the-essex-local-delivery-pilot>

Officers within Active Leicester and Public Health would welcome the board's views on a Place Based working bid to Sport England, and whether any members would express an interest in being part of an application steering group.

Officers would also ask board members about their individual organisations and how they can contribute to the aims of the strategy to get the cities most needed residents, more active.