

Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY
COMMISSION**

DATE: TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street,
Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Committee

Councillor Dawood (Chair)

Councillor Mohammed (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Agath, Aldred, Chauhan, Halford, Karavadra and Singh Johal

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Katie Jordan (Democratic Support Officer),

Tel: 0116 4546350, e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

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- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
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- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Katie Jordan, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 4546350.** Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Democratic Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

[Appendix A](#)

The minutes of The Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on 26 September 2023 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on any questions, representations and statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

7. SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT FINDINGS INTO 'ENCOURAGING WOMEN INTO SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES'

[Appendix B](#)

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submits a response report on actions into the findings of encouraging women into sports and physical activities.

8. MUSEUM SERVICE UPDATE

[Appendix C](#)

The Director of Tourism and Culture submits an overview report on the progress in relation to the Arts Council NPO fund.

9. BURIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

Appendix D

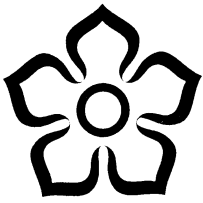
The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report to update the commission on the Burial Strategy at Leicester City Council.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix E

The current work programme is attached. The Commission is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Dawood – Chair
Councillor Mohammed – Vice Chair

Councillor Agath
Councillor Chauhan
Councillor Karavadra

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Halford
Councillor Singh Johal

* * * * *

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th August 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

15. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leicester Mercury had reported that the Phoenix Building had unsafe cladding. The Chair asked Officers present for comment.

16. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

17. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

18. VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submitted a report to update the Commission on the Voluntary Community Sector Engagement Strategy. A presentation was provided on the pledges and actions of the VCSE Strategy including some further updates to these.

Councillor Malik, Assistant City Mayor, Communities, Adult Learning, Jobs and Skills introduced the report. He informed the Commission that the item should have gone to the last Scrutiny meeting before the election, but due to a power cut the meeting was cancelled. He explained that it was a key service in the local community and played a crucial part in engaging the communities that can be harder to reach. Leicester City Council as a Local Authority acknowledge the importance the strategy has, which is mainly focused on a reconnect, refocus and rebuild approach for us to understand the sector and the communities needs and wishes.

The report and the following points were noted:

- The strategy will help to coordinate planning and working across the Councils divisions and service areas in relation to local VCSE groups, organisations, projects and services to develop better ways of working closely with VCSE Organisations.
- More regular meetings with a variety of representatives from the Local VCSE Sector and other Civil Society Partners, especially to help the review of the progress of the strategy.
- The VCSE team work with My Choice who have done some work with Be Inspired to help collect important data, which gave a better picture of the groups and organisations across the city, so the data would be more enhanced. The data would be used to create a map of VCSE groups and organisations across the city, on a ward by ward basis with support from the Ward Councillors.
- Once the Map had been signed off, it could then be used and shared by Ward Councillors to understand which groups and organisations exist in their wards and offer support for residents wanting to know more about VCSE groups.
- The focus would be to work with Leicester City based businesses, that have an understanding of the business landscape in the city and play a significant role within it.
- Work would be completed to build relationships and gain an understanding of organisations roles within VCSE, to enable a matching exercise.
- The VCSE Team currently use an organisation called MyCake which takes and interprets organisational and financial data from the Charity Commission and other sectors, which gives a picture of VCSE groups and organisations across the city on a subsector basis.

AGREED:

1. The VCSE will be a part of a strategic conversation.
2. The VCSE and LCC boards to potentially co-produce and join funding submissions together.
3. To consider a team for community developments to support and empower community groups.
4. Develop a business pledge for local businesses to sign up to be in partnership with LCC.
5. For the VCSE team to engage more with Ward Councillors in delivering the strategy.

19. DRAFT CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY REPORT

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a report to update the Commission on the Draft Cultural Industries Strategy.

Councillor Clarke, Deputy City Mayor for Climate, Economy and Culture introduced the item. He noted that this was a huge opportunity to develop a strategy that will enable our creative and cultural industries to do even better in Our City and to thrive. It also what funders are looking to see and would expect a strategy to be in place, to ensure that organisations and the Council can receive funding for a thriving creative and cultural calendar.

Members noted the report and the following points:

- The strategy is a joint initiative with Leicester City Council, Arts Council England and both universities in the city.
- The first round of the consultant had just completed with 80 responses, the data was being analysed.
- A further round of consultation was due to take place face to face with a host of other organisations.
- The city had done well in recent funding lines for the Arts Council. A host of new organisations had been added to the group that the Arts Council provides core funding for, which allows LCC more capacity.
- The LCC are keen to create a new Spirit Partnership, to create more joined up working across the sector.
- LCC had been very successful in attracting resources for creative industries. An example is Pilot House Scheme, on King Street that is referenced in the strategy. The scheme is specifically designed to be a workspace for new creative businesses, with particular focus on the design community.
- Another example is Space City on the development of new workspace. Where another 60,000sqf that will be available for new tech businesses in the spring of 2024.
- Both schemes were supported by the levelling up fund, round one allocations.
- There are different ways in which arts and culture activities can be used to raise ambition and help communities in a variety of settings.

AGREED:

The commission to receive the full report, once it is completed.

20. WARD FUNDING ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a summary report updating the Commission on the findings of the Ward Funding Annual Report.

Lee Warner, Head of Neighbourhood Services led on the presentation. Members noted the report and the following was noted:

- Currently there were not any plans to reduce the funding amount each ward receives.
- A Member training session was happening in October on Ward Meetings and funding.
- Each Ward receives the same amount of funding, regardless of the size and number of Ward Councillors.
- Most ward funding is spent on the 5 categories outlined in the report. On occasion requests are made outside of the categories and requests are different each year.
- The data based on the last two years hadn't shown an increase in the amount of funding requested.
- Further work needed to be completed on the guidelines for who was able to apply for ward funding and the amount of funding issued. Councillor Dempster suggested a task and finish group with Ward Councillors or as a Scrutiny Commission.

AGREED:

1. To consider increasing the amount of ward funding.
2. To set up a task and finish group to complete work around ward funding.
3. To recognise volunteers that support community work within the wards.

21. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

Appendix B

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Encouraging Women in Sport Review – response to recommendations

Date of Commission meeting: October 2023

Lead Director: Miranda Cannon

Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Vicky Ball
 - Author contacts details: Victoria.ball@leicester.gov.uk
 - Date of Exec meeting: n/a

1. Summary

- 1.1 A review commissioned by the Heritage, Culture, Leisure, and Tourism Scrutiny commission in to 'encouraging women to participate in sport and physical activity in Leicester was completed in late 2022, with a report presented to the commission in February 2023.
- 1.2 The report sets out a range of findings, following a period of community and industry consultation. It also, provides several recommendations to support the industry to engage, and encourage more women to participate in sport and physical activity.
- 1.3 This paper provides a response to those recommendations. Responses have been facilitated by Active Leicester, which in the main are from internal city council departments.
- 1.4 The responses and review findings align well with the new Active Leicester Strategy, where women and girls are identified as a key target group. Subsequently, Active Leicester in partnership with Public Health are developing an action plan that will consider how the recommendations from the scrutiny review can be reflected. A further report will follow on this.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

- 2.1 The scrutiny commission are asked to note the content of the responses to the recommendations, and to provide comment.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 A summary of recommendations and responses are shared on pages 6-16 of the full report, which is shared as an addendum.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report at this stage. Initiatives outlined in the report will need to be funded from existing budgets.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance

4.2 Legal implications

The report does not give any specific details about grant funding, but if there is to be any funding awarded to external organisations it will be necessary to consult Legal Services to ensure that a subsidy control assessment has been carried out and to ensure that appropriate grant funding terms and conditions are put into place.

Additionally, if any of the work with external organisations requires any joint working arrangement, then please consult Legal Services to seek advice on whether formal joint working arrangements will be required.

Tracey Wakelam
Principal Lawyer
Commercial, Property and Planning

4.3. Climate Change implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. More widely, however, work to promote participation in sport and healthy lifestyles may help to encourage and enable active travel by participants, which could have a positive impact on travel-related carbon emissions within the city.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

4.4 Equality Implications

All public bodies must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In doing so, they must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report provides recommendations to support the industry to engage, and encourage more women to participate in sport and physical activity.

There are inequalities in health between women, which are related to socio-economic

status, ethnicity and geographic region. Across different stages of women's lives there are different social and economic factors which drive health and associated health inequalities. The recommendations in the report may lead to positive outcomes for women and people of all protected characteristics if proposals are developed. There does need to be greater consideration given to the impacts on women that might share some of the other protected characteristics and how they may need to be engaged with differently, for example, women with a disability may not be able to partake in 'conventional' physical exercise and engagement for women of different races and religions may also need to be different to encourage participation.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

4.5 Other Implications

(You will have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate any which apply?)

None.

5. Background information and other papers:

Addendum: A Report of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission: **Encouraging Women to Participate in Sports and Physical Activities in Leicester**

6. Summary of appendices:

7. Is this a private report ?

(If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)



Leicester City Council Scrutiny Review

‘Encouraging Women to Participate in Sports and Physical Activities in Leicester’

A Report of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

28 February 2023 – Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny commission meeting.

20 March 2023 – Overview Select Committee meeting

23 March 2023 – City Mayor & Executive Board meeting

Encouraging Women to Participate in Sports and Physical Activities Task Group

TASK GROUP MEMBERS

Cllr Elaine Halford (Chair)

Cllr Susan Barton

Cllr Nita Solanki

Cllr Ruma Ali

Cllr Mohammed Dawood

THIS REVIEW WAS LED BY COUNCILLOR ELAINE HALFORD

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Chair's Foreword

Being active and having a positive relationship with sport and physical activity is important to women's long-term health and wellbeing.

We know that the COVID pandemic has resulted in more home working, which has led to changes in lifestyles, fitness and health with positive and negative effects on physical activity habits. We need to understand women's attitudes and behaviours to sport and physical activity to promote and encourage participation.

The Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission set up a Task Group in November 2021 to undertake a review into 'Encouraging Women to participate in Sports and Physical Activities in Leicester.'

The task group heard evidence about the sports opportunities for women by council-run services and of wider community-based opportunities; It also heard evidence of the barriers that exist for women to participate and explored good practice ideas of what can be done to encourage women to be more active and in better health.

The task group review meetings for evidence gathering were held online due to the covid restrictions.

I would like to thank witnesses organisations and officers who gave evidence to this review. Thank you to members of the task group for their time and contributions to this review.

Councillor Elaine Halford

Chair of the Task Group, and Chair of Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission, Leicester City Council.

REPORT

1. Introduction

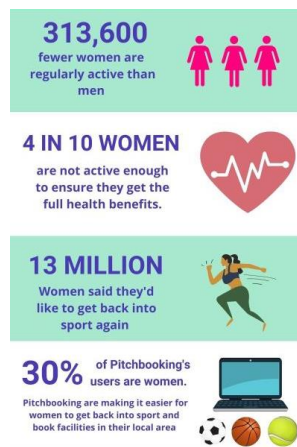
1.1 Today's leisure market offers a fantastic choice of activities for women to take part in. Budget gyms have boomed, our green spaces have been revolutionized with park runs and park gyms, and fitness trails have grown rapidly, while technology has broadened the appeal of fitness activities. Over this time, councils have been grappling with austerity. This reduction in budgets, when combined with a rapidly changing leisure market, has altered the range and quality of local sport and leisure provision.

1.2 Leicester City Council and city partners offer a wide range of opportunities for women to participate, both within a formal setting or recreationally. Sports Services in particular provides numerous services and programs across its portfolio of leisure facilities. There is also a range of opportunities for women to participate in neighbourhoods and community-based activities, and via parks and open spaces; community and faith organisations; local community centres; sports clubs and forums; gyms and fitness organisations and many more. Some of these are captured in the report.

2. Background

2.1 Participation levels in sport have historically always been consistently lower for women than for men. Right now [there are over 700,000 more inactive women than men in England](#), a trend that was only made worse over the course of the pandemic and recurring lockdowns. The recent [Active Lives Adult Survey commissioned by Sport England](#) revealed that the drop in activity levels for women was more sustained than for men, suggesting it will take longer for women to return to pre-pandemic activity levels. The same study suggests that more support is needed across the board to help women get active again.

Sport England national data shows:



2.2 Leicester City physical activity and gender data from 'Active Lives Survey 2017/18' shows females are less active than men, for example 65% of men participate in 150+ minutes of activity a week, in comparison to 61% of women.

- 2.3 According to Local Authority Health Profiles data 2020/21, Leicester's proportion of physically active adults is worse than the percentage for England and the Region, the data shows: Leicester 55.4%, Region 64.5% and England at 65%.
- 2.4 Leicester City Council and work with partners has identified that more work is required for Leicester residents to be more active and to encourage participation in informal physical activity; activities for family participation; and to utilise partnerships and key stakeholders involved in sports and physical activities e.g. professional sports clubs; universities and community sector organisations.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Mayor and Executive is asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 1) Women need to know that they are welcome to participate in sports and physical activities by wearing clothing that is comfortable for them and culturally acceptable. **To consider better signage in facilities and raising awareness of the availability of alternative clothing e.g. swimwear, gym-wear and cyclewear.**

Active Leicester

To promote inclusivity and diversity in leisure centres, Active Leicester will have posters across sites showcasing ladies being able to swim in burkas. However, Active Leicester notes this recommendation and will commit to maximising the use of social media to showcase women from different backgrounds, exercising in various types of clothing.

- 2) There is a need to address the shortage of female gym trainers, coaches, and fitness instructors at facilities. **To consider carrying out recruitment, training and apprenticeship programs to attract women into these positions.**

Active Leicester

Active Leicester has a gender split of staff which is round 50%. This is typical of the sector and demonstrates the attractiveness of the industry to women, where part time, flexible working can be balanced with family life.

Active Leicester currently operates a recruitment academy for instructors and coaches in the field of learn 2 swim, group exercise instructors and lifeguards. The cost of becoming a coach or instructor can be prohibitive to entering the industry. Therefore, Active Leicester pioneered a scheme in 2017 to support

this barrier. Active Leicester provides upfront payment of a course on the proviso that employees maintain employment for a 12-month period. This scheme has revolutionised the way we recruit these often-difficult sectors of the market to appoint. This practice is now adopted by many local authorities.

Also, during the recruitment of roles, Active Leicester actively use a diverse range of images of employees, of which we utilise female staff. The service also intends to create a new Active Leicester recruitment page, where we will adopt the recommendations from the scrutiny commission to enhance the profile of female staff.

- 3) Women can be inspired and motivated by role models and sporting champions. **To consider involving local and national women with sporting related achievements e.g. the Lionesses who are champion winners, and individuals like Summaya, who has shared her experience via the media and via podcast following her journey to learn to swim in adulthood.**

Active Leicester

Active Leicester recognises the importance of celebrating and maximising the role of local and national champions. Active Leicester will continue to work in partnership with the network of organisations in the sector to identify these individuals to share their success. Active Leicester will utilise the reach of its social media platforms to promote these champions. Active Leicester also works in partnership with Active Together, a local organisation that seeks to find and promote local champions. Their 2022 campaign was very successful in finding 'Z' fitness, a local fitness champion from the east of the city. Together Active Leicester and Active Together featured 'Z' across their social media platforms. For 2023, both organisations are recruiting a new champion to extend this campaign.

In addition, Active Leicester is developing a new standalone website that will promote the wide range of services that Active Leicester has to offer. It will provide an opportunity for the service to showcase these champions in much greater detail.

- 4) Members were impressed by the success of 'The Girl Can' campaign used by Active Leicester. Research shows that many women are put off taking part in physical activity due to a fear of judgement. 'This Girl Can' seeks to tell the real stories of real women with videos of their personal experiences and exercising **To consider using videos and inspiring women with real stories they can relate to can help to increase participation.**

Active Leicester

Active Leicester is a strong advocate of the hugely successful 'This Girl can Campaign'. Active Leicester will continue to utilise the assets that is produced as part of this campaign, particularly featuring diverse women in sports and physical activities.

The emerging Active Leicester strategy also provides a strategic context to raising the profile of women exercising. Increasing participation of inactive women and girls is a strategic priority. As a result, the strategy provides a framework and blueprint to support organisations attract and retain more women and girls into exercise.

In addition, as stated above Active Leicester's emerging website will provide much greater flexibility to the way we promote and show case behaviour change to exercise, including how we participate in campaigns such as This Girl Can, with better imagery and modern digital techniques. Active Leicester will adopt the recommendations set out by the scrutiny commission with the development of the new website.

Active Leicester will also look to share success stories of local women, collaborate with organisations aligned with the campaign, and engage through social media to create an inclusive and empowering environment that encourages women to participate in fitness and wellbeing.

- 5) **To consider new approaches to attract families and friends groups to participate in sports and physical activities together.** For example: a friend's invitation makes sport participation more attractive and there is also safety in numbers. Socialising with friends and family is rewarding and bonding becomes a strong external motivator. (*The Health & Wellbeing Survey in Leicester shows that there is a lack of suitable structured activity provision for families to exercise together. Whilst parks and open spaces are available for informal family friendly activities, the leisure centres and sports clubs often offer adult and child physical activity sessions separately*).

Active Leicester

The Active Leicester strategy provides the strategic context to raising the profile of inactivity. Consultation from the strategy stated that inactive residents, of which women and girls is high, prefer to start participating with family and friends, in a local, safe environment that is delivered by trusted people. As a result, the strategy has used this evidence base to provide a framework and

blueprint for organisations to help them attract and retain more women and girls into exercise, with a set of guiding principles. An element of this will be the role of supporting organisations utilising the wealth of parks and open spaces the city has for informal activity.

Active Leicester is also piloting a new approach to leisure centre's that will enable people to become active, by working in a more holistic behaviour change way. The service is piloting a health and wellbeing hub approach, at one of it's leisure centres. This approach will test and pilot new ways of working that will attempt to reach out to broader sectors of the community who are inactive, including increasing it's reach to Women in Girls. Ideas that being explored include:

1. Bring a buddy for free
2. Behaviour Change training for key staff to create an empathetic, friendly, and welcoming approach to people starting their exercise journey.
3. Free fitness and health checks.
4. A review of pricing with off peak or free daily sessions.
5. Adult Swimming lessons at reduced prices.

Park Services

Leicester City has over 180 parks gardens and green spaces which amounts to 22% of the entire city surface. The service provides 81 outdoor gyms, 240+ play areas and 11 parks with dedicated walking and jogging trails.

In addition to the universal provision provided above, the Parks Services Leicester Environmental Volunteers initiative provides a weekly programme of practical environmental activities fulfilling a vital role in keeping the parks and open spaces, waterways, and streets clean and well maintained for all to enjoy. The initiative has been hugely successful in engaging people into regular outdoor conservation management activities on land and water throughout Leicester, all year round, in all seasons and weathers.

The scheme has provided an alternative way to encourage and engage people to get out, get active, increase their social interaction, keep fit and improve their mental health.

Activities range from a beginners gardening session to conservation and habitat enhancement of local nature reserves, street scene cleaning to invasive species management on Leicester's waterways using 8-person bell boats (large canoes).

Park Service are also involved in a national Police led scheme to promote safer access and usage of parks by women and girls. Local authorities nationally are reviewing and amending grounds maintenance programs to improve sight lines, reducing the build-up of shrubbery and improve natural

lighting. Several parks have already seen a benefit, and this work will be ongoing.

Park Services will commit to enhancing the profile of its green and open spaces by working in partnership with broader internal and external teams on raising the awareness and promotion of these important city assets.

- 6) Participation in sport must be enjoyable and provide an experience worth repeating. **To support women to focus on feeling good about themselves and their achievements e.g. rewards and celebration are important.**

Active Leicester

Active Leicester strives to provide a warm, friendly, and welcoming experience, from the moment visitors enter, to when they leave. By implementing these strategies, we will hope to increase member retention, promote a sense of belonging, and create a positive and fulfilling experience for visitors and members.

- 7) **To consider new initiatives such as combining fitness sessions with health promotion sessions for women.** For example 'The Fitness Factory Gym' in Leicester held an open day event inviting members and non-members, offering a variety of free taster fitness sessions combined with a health promotion session, including mental health and wellbeing talk with Q&A. *(open day events like this are successful and attracts many local women plus existing members bring along families and friends).*

Active Leicester

The Active Leicester team will look at implementing a plan for open days to be held at each leisure centre. Hosting open days at each site in partnership with Public Health could be an effective strategy for the service to promote health and wellbeing and engage the local community. By hosting open days in partnership with Public Health, leisure centres will have the opportunity to raise awareness about the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle, showcase their facilities and programmes, and foster a sense of community engagement. This collaborative approach can help attract new members, encourage participation, and promote the overall health and wellbeing of the local community. Each Active Leicester facility will aim to provide one open day per annum.

Similarly, the service approach to the emerging health and wellbeing hub pilot will test the relationships with local health partners. The service has a vision to build stronger relationships with GP's, social prescribers, community champions and other community partners to make leisure centres the go to place for physical activity, where exercise is recommended or prescribed to patients.

Public Health

One of the five components in the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' is Be Active. Making the link between physical activity and mental health is a key theme that needs to run through the provision throughout the city. Let's Get Together, Short Strolls and Live Well Walk More are led walks aimed at promoting general wellbeing including both physical and mental health.

- 8) **A need for powerful messaging and marketing to educate and motivate women to incorporate moderate exercise as part of their daily lives. It is essential to connect with women about the health and mental health benefits to exercising. Evidence shows that most residents would try a fitness tracker or health app if recommended by a health professional, suggest that this be piloted for women who are interested.** Women are involved in many different daily routines and journeys e.g. using the stairs, housework and gardening, school runs and walking to local shops, so it's a case of changing mind-sets to link physical exercise with better health.

Active Leicester

Active Leicester agrees that making small changes to the way residents view physical activity can make a positive impact on their health. Building small changes to their routine can be more sustainable. Active Leicester provides a limited range of behaviour change marketing, alongside the commercial marketing. For example: swimming for health or 'me' time, have been campaigns in the past. The service recognises this needs to be built upon to engage a different audience.

Therefore, looking forward Active Leicester will build on this type of marketing technique, by expanding its budget to create an annual programme of targeted behaviour change campaigns. This will include internal and external partners. For example, the service is working with public health and park services to promote independent exercise within the city's wealth of parks of spaces, with family and friends.

Public Health

Beat the Street is a fun, free, family activity that has happened again in Leicester in June and July 2023. Many families are signed up to receive information about the game and will be sent information on many casual activities that they can do individually or as a family including promoting led walks for adults and for families, walking routes and maps in parks, the three Parkruns in the city and walking or cycling to school in the new term in September.

- 9) **We need more engagement with other groups of women across the city e.g. with single parents, with carers, and family carers too. Suggested that sub-groups be formed, as it is very important to reflect on this.**

Active Leicester

The Active Leicester Strategy endeavours to bring likeminded organisations together who see the value in making changes to existing resources for the benefit of attracting and retaining the cities inactive population into exercise. Active Leicester is reaching out to internal and external departments to seek their appetite to support the strategy action plan. Willing partners will be part of the sub-group and the governance structure who will oversee the action plan.

- 10) **Gaps exist around community champions, ambassadors and mentors To consider engaging local people as ambassadors and community champions to support and empower women to be the best possible version of themselves. For example: Active Together have successfully involved community champions like Zee from Zfit who runs her own ladies-only Zumba and Boxercise classes at venues across Leicester all of which aim to empower women.**

Active Leicester

Active Leicester will continue to work in partnership with Active Together and Public Health to grow the community champion networks, as these can greatly enhance community engagement and promote the involvement of local champions. By partnering with Active Together and Public Health's community champion network, we can find and promote more community champions who play a vital role in inspiring and supporting healthier lifestyles. Utilising various promotional channels and collaborating with Public Health for literature and support, we can amplify the impact and visibility of these champions, fostering a stronger culture of health and wellbeing within the community. Led walks in the city are supported by a team of volunteer walk leaders and they can support women to become walk leaders.

- 11) **We need more fitness instructors and activities leaders and mentors to do outreach work to support women in the community, such as in community centres; places of worship; health centre hubs and public spaces. Sport England research shows that making sport the 'norm' for women relies on local women of all ages, sizes and faiths, becoming active, celebrating it and encouraging other to join in. Therefore by taking an activity into the community, both physically through outdoor sessions or venues in new and unexpected places can attract new circles of women.**

Active Leicester

The above is outlined in the new Active Leicester strategy, which encourages organisations to work on a local basis. The strategy provides an excellent framework for promoting community engagement and fostering a culture of physical activity and wellbeing. With this strategy, Active Leicester hope to leverage its principles to further enhance our partnerships, initiatives, and promotional efforts. This includes collaborating with local organisations, utilising community champions, and emphasising the importance of grassroots involvement in promoting active lifestyles. Implementing the Active Leicester strategy will help ensure a coordinated and impactful effort to encourage physical activity and improve wellbeing within the local community.

A good example of women's participation is the Active Women project taking place in the Wycliffe Ward. Please see video link as an example below:

<https://vimeo.com/tmgmakes/review/801923750/e5b5d6e07e>

Park Services

Leicester Environmental Volunteers initiative provides a weekly programme of practical environmental activities fulfilling a vital role in keeping the parks and open spaces, waterways, and streets clean and well maintained for all to enjoy. The initiative has been hugely successful in engaging people into regular outdoor conservation management activities on land and water throughout Leicester, all year round, in all seasons and weathers.

This is a great way for women and girls to get involved, be active in a non-traditional way, whilst enhancing the local / physical environment.

The scheme is widely promoted city wide by onsite notice boards, park railing banners and via our extremely popular Parks Facebook social media platform. The link to our volunteering offer can also be found on the Leicester City Council website homepage.

The scheme has won 2 national awards, The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) award for Community Engagement 2018 and The Keep Britain Tidy Award for Environmental innovation 2021.

Public Health

A further example is that several schools have been supported and will be supported in the future to apply for The Opening School Facilities fund by Inspire Together and Active Together. This provides funding to support schools to make their sports facilities available to their communities, supporting organisations to work on a local basis. Priority is given to those who are aiming to support a number of groups, including women and girls.

- 12) To encourage women to be involved in sports governing bodies and community leadership roles to influence decision-making.** Women

remain less represented in leadership and coaching roles and face continued challenges in terms of equal pay and coverage in the media. This imbalance is magnified among some sub-groups e.g. BME women and disabled women. There are many reasons for this and most relate to social and cultural factors.

Active Leicester

Active Leicester will continue to be an advocate for diverse governance arrangements within sport's governing bodies and support the work of Sport England to promote the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and code of Sports Governance.

As an employer within Leicester, Active Leicester is committed to supporting the council policy for equality of opportunity, ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunity regardless of their background, culture, or personal circumstances, across all protected characteristics. Active Leicester employs 264 people, of which around 50% are female.

- 13) Task group members felt that many more organisations offering paid for activities and non-paid free sports and physical activities exists across the city e.g. community-based, grassroots sports and informal groups. **To consider engaging with smaller community-based organisations that are well placed in the hub of residential areas and more accessible for women (community-up approach). To support joined up working, sharing resources and support for accessing funding sources.**

Active Leicester

The emerging Active Leicester Strategy recognises the importance of raising the awareness of local activities, that are delivered at a low cost, near to where people live and with trusted leaders. As a result, a priority and key objective for the strategy is to improve the joined up working with organisations to promote the wealth of opportunities that already exist within communities. This will form a key element of the strategy action plan.

- 14) **To reach out to female students in the city to promote sports and physical activities and healthy living.** For example: *'Freshers week' for university students is an excellent time to connect with female students to promote what is available in the city.*
 - De Montfort University and the University of Leicester are fully committed to equity and equality of opportunity for all students. Both institutions regard this as a priority and so will continue to develop the following in order to reach out to female students in the city to promote sports and physical activities and healthy living:

- Both institutions promote & organise physical and mental wellbeing through different projects HealthyDMU, DMUactive, Let's Do Leicester and Be The Influence.
- During Welcome Week both promote physical activity and sporting opportunities through various mechanisms such as fairs, social media, attending lectures and discussions on managing positive wellbeing.
- Both deliver This Girl Can sessions and Girls Night Only evenings.
- Both use data & analytics to measure female uptake in all sporting and physical activities to ensure unintended barriers are not in place
- Both work with student leaders to ensure the importance of equality is shared amongst the student body
- Both work with National Governing Body Leadership programmes specifically targeting females e.g. Football/Rugby. Both run Football for All sessions – targeting females – specifically those with a disability (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CA0DUakOV2A>)
- The University of Leicester recently appointed their first Sports Experience Officer (Inclusion). This individual will use an evidenced based approach to identify gaps within current engagement levels. A particular target is to increase engagement levels within the female Asian student population

15) To encourage businesses, universities, hospitals etc... in the city to promote active travel plans and promote sports and physical exercise activities available in the city to benefit health and wellbeing for women employees.

Leicester City Council is funded by Active Travel England and a proportion of that funding allocation is working with employers to encourage active travel amongst their staff. LCC offers sustainable travel grants to businesses, which can fund things like showers, pool bikes, cycle parking, active travel days. Apprentices and those on a low income are eligible for the Wheels 2 Work programme offering subsidised rental of an electric bike with the opportunity to purchase it at the end of the 6-month trial. We also provide personalised travel plans; information on local walking routes and Dr Bike sessions for employees. Businesses can join in active travel initiatives such as Beat the Streets, Betterpoints, Open Streets and the Walk Leicester Festival. Businesses are also encouraged to advertise the adult cycle training sessions offered to residents and employees within Leicester.

16) Members praised sports partnerships as working well together. To consider including 'Netball' in future projects. To consider a cricket friendly environment for women and a need for role models (Leicestershire County Cricket Club informed members that there is a lack of cricket facilities).

Active Leicester notes this feedback and will consider the role of netball in future projects. The service will also work with Leicestershire County cricket club, the

English Cricket Board and local cricket clubs to improve the number and accessibility of facilities for women and girl's cricket.

In addition, the service is working with the Football Foundation on a funding application to introduce several new Playzone's to the city. These are purpose built multi-use games areas, of which cricket will feature. The evidence base from this scrutiny report will help inform the approach to location, sport and accessibility for women.

- 17) **That the Council increase publicity and marketing of Leisure and Sport facilities and activities on offer across the city.** Wider publicity is needed to reach more women via internal and external methods e.g. members bulletin, ward community meetings, internal face newsletter, council website, community centres, hospitals, G.P surgeries and health centres, face-to-face, local radio and social media.

Active Leicester notes this feedback and will actively take this on board with its annual marketing and communication plan.

- 18) The review report evidence and recommendations has captured valuable information. **This review needs to inform and shape the new strategy being developed.**

This review forms a key review document for the new Active Leicester strategy, in which women and girls are a key priority group. This framework is in place and aimed at helping organisations to target more women. This will be monitored throughout the roll out of the strategy document. Key recommendations from this review will feed into the strategy action plan and Active Leicester welcome the feedback and recommendations in this report.

- 19) This review did not cover 'girls participation' in sports and physical activities, however, we are aware that national data shows: school-age girls are more interested and tend to participate in sports and activities, but then they seem to drop out as they get older for various reasons. **We suggest that this topic be added to future work programmes – possibly Childrens scrutiny jointly with our Heritage scrutiny commission.**
- 20) This review did not cover 'women's safety issues' when accessing sport or physical activity opportunities, although we are fully aware that this can be a barrier for some women. **We suggest that this topic be looked at in the future as it is essential that women and girls feel safe and secure to participate in sports and physical activities.**

- 21) Members praised the public health and sports services, Active Leicester, Active Together and partners for their commitment and expertise to support and

develop new initiatives for women to participate (see *diagram 7.66 showing example of partnership working success*). Members supported future plans to increase women's participation, see 7.82 'looking forward' and Appendix C 'Active Leicester: context and future vision.

The evidence and the good practice captured in this review report to be taken forward by the council and partners.

3.1. CONCLUSION

The task group found that sports and physical activities can be experienced by women in many different ways across the city.

More work needs to be done to educate and motivate women to understand the importance of being active as part of their health and wellbeing journey throughout their adulthood. There are very real short-term and long-term health benefits to women being active and healthy. We need to ensure that our neighbourhoods are enriched with the offer of feel-good-factor physical activities and sports to encourage women to participate on their own and with friends and family.

The review found positive examples of good practice and initiatives existing and being developed and felt that women are probably unaware of the variety of what is available in the city. We need women role models, and women community leaders to inspire and motivate women.

We need to do more work with communities and partners to help women to understand that activities can be an experience for them, their families and friends and that it can be fun and social, and can be carried out in daily life, and can be cost effective / free to participate. We want to enrich our neighbourhoods in Leicester with activities and sports that women can enjoy.

4 Local Context – strategies and budget

Leicester City Council, Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2019/24. Getting people more active is a key public health priority <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/185984/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2019-2024.pdf>

Active Leicester

Active Leicester encourages participation and encompasses all sports in the city. We have seven leisure centres with swimming pools and gyms; one

climbing wall; one athletics track; one golf facility and several dedicated football pitches.

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/sport-and-leisure/>

Active Together (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) support people to make physical activity and sport more accessible and part of our everyday lives. <https://www.active-together.org/>

5. Leicester City Council Sports Services budget

5.1 Leicester city council has recently invested in developing and improving the Leisure and Sports centres facilities across the city. Active Leicester has a budget of £30k per annum to promote its services. A balanced approach to marketing is taken to ensure it appeals to a wide audience. Promotion and campaigns include female-only imagery. This budget came into situ in 2021; prior to this the service did not have a dedicated marketing budget.

5.2 Leicester City Public Health Services budget

5.3 Public Health services provide £67,000 to Inspire Together per year, approximately £15,000 of this funding per year goes towards the provision of the WHISPA delivery. This totals £75,000 for the previous 5 years' delivery. £60,000 has been allocated to Leicester City in the Community over the last 5 years, of which we expect 30% participation from women and girls.

5.4 Predicted budgets for year ahead - The Inspire Together funding will be reduced as a result of the recent PH budget reviews and £47,000 will be the new yearly allocation.

5.5 Funding to the sports clubs is unlikely to continue, however we will continue to support them to apply for funding bids from Sports England and each sports club's governing body. This will ensure that a focus remains on supporting women and girls into sports and physical activity in the absence of direct funding.

6. Purpose and Scope of the review

6.1 The purpose of the review was to better understand the challenges and issues faced by women who want to participate in sports and physical activities and to explore what is available for women to participate in, including examples of good practice to promote increased participation.

6.2 The task group held evidence gathering sessions with witnesses, as below. These meetings took place online due to the covid pandemic restrictions.

- Sally Slade (Active Travel Team Leader, Leicester City Council)
- Uma attended for Kirit Thakore (Founder of BlazeFit, an online fitness, workout and dance company, Leicester)
- Amanda Howe (Managing Director of WALX Leicester East, walking group)

- Anisha Karolia (Owner of My Gym Fitness Factory, Leicester)
- Leicester City Football Club in the community (Allison Tripney)
- Leicestershire County Cricket Club (Mark Barber)
- Netball England, East Midlands (Val Kindred)
- Leicester Hockey Club (Sarah Treanor, Vice President)
- De Montfort University (Fiona Dick, Head of Sports)
- Leicester University (Matthew Weir, Director of Sports)
- Active Together Organisation, Leicestershire (John Bryne, Active Partnership Director, and Jo Spokes, Sports Development Manager)
- Councillor Piara Singh Clair, Deputy City Mayor and Executive Lead for Sports Services.
- Councillor Vi Dempster, Executive Lead for Public Health Services.
- Sports & Leisure Centres, Leicester City Council
- Victoria Ball, Andrew Beddows and Charles Hurley, Lead officers, Leicester City Council

6.3 Task group evidence gathering included:

- a) Gathering evidence from internal and external witnesses (listed in the report)
- b) Senior officers in sports and public health division providing supporting evidence and reports at the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission meetings.
- c) Conducting an online survey questionnaire via the councils consultation website and through Sports & Leisure Centres in the city, to engage the views of women in the city.
- d) Inviting wider participation in the review by promoting the survey questionnaire via council staff 'FACE' newsletter, and via the 'Elected Members' bulletin, and via HealthWatch Leicester.
- e) Desk-top research of related documents, reports and data.
- f) Inviting Summaya, local BBC radio presenter (as a role model inspiring Asian women to participate in learning to swim) to Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny commission meeting. Her story and experience informed the review.

7. TASK GROUP FINDINGS

7.1 Snapshot of activity levels for women in Leicester

- Leicester has a higher percentage of inactive women (+3.7%) and a lower percentage of active women (-5.4%) when compared nationally.
- There is a 5% gap between male and female participation, with the highest levels of inactivity amongst people from ethnic backgrounds.

The task group conducted an online survey questionnaire to engage the views of local women to inform the review, results at Appendix A. This shows:

- 142 women (out of 191 responses) said sport and physical activity is very important to leading a happy and healthy life, and 44 said it was important.
- 136 women (out of 179 responses) said they never participated in paid-for physical activities in community locations; private gyms and sports clubs.
- 119 women (out of 178) said they never participated in paid-for physical activity at Leicester City Council leisure centres.
- 140 women (out of 174 responses) said they never participated in free physical activities such as parkrun or informal sports groups.

7.2. Active Leicester operates 7 leisure centres, a golf course, and an athletics stadium. The city also has a wealth of parks and open spaces for people to be active in. The services and facilities are well placed, in the hearts of the city's communities. Most leisure centres are accessible within a 20–30-minute walk, thus reducing the barriers associated with distance and transport.

7.3. National and local documents

The task group was informed that a wide range of research and reports existed on the topic of Women's participation in Sport and Physical Activity (reference list is at the end of the report).

Key reports:

- Sport England: Go Where Women Are
- Sport England: Helping Women to Get Active
- Sport England: The Girl Can
- Active Together Partnership (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland)
- Active Leicester: Women in Sport Current Best Practice
- Active Leicester: New Strategy Development
- Leicester Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategy

7.4 Members have been provided with supporting information, research and presentations about the positive work carried out by the council, by leisure, sports and public health services to encourage women to participate in sports and physical activities in the city. The task group recognised that this work was well-documented. **Appendix C** 'Active Leicester, Women in Sport sets out the current best practice, as evidence.

7.5 **What are the key issues and barriers preventing women from participating?**

Many of the issues and barriers captured by the task group are similar to existing reports and research about women's sports.

Task group evidence identified these barriers and issues:

- Location of facilities e.g. distance to travel and lack of transport
(*In Leicester, most leisure centres are accessible within a 20–30-minute walk, thus reducing the barriers associated with distance*).
- Lack of time e.g. family, childcare, lifestyle, work and caring commitments
- Financial e.g. cost of sessions, cost of gym-wear and cost of equipment
- Accessibility e.g. women only sessions, women-led sessions and timings of sessions
- Family commitments and childcare e.g. women often prioritise family time over themselves.
- A lack of confidence in taking an initial step to join activities.
- Cultural barriers and beliefs e.g. exercise 'is not the norm' for women in some cultures.
- Lack of role models
- Women prefer to exercise with their family, friends and at a location that is close to home
- Lack of childcare provision for parents who wish to join sessions.
- Body confidence, appropriate clothing e.g. women at Cossington Street Centre in particular were anxious in terms of participating.
- Many women were said to be put off by the stigma associated with gyms, (and it had been hard to overcome that barrier when promoting gym services to women).
- It had also been stated that there were often cliques with activity classes and this could deter others from having the confidence to participate.
- Women were not always confident being led by male instructors (there was a shortage of female personal gym trainers and female swimming instructors across council-run sports and leisure centres).

7.6 Research in 2017 sought to look in depth at the motivations and barriers to participating in physical activity for young mums who live in Wycliffe and Eyres Monsell wards in the city. Evidence pointed to the following:

- Many had the desire to undertake activities as a family and it was felt that there was a shortage of such provision.
- The provision was overall not flexible enough in its offer to young families
- Parents were sometimes reluctant to leave babies in unfamiliar childcare settings.
- Parents preferred local, community-based provision closer to home, rather than provision that required more extensive travel, which was a particular issue for those without access to a vehicle.
- Classes were not always culturally appropriate
- Parents did not always feel safe undertaking classes in open parks, even with the presence of children.

- 7.7. Active Leicester have been involved in research projects over the last five years to understand barriers and issues and have taken steps to address many of these. For example, since the programme of refurbishment at local leisure centres had been completed there had been an increase in the take-up of female participants due to the changed physical environment of the buildings becoming more appealing and welcoming. There was praise for the high take-up for women-only sessions offered e.g. at the Evington and Cossington centres.

7.8 Recommendations identified by the task group:

- 1) Women need to know that they are welcome to participate by wearing clothing that is comfortable for them and culturally acceptable. *To consider better signage in facilities and raising awareness of the availability of alternative swimwear, gym-wear and cyclewear.*
- 2) There is a need to address the shortage of female gym trainers and female coaches and instructors at facilities. *To consider carrying out recruitment, training and apprenticeship programs to attract women into these positions.*
- 3) The use of role models to inspire and motivate women to participate. *To consider local and national women with sporting related achievements e.g. the Lionesses who are champion winners, and individuals like Summaya, a local radio presenter who has shared her story / podcast to learn to swim in adulthood.*

7.9 What can be done to encourage women to participate?

[‘Go Where Women Are’ says Sport England](#), and remove the barriers that prevent women participating in sport. In their research they highlight that the barriers can be categorised as either physical or emotional. There are several key actions that facility owners can undertake to remove the physical barriers. Access to sport has to be practical and fit in with the other time commitments and requirements of the female population. Going where women are means understanding their constraints, such as “*staying for children’s bedtimes, family mealtimes and accommodating work schedules.*”

7.10. Members heard evidence about ‘This Girl Can’ national campaign

<https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk> (Sport England launched in 2017). A national initiative showing 2.8 million women were inspired to exercise due to the campaign, 1.6 million started exercising and 1.2 million increased their participation.

‘The campaign has successfully persuaded nearly 4 million women across the country to take action. This research shows that many women are put off taking part in physical activity due to a fear of judgement – this might be about the way they look when they exercise, that they’re not good enough to join in or they should be spending more time on their families, studies or other priorities. This Girl Can seeks to tell the real stories of women who get active or play sport in the way that’s right for them using images that show what activity really looks like in all its sweaty, jiggly glory. We never judge and we don’t care what other people think.

7.11. Members heard that ‘The Girl Can’ campaign has helped many providers to inspire and encourage women to participate in sporting and leisure activities, for example:

- brought the initiatives directly to women instead of expecting women to travel to them. The campaign had 95 million views worldwide and had brought £66 million to the economy.
- to increase resilience, which had brought 700,000 followers on social media, with 50% of 40-60’s recognising at least one of their adverts.
- aimed to challenge and overcome cultural barriers.
- Over 13,000 partners have signed up to use the ‘toolkit’, including the council.

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Heritage Culture Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission, 01/03/2022 17:30 \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#) Task group members praised this campaign and council officers in using this good practice to encourage women’s participation in Leicester.

7.12. Recommendations identified by the task group:

- This is an excellent video produced by ‘The Girl Can’ campaign. We should use videos and real stories to inspire and encourage women in Leicester. We need to have targets in place to succeed in motivating and encouraging women to participate.
- That the Council increase publicity and raise awareness of Leisure and Sport facilities on offer across the city. Wider publicity to reach more women, via internal and external methods e.g. members bulletin, ward community meetings, internal face newsletter, council website, community centres, hospitals, G.P surgeries and health centres, face-to-face, local radio and social media.

7.13. Key evidence captured by the task group of what can be done to encourage women to participate:

- Support and mentoring to build confidence
- Creating a sense of togetherness, for example with a social element. A need for new approaches to attract families and friends' groups to participate in activities together.
- Women like to see a sense of achievement. Helping women to focus on feeling good about oneself and the sporting experience e.g. certificates of achievement, rewards and celebration are important.
- Using the word activity, not sport, to encourage women to participate
- More work was needed to be done in terms of listening and engaging with women in order to lift each of the barriers that prevent or deter participation.
- Encourage women to use open spaces available e.g. in Belgrave women do not participate in football, mostly men use the recreation sports ground.
- Lack of cricket facilities e.g. need to create a cricket friendly environment for women and need role models.
- There was sometimes a tendency for women (particularly those with children) to put themselves last, and this was a mentality that was difficult to alter. However, more work was needed in terms of engaging with this cohort.
- Body confidence was a significant barrier. The notions of embarrassment and shame needed to be removed.
- A mapping exercise of what is on offer for women within neighbourhoods and organisations e.g. communities up approach. Supporting and promoting grassroots sports and activities.
- A shortage in the supply of toilet facilities on parks often deterred women engaging in sporting and physical activity.
- A campaign to encourage more women to become sports and gym instructors should be considered.
- Supporting and promoting grassroots sports and activities

7.14. The task group heard evidence from a selection of individual organisations in the community that provide successful sports and physical activities for women in Leicester:

Evidence captured from 'BlazeFit' company, Leicester (fitness, dance, exercise and wellbeing sessions):

- Online sessions, e.g. bangra fitness, bollywood dance, body workout exercises. Now branched out doing leg, bum and tum, and various exercises etc.. We have a team of instructors who lead various sessions.
- We are a company, main customers by paid subscription (approx. £20 per month), We also offer many non-paid free sessions.
- Our online exercises are very popular especially with older women, we have expanded to offer sessions for elderly and vulnerable women, e.g. gentle exercises sitting on a chair.
- We have themed days with sessions for special occasions e.g. Navratri, Diwali and various other festivals and events in the calendar year, this keeps people interested, engaged and upbeat.

- We have expanded to offer much more now than before. Mainly targeting everyone, but mainly our customers are women. By offering online sessions women can remain in their own homes and manage family and childcare issues.
- Our live sessions are very popular, and also offer recorded sessions. The recorded sessions very useful for women to access at their convenience, and there is a high demand for these.
- We lead and host many charity events and good causes to raise funds e.g. for Alzheimers and British Heart foundation etc.. (we have a charity event coming up involving our customers to raise funds). Our customers plus their families and friends all get involved to help raise funding with charity events.

7.15. Evidence captured from a walking group organisation (A Leicester East area WALX Leicester East is a friendly, sociable walking and fitness group)

- A walking group, with café access, offers different types of walks and trails.
- We offer total body workouts, exercise and many walking activities.
- We offer yoga and mindful – but all in the context of outdoors activities combined with walking.
- Vast majority of customers are women, slightly older generation, most of them looking for social activity and to get out. Sometimes restricted by confidence and some have various health issues e.g. cardiovascular.
- A gym-style model prepaid by customers, approx. £18 per month.
- We also have a selection of online activities.
- We offer a walking festival in the summer, one coming up shortly.
- Have trained staff to help support walks. People feel confident and enjoy the exercise.
- However, we need to address issues of travel to and from these walks – as this can be a barrier (*the task group helped Amanda to link up with Sally from Transport, LCC, for advice on transport*).
- Generally, we all need more engagement with other groups of women across the city e.g. single parents, and with carers, and family carers too. Suggested that sub-groups be formed, as it is very important to reflect on this (*task group members agreed*).

7.16. Evidence captured from ‘My Gym Fitness Factory’ organisation

- Culture and religion can be one reason why women do not participate e.g. clothing for sport activities (women want to cover up in public)
- Another barrier is that many Asian women have not grown up with sports and exercise – it’s a generational thing / not the norm for some women.
- We cater for women for private sessions and try to make women comfortable – we tailor the sessions. We hand hold and build confidence and take them through step by step and this has been positive as for most of them it breaks down barriers and they feel comfortable.
- Online sessions are good, especially for women who are unable to get out much.
- Face to face sessions are better for many women as some women look forward to leaving the house and getting out, these sessions are the highlight of their week, good for their mental health and wellbeing and something to

look forward to, e.g. for the Bollywood classes we have about 40 women who attend regularly.

- We promote on social media all the time – which is very popular.
- We have planned an International Women’s Day event and offering free taster sessions combined with women health talks (including mental health issues) with a Q and A session. This will also be available to access online.
- What is needed is more education and more understanding about the physical links to exercise and mental health – we need to educate women and promote how it can help them. (Task group members agreed)
- The leaders of any activity needs to be reflected in the people taking part in activities, and vice-versa, role models are important.

7.17 Task group members comments:

- That women in the Belgrave area are not keen to cycle – many women either go to the Neighbourhood Centre or use outside gyms or walking for exercise. *(however, Active Travel officers informed members of plans for new wellbeing projects in Belgrave for women to keep active – this is a positive step)*
- Many people have missed the interaction and social element during the pandemic.
- That we need more fitness leaders and fitness instructors to do outreach work e.g. with community centres, places of worship etc. and possibly offer home visits.

7.18. Members identified these recommendations:

- We need more fitness instructors and activities leaders and mentors to do outreach work e.g. with community centres, places of worship, health centre hubs and public places.
Sport England research shows that making sport the ‘norm’ for women relies on local women of all ages, sizes and faiths, becoming active, celebrating it and encouraging other to join in. Therefore by taking an activity into the community, both physically through outdoor sessions or venues in new and unexpected places can attract new circles of women.
- A need for new approaches to attract families and friends groups to participate in activities together.
The Health & Wellbeing Survey in Leicester shows that there is a lack of suitable, structured activity provision for families to exercise together, whilst parks and open spaces are available for informal family friendly activity our leisure centres and sports clubs often offer adult and child physical activity sessions separately..

- Task group members felt that they had a good insight and heard valuable evidence from these organisations. These organisations were all very committed to helping women in the city and welcomed being involved in providing evidence. Their good practice, approaches and ideas should be taken into account by sports and physical activities providers in the city.
- Good practice initiative - holding an open day event inviting members and non-members, offering a variety of taster fitness sessions and combining this with a health promotion session e.g. mental health and wellbeing talk with Q&A. (*The fitness factory gym in Leicester said events like this are successful and attracts many local women – plus existing members bring along families and friends*).
- Generally, we also need more engagement with other groups of women across the city e.g. single parents, and with carers, women with disabilities and family carers too. *Suggested that sub-groups be formed, as it is very important to reflect on this.*
- Task group heard valuable evidence from a handful of organisations, however many more organisations (offering paid for activities and non-paid free activities) exist across the city e.g. community-based, grassroots sports and informal groups. *Suggest making use of existing groups and networks (community-up approach), to identify what activities are available within neighbourhoods as this would provide more choices for women to participate; more scope for joint-up working; scope for learning from each other and scope for accessing funding sources.*

7.19. The task group heard evidence from Transport Strategy, Leicester City Council (relies on external funding for schemes)

7.20. Active Travel Neighbourhoods Team mainly delivers behavioural change initiatives to encourage sustainable travel in **businesses, schools** and the **community**. Recently the team has also been delivering the **Safer Streets Healthier Neighbourhoods programme**.

Examples of work carried out:

- We lead on activities for active travel in the city. We provide advice and services (dipping in and out) with working with all council departments, including sports and leisure centres, and public health services to advise on travel plans and transport needs.
- We have an active travel neighbourhoods team who lead on active travel plans, walking and cycling schemes and initiatives in the city to encourage people, including women to exercise and enjoy the outdoors.

- Women in the city are involved in many different daily journeys in their local areas e.g. school runs, going to local shops, so it's a case of changing mind-sets to walk or cycle for better health.
- We are trying to make cycling more appealing in terms of clothing e.g. cyclewear that is more trendy, comfortable and appropriate for all women (*there is more than lycrawear out there!*).
- We find that girls in their younger and teenage years tend to cycle and play sports more, but this reduces as they move into adulthood.
(*Schools Sports Partnership work identifies women and girls as a priority area, particularly secondary age girls who are more likely to drop out of formal sporting opportunities*).
- We do a lot of work with schools in the city to promote cycling and walking.
- We work with businesses, universities, hospitals etc... in the city to promote active travel plans for employees, this includes women employees.
- We do lots of community engagement work which benefits women in the city, e.g. cycle training programme based as Cossington Recreation Ground; Walk Leicester Forum – meeting of all organisations within Leicester that deliver some sort of walking activity.
- Community Cycling Project – E-bike initiative to encourage South Asian communities in Leicester to think about keeping active and moving in different ways. This initiative was really popular, and we identified that women over the age of 55 years in particular wanted more cycle training to increase their confidence in using a cycle again.
- New projects planned – weekly wellbeing walks in Belgrave. A good walk can do wonders for your mental wellbeing. Also to encourage more women to consider taking up cycling to increase their fitness and keep active in a green way.
- British Cycling has launched its first ever Women and Girls' Club Toolkit: this contains advice, tips and best-practice examples to make cycling appealing to females (*publicised on Active Together website*).

7.21. The task group survey question asked women '*how often do you participate in recreational, non-paid physical activity per week re: Cycle to work or school?*'
Out of 178 responses:

- 123 women said never,
- 39 said 1-3 times a week, and
- 9 said 4-6 times a week.

7.22. **Good practice example:** A focus on having fun and building confidence has been effective in breaking down the barriers to cycling in hard-to-reach communities in Hackney. Family cycle clubs were set up so the whole family could learn to cycle (using pool bikes) in a relaxed informal environment. All who completed the course received a free (recycled) bike and lock.

7.23. Recommendations identified by the task group:

- A need to educate and motivate women to include exercise as part of their daily lives would be a more realistic way to target more women to increase activity. *Women in the city are involved in many different daily journeys in*

their local areas e.g. school runs, walking to local shops, so it's a case of changing mind-sets to walk or cycle for better health.

- To encourage and support businesses, universities, hospitals etc... in the city to promote active travel plans for employees, and to also promote sports and physical exercise activities available in the city to benefit health and wellbeing for women employees.

- We need to use local people as ambassadors and community champions to support and empower women to be the best possible version of themselves. *Active Together have community champions. For example: Zee from Zfit is one of their best examples who runs her own ladies only Zumba, Hiit and Boxercise classes at venues across Leicester all of which aim to empower women.*

7.24. The task group were aware of the steps taken by sports and public health services to address many barriers identified by women and accept that even if provision is available for people to be active, then that doesn't always translate to people becoming active. Often people's motivations and readiness to change can stop people from using sports and leisure facilities / services. The task group recognised that the service is progressing with different approaches to marketing as a positive step in the right direction.

Active Leicester has learnt a lot over recent years on how to balance a universal sport and physical activity offer, with a targeted approach to its services. It is a tricky balance to achieve. However, the scope and spread of dedicated female sessions, in centres with most demand, have gone part of the way to meet this need. Other targeted approaches include:

- More work was being undertaken to try and encourage women to participate at an earlier age, with female entry ages being low in comparison to male.
- Women-only sessions are often offered due to the cultural diversity of Leicester, and these are particularly well-attended.
- The centres also provide opportunities for third parties to undertake activity – such as swimming and badminton clubs.
- An online programme of activity was launched during the pandemic, but this ceased due to generally low uptake.

7.25. Public Health services is fully aware of the barriers that many residents face to being physically active and as a result have developed more focus on encouraging people to be active through increased daily activity such as active travel, walking, cycling, scooting to school or work for example. Activity in parks and open spaces such as play with children and use of outdoor gyms.

7.26. Partnership working with Leicester City Council was praised by sports clubs, partners and universities who contributed to this review.

Evidence captured by the task group:

- Partnership working initiative, the student women's basketball team at De Montfort University currently benefit from specialist coaching from the Leicester Riders Club and also play their home British University and College Sports (BUCS) league and cup fixtures at Leicester Riders impressive 2,500-sear Leicester Sports Arena.
- Leicester Hockey Club - Students are benefiting in Leicester with experiences in everything from umpiring to media work and administration to help their CVs stand out and prepare them for the world of work.
- The University of Leicester and Sporting Equals have signed a strategic partnership to promote ethnic diversity (includes BME women) across sport and physical activity to address the lack of diversity amongst sports leaders, sport governing bodies, and leadership roles.
- The Universities said further work is required to train up women coaches, women mentors, and women leaders within sports.
- The Universities reported that 'freshers week' is an excellent time to promote and provide information to female students relating to sports and physical activities and healthy living.
- **Leicester Tigers with their Project Rugby Asian** sports foundations project to actively support Asian women into Rugby.
- **LCitC Active Women Project** – 5-year project focussing on women between the ages of 18-49 in the Wycliffe ward area. The project is aimed at getting women from the local community engaged in some form of physical activity. The project has currently engaged with 1305 participants and offers 13 sessions per week.
- **Netball East Midlands: Leicester** – Women and Girls receive coaching on game play (part of Grassroots Netball initiative). The

Netball Club identified that they need to be involved in partnership working in the city on par with other clubs e.g. Leicester City Football Club and the Tigers Rugby Club

- **Leicester Tigers Foundation Women and Girls Programme** – project aimed at offering women’s only rugby sessions in the city and utilising the recent success of the Red Roses to inspire women to get involved. Leicester Tigers have also recently set up a women’s team to again create role models from our community to inspire other women to become active.

- **Leicestershire CCC Community Women and Girls** – A dedicated women and girls’ officer is in post to develop opportunities for women to get active and involved within cricket from a young age. This includes the women’s cricket league which is played in the summer.
(The cricket club identified that there is a lack of cricket facilities e.g.need to create a cricket friendly environment for women and need role models).

- **National Governing Bodies of sport (NGB’s)**- The majority of NGB’s follows Sport England’s ten-year strategy of ‘Uniting the Movement’. This strategy aims to transforms communities and lives through the power of sport and physical activity. Removing barriers to participation are a key theme of their strategy. An example of this in practice is through the Leicestershire and Rutland County FA, who have KPIs for the number of female players (4,982 players by June 2024) playing the game across Leicestershire and Rutland. Players can come from affiliated team or recreational groups. Female players are underrepresented across the county and city when compared to census data, so the County FA are working to give opportunities to everyone across Leicester. These ambitions will be replicated across the wealth of NGB’s operating in the city. Active Leicester supports their work.

- **PlayZone Initiative** - The PlayZone programme is currently being developed and finalised, but this is a programme with the Football Foundation that will see ballcourts across the city developed into state of the art, attractive facilities aimed at certain priority groups, one of which is Women and Girls. The courts will be bookable and will have several programmed sessions each week purely for women and girls. The courts aim to be accessible, attractive, well-lit and safe spaces to encourage women to attend and participate.

- **Wesley Hall Community Centre** – Wesley Hall offers several opportunities for women within their local community. They are seen as a trusted provider within their community and thus attract and encourage women to attend their sessions. Some examples of the opportunities offered are Women aerobic and weight management, sewing classes, yoga classes, slimming world, and Zumba classes.
- **Active Together Partnership** – Active Together link into some of the national campaigns for example ‘This Girl Can’ and at times offer similar initiatives. An example is in March whereby they offer ‘Lets get Moving This March’ which is a programme that allows women to have a go at multiple activities from their own homes, for example Zumba, Bhangra, Nordic Walking. Active Together also have community champions. Zee from Zfit is one of their best examples who runs her own ladies only Zumba, Hiit and Boxercise classes at venues across Leicester all of which aim to empower women to be the best possible version of themselves www.active-together.org

7.27. Recommendations identified by the task group:

- Need to reach out to new students in the city e.g. universities, to promote sports and physical activities and healthy living. *‘Freshers week’ for students is an excellent time to connect with female students to promote what is available in the city.*
- More work needs to be done to train and attract more female coaches, mentors and leaders in sports.
- Leicestershire County Cricket Club identified that there is a lack of cricket facilities. *For example need to create a cricket friendly environment for women and need role models.*
- Women need to be involved in sports governing bodies and community leaders, to influence decision-making. Women remain less represented in leadership and coaching roles, especially BME women. *Women remain less represented in leadership and coaching roles and face continued challenges in terms of equal pay and coverage in the media.*
- Members praised Active Leicester, Active Together and partners as they have the knowledge and expertise to support and develop new initiatives. *Many smaller community-based organisations are well placed in the hub*

of residential areas and more accessible for women but some lack the expertise and resources to develop new initiatives and access funding.

7.28. The different methods used to offer sports and physical activities, e.g. in-person, digital online

7.29. Benefits of Social Media platform – It's highly recommended that all sports and physical activities providers has a presence on social media platforms. Doing so, will widen your reach to a range of demographics. Social media can be used to highlight any trials you may be offering. Moreover, with social media's ability to host visual content – it can be used to showcase your staff, venue and facilities. It also provides greater exposure for any offers, discounts or deal you may be offering. Social media is also a great medium for prospective members to contact you with any query's or provide valuable feedback to improve your sports club/venue. Not to mention, visitors or permanent members can use social media to post reviews of the club and or classes and facilities, helping to attractive new customers.

7.30. Task group evidence shows:

a) It was felt that word of mouth is ultimately the most powerful method of communication.

'Active Leicester service finds that word of mouth is a more powerful form of promotion. Therefore, we aim to deliver the right product with excellent customer service to ensure women that do use our services are telling their friends and family'.

b) The service carefully considers the appropriate use of imagery as part of marketing campaigns.

c) Users from certain centres (such as Spence Street) did not find out about opportunities online – in comparison with users at other centres. In these case, greater outreach is required. (recommendation)

d) Most residents would try a fitness tracker or Health App if recommended by a health professional (*recommendation – promote women to use fitness tracker or health app*).

e) It was felt that the service could do more to promote mental health benefits from participating in sport as part of marketing strategies (recommendation)

7.40. According to Sports England research: *Access to 24/7 online booking enables sports facilities to be available at all times. When the [booking process has been simplified and made accessible](https://pitchbooking.com/blog/increasing-female-women-activity-levels-sports-facilities), sports facilities must look to reduce and remove the practical barriers that prevent women's participation in sport. Sports facilities can encourage women to become more active. <https://pitchbooking.com/blog/increasing-female-women-activity-levels-sports-facilities>. Pitch booking can help make this a reality by streamlining the booking process and bringing online visibility to facilities across the country.*

7.41. Social media campaign to drive higher female attendance at organised activities by ‘This Girl Can’ Sport England – good practice example: this is a behaviour change campaign in response to the long-standing sport and physical activity gender gap in England. One key means of mobilising more women to organised activity is to refine the marketing drive and improve the “on the ground” experience. The campaign, which combines social media, a TV commercial and poster advertising, is the brainchild of Sport England, and aims to ‘inspire women to wiggle, jiggle, move and prove that judgement is a barrier that can be overcome’. [This Girl Can](#)

7.42. Good practice example of Live Podcasting - posts to follow Summayas experience and journey re: Asian women learning to swim. Summaya Mughal, a Nottingham born, Leicester Radio presenter and journalist, has too echoed these statements in her latest documentary ‘Brown Gal can’t Swim.’

Summaya’s 6-part, podcast in which she confronts the cultural barriers that many Pakistani Muslim women face when wanting to swim- such as disagreements with family members, risking criticism from their community over breaking social conventions, and worrying about what to wear in the pool that will fall in line with Islamic expectations around female modesty.

The podcast is an intimate view of Summaya’s journey, where she aims to break down misconceptions about swimming, and encourage members of our South Asian communities to take the plunge and learn to swim. She even gets her dad involved - something she would never have imagined when she was younger.



The link to view the podcast can be found here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0ctzgtf>

‘I’ve spent over 20 years embarrassed about not having a skill it feels like kids have, especially when it’s something that could save your life. I’m terrified of the deep-end - so we’ll start there.’

7.43. Good practice example: Poster and Video ‘Leicester Swim’ marketing campaign to increase casual swimming:

Leicester City council marketing for adult swimming lessons is mainly through word of mouth with some use of social media. In 2017, the service was awarded a funding grant from Sport England to explore behaviour change marketing techniques in increase casual swimming. The service trialled behaviour change marketing techniques to motivate people to use the service. For example, rather than selling the gym membership we would promote the benefits of being active and how being fitter and healthier can help them play with their children, feel healthier. These techniques have been adopted and now feature in our annual marketing programme.

➤ **Benefits of swimming for female adults: promotion video**

<https://vimeo.com/290929937/603a1614e9>

The swim pilot also taught the service that providing lessons is just part of the journey of adults learning to swim. Similar to the Swim England survey and Summaya's experience.

7.44 BME women swimming good practice example:

New group 'Afro Aquatics', Black women in Leicester getting into Swimming: A competitive swimmer and instructor who recognised the barriers faced by ethnic minorities when it comes to learning how to swim is making waves in Leicester by getting the the **black community** into swimming. As someone who has devoted a majority of her life to the sport, Katrice Rodrigues identified the changes that needed to be made in the black community, and **Afro Aquatics** was born.

The Aquatics group only launched in 2022, but already has had a massive impact. They are currently in their second term meeting weekly at Winstanley School in **Braunstone**. Founder Katrice used her expertise to get the group off the ground. [Swim instructor creates group empowering Black communities to swim - Leicestershire Live \(leicestermercury.co.uk\)](https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester/aquatics-creates-group-empowering-black-communities-to-swim-1711111)

7.45. Members of the commission heard evidence relating to Swim England data and Swim Leicester to better understand participation of women from BME backgrounds.

7.46. Swim England launched a campaign called 'England Swims' specifically aimed at finding out barriers that prevent ethnically diverse communities from accessing water-based activities. The survey shows: that there is a clear disparity of swimming abilities when analysing by ethnicity. 14% of White Communities cannot swim 25m, in comparison to 49% of ethnically diverse communities. This disparity is further exemplified by gender differences. Females of all ethnicities are less likely to be able to swim 25m. Muslim women were most likely to view swimming as inaccessible. Modesty, and feeling comfortable in swimwear and feeling comfortable with the changing arrangement were also important points raised.

7.47. Although in Leicester 71% of adults' swimming lessons are female (approx. 170), and 72% are from ethnically diverse communities (approx.172 out of 240). The highest number of women participates are at the Evington, Spence Street and Cossington centres.

7.48. Good practice example for free /low-cost activity session: *The Let's Get Moving for Less* page includes a range of ideas on how to be active, as well a whole host of free/low-cost activity sessions taking place within Leicester and Leicestershire, enabling you to still feel the benefits of being active throughout this difficult time. Navigating your way through the page is easy. Simply click on your district name at

the top and view all the different opportunities that your locality has to offer. To view all the activities in one place, visit the [Let's Get Moving for Less directory](#).

#LetsGetMovingLLR for less! More information: <https://www.active-together.org/letsgetmovingforless>

7.49. Since the pandemic began (with lock down restrictions) many more sports and activity providers diverted to offering more online sessions e.g. dance, exercise, yoga, body fitness etc. There has been a huge increase of women participating in activities with this method preferred as it enables them to participate within their own homes and allows them to manage family, childcare, work and other commitments more easily.

7.50. Task group survey question: asked women if they participate in non-paid activity re: Home workout (online or on your own)

Responses: those that do home workout online = 47 (out of 169), in comparison to those that do home workout on their own = 135 (out of 179)

7.51. **'Blazefit' fitness, Leicester** – example of providing live streamed workouts, dance and wellness classes, which has become more popular during the pandemic. We deliver enjoyable and dynamic online classes right in your home. Increase in the number of women subscribing to join streamed sessions during the pandemic. We use social media to promote our classes. We offer taster sessions and provide sessions for older women e.g. gentle exercise.

7.52. **Zfit local fitness, Leicester** – Run by Zee who is currently an Active Together Champion and community ambassador provides Zumba toning, HIIT and boxercise classes throughout venues in Leicester. Ladies only sessions. Fun, friendly party atmosphere for all abilities aged 16-86. Aiming to empower women to be the best version of themselves through fitness.

7.53. *Both of these groups support and promotes Active Together LLR activities and events through their website, which is very positive, as the activities and opportunities offered by Active Together LLR reach a wider audience.*

7.54. **Good practice example for BME participation: The trail blazer: the rewards of setting up a walking group** - Wanting to stride out into the countryside with like-minded people, our writer established Black Girls Hike in 2019 and has never looked back.

"I became a walking group leader by chance. In 2019, I was on a train going through the Peak District, and I watched all these hikers getting on and off. I wanted to do something new for my wellbeing, so I set up a [Black Girls Hike instagram](#) page a few days later. I didn't want to go by myself and I wanted to feel safe and supported so I set up a group for black women"



<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/nov/01/black-girls-hike-rewards-of-walking-group>

7.55. **Walk Together initiative** - During the pandemic, outdoor walks in local areas and local parks have become more popular as a no-cost exercise activity. Walk Together is a physical activity initiative offering a weekly programme of free, sociable and accessible group walks within Leicestershire led by trained volunteer walk leaders. Walk Together is coordinated, developed and delivered via a partnership of

Leicestershire Local Authorities and Active Together. <https://www.active-together.org/sports/walking>

7.56. Task group question asked women: do you participate in non-paid free organised activities re: Parkrun, informal sports groups etc. Responses show that out of 174 women, 140 said they never participate, and 33 said they do participate 1-3 times a week.

7.57. Good practice example of Face-to-Face engagement with women: Active Leicester carried out this work with young mums in Wycliffe and Eyres Monsell wards in Leicester

Good practice examples for Active Leicester
re: engaging with young mums in Wycliffe and Eyres Monsell wards

Example interventions

Work with the mums attending an established 'stay and play' sessions in the community of interest. Find out what sorts of physical activities they might like to do during the session with their children.
Options could include:

- Training for staff so they can deliver short 10 minute bursts of activity specifically targeted at encouraging the mums to get involved.
- Providing an instructor to join the stay and play session on a regular basis to lead activity sessions for the mums and their children.
- Providing activity cards and resources for activities which mums and children can do together.

Hosting a family fun day in the local park or green space:

- Work with local families to decided what this looks like, e.g. the location, date, time and activities to run.
- Run a variety of sport and physical activities which are: short, instructor-led, of low / medium intensity and in which young mums are activity encouraged to participate in with their children. The activities may even build in intensity from session-to-session.
- Work with other community and health providers to provide advice and information on parenting, health and fitness in to these sessions.

By working with the young mums to develop the activity session, the sessions are more likely to be strong in all the intervention elements.

56



While mums wanted activities they could do with their children, one of their main motivators for participating in different activities was the chance to socialise with friends and meet other young mums.

That's the biggest thing, and I like to meet, like, the mums that I've made friends with. That's the only time I would see them because I come to the mamas, baby

thing sometimes, but it's more, like, getting them up, because otherwise I wouldn't get up because I'm pretty much a homebody. – Wycliffe participant

Practitioners also highlighted the important role that activities can play in building social networks for young mums.

7.58. Communicating the strong links of health and wellbeing to encourage more women to participate

7.59. The nhs.uk website communicates the benefits of exercise with this powerful message that does draw people in and think more seriously about their health:

Step right up! It's the miracle cure we've all been waiting for. It can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer and low your risk of early death by up to 30%. It's free and easy to take, has an immediate effect and you don't need a GP to get some. ***Its name? Exercise.***

The Department of Health and Social Care website states that ***inactivity is a "silent killer"***.

The NHS website offers tips and advice for low intensity exercises that can be done at home:

- **Get moving around the home** – advice on ways you can be active without leaving the house e.g. *chair exercises, using the stairs, using tins of beans as weights, dancing to the radio in the kitchen while the pasta is cooking.*

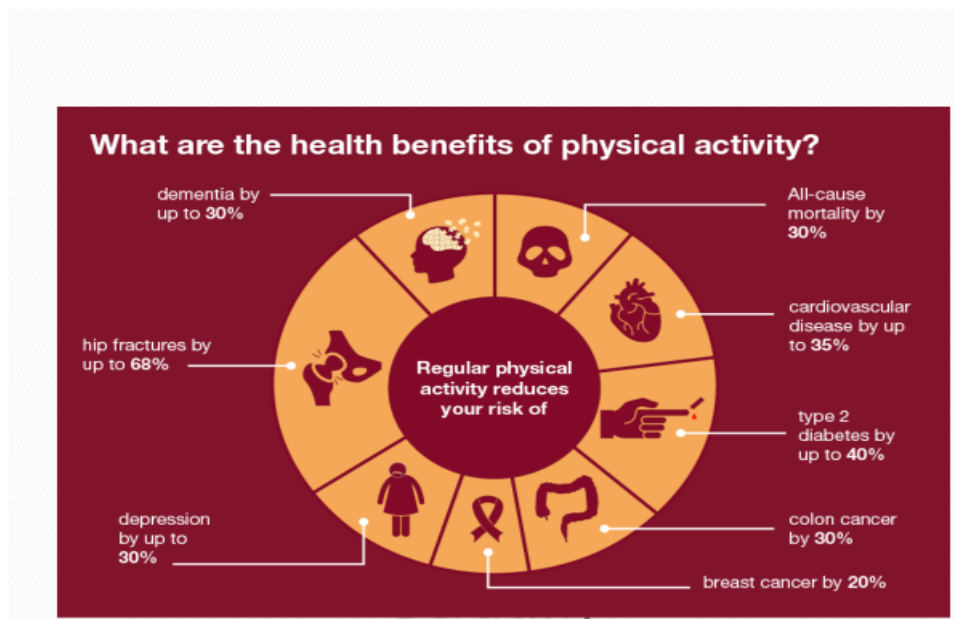
7.60. The NHS website promotes and gives advice on many different ways to keeping active, increasingly like many organisations promoting keeping active using online videos, health apps, online training instructors and classes.

- **'Couch to Fitness – Get Fit For Free'**, promoted as a home-based activity – a free and flexible at-home online exercise plan for beginners. This is a partnership initiative with locals councils and local parks.

7.61. Being active provides numerous physical benefits. Regular exercise can help maintain healthy bone and muscle mass. Exercise also helps people maintain a healthy weight. Being active also has massive mental health and wellbeing benefits, especially when done outdoors, people who are active have a 30%

Lower risk of developing depression.

7.62. What are the health benefits of physical activity? – Diagram to show this



- 1) Many women in midlife are missing out on the social psychological and physical health benefits of being active.
- 2) 33% of women aged 41 to 60 are not getting the recommended amount of exercise, e.g. can experience health issues, mood swings, anxiety, depression, poor sleep, embarrassment etc..
- 3) The report on ‘Inspiring women to be active during midlife and menopause’, by Women in Sport, recommends 5 principles for inactive women, especially those who have fallen out of exercise: 1. endless possibilities, 2. judgement-free zone, 3. support network, 4. expand the image of what sport means, 5. make it relevant.

7.63. ‘Fit for the Future: The Health Value of Wellbeing and Leisure Services’ – good practice example from Leicestershire and Rutland working in partnership

Re: Overview of Publicly Funded Community Engagement Activities

7.64. Over time, publicly funded leisure services have continued to extend their role in relation to general wellbeing and not just fitness. This has involved diversifying their responsibility within the community and being at the forefront of driving community engagement. The opportunities are manifold and largely reflect expressed local community needs which includes linking up with or leading new community initiatives as part of innovative partnerships with Public Health, CCGs, and Active Partnership with the shared goal of levelling up social inequalities that exists across various regions. Beyond providing access to physical activity infrastructure such as gyms and swimming pools, publicly funded leisure services, working collaboratively with system partners has a far-reaching impact in driving community engagement with a unique advantage of influencing the wider determinants of health. The examples below highlight some community engagement activities

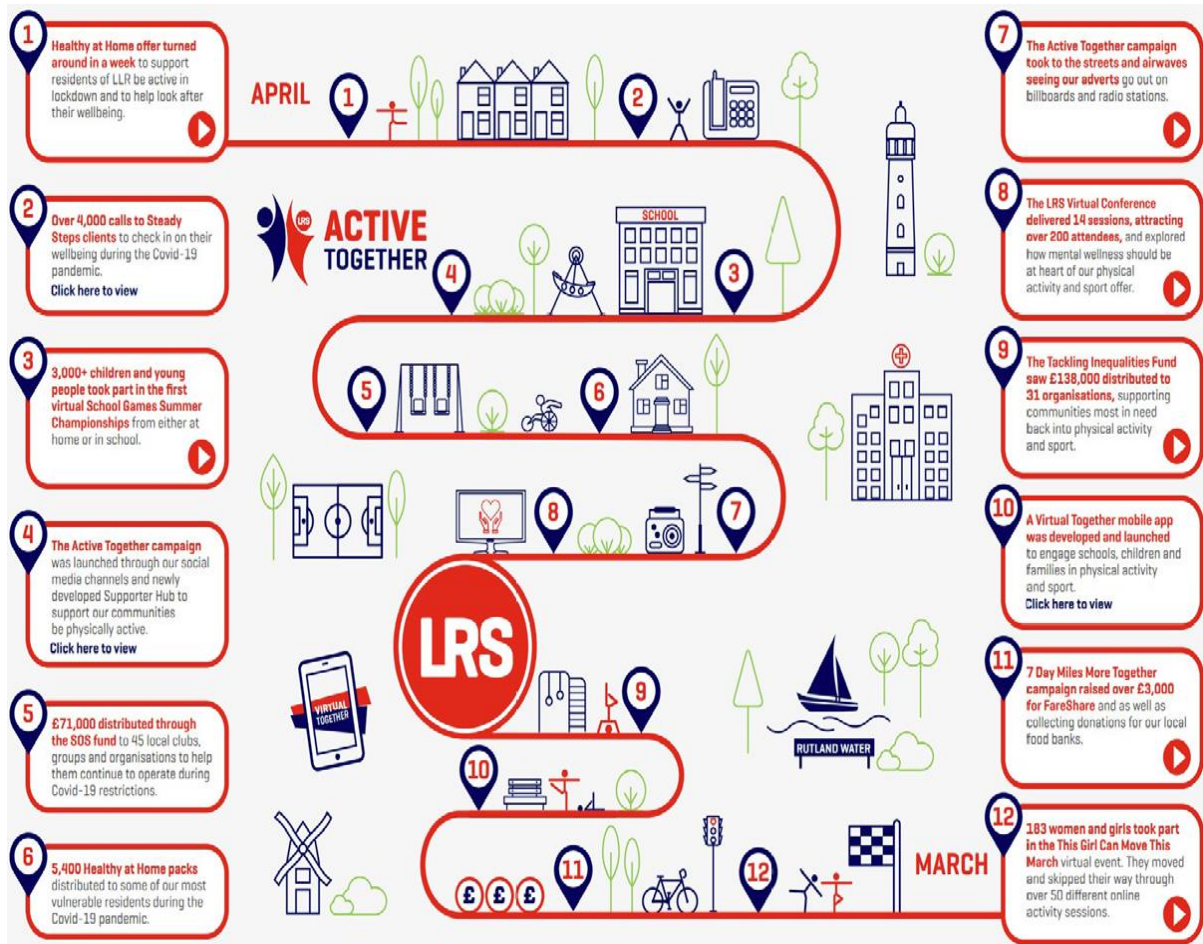


fit-for-the-future-th
e-health-value-of-w

7.65. The Leicestershire and Rutland⁹ Annual Review 2020/21 on physical activity and sport shows the impact of local authorities working cohesively and collectively with key partners to stimulate innovation and local delivery across its region for a twelve-month period. Community engagement included activities targeted at young people (i.e., virtual school sport and physical activity), activities for women and girls (i.e., ‘Move this March’) with its own dedicated hashtag - #Thisgirlcan – with a dedicated Facebook group providing encouragement and support. There was also the launch of the LRS Active Together campaign to raise awareness of physical activity.

7.66.

Diagram showing 12 months of impact across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland



The infographic above provides a comprehensive picture and highlights key achievements that the local authority working with system partners has helped shape and deliver (see diagram above)

7.77. Public health services provide support and funding to projects in the city to encourage women and girls to participate, some examples:

- a) Leicester City in the Community ran a premier league girls football programme from 2017 that supported over 280 girls to play football.

- b) Public health provides the local schools sports partnership now known as Inspire Together with enhanced funding to ensure a more holistic offer of health, wellbeing and sports is offered to schools in the city. Part of the funding arrangements identifies women and girls as a priority area, particularly secondary age girls who are more likely to drop out of formal sporting opportunities.
- c) Commissioned **‘Beat the Street’ in 2021, a city-wide game aimed to encourage physical activity amongst families.** The game gave points for distances walked and primary engagement was via primary schools. The children were motivated to gain points for their school to help them win prizes, this results in many children walking, cycling and scooting with their family both to and from school and also in the evenings and weekends. **Over 40,000 people played the 6-week game and saw 68% of inactive adults become active with a 10% increase in children active daily. 54% of participants were female.**

Targeted programmes (Older age, Ethnicity etc)

- d) Whilst Public health do not directly commission or deliver targeted physical activity we do support partners to deliver targeted projects such as Leicester Tigers with their Project Rugby Asian sports foundations project to actively support Asian women into rugby. We did this by supporting the club to directly target health professionals PE/School Sport & PA. Inspire Together also developed a mini-whispa concept to KS2 girls to provide specific provision of non-traditional activities to encourage girls to participate in PE/School Sport and the wider benefits this brings – leadership, employability, develop self-esteem = lifelong participation.

7.78. Public Health services is fully aware of the barriers that many residents face in being physically active and as a result has developed more focus on encouraging people to be active through increased daily activity such as active travel, walking, cycling, scooting to school or work for example.

Previous research in Leicester City ‘Physical Activity and Sports Insight: Young Mums’ states: *One group of women in Wycliffe had recently participated in a health education class hosted by their local community centre. They stated they were now more conscious about trying to walk quickly to raise their breathing rate as this was important for their health. However, it was difficult to always walk quickly if they had a child with them.*

7.79. Recommendations identified by the task group:

- 1) What is needed across the city (from all sectors) is powerful messaging, education and making it real to connect with women about the health

benefits to physical activities and sports. Members felt that we could do more to promote mental health benefits from participating in exercise as part of marketing strategies.

- 2) Most resident would try a fitness tracker or health app if recommended by a health professional. Maybe this can be piloted for women who are interested.

7.80. Activity in parks and open spaces such as play with children and use of outdoor gyms. Gardening has become more prominent as a way of increasing physical activity and more importantly post covid as a way of reducing social isolation and improving mental health.

7.81. By encouraging daily activity that can be incorporated into daily lives is more achievable and sustainable than encouraging structured sport or exercise. Increases in daily activity can often be the gateway into someone participating in formal sport and exercise.

7.82. LOOKING FORWARD: What else can be done in Leicester to increase women's participation that is not currently offered?

'Change the offer to suit women - don't expect women to change to fit sport and exercise' (Sport England).

- a) Active Together Leicestershire working on expanding women's sports area and training more women's coaches and referees.
- b) Supporting women for behaviour change, upskilling and empowering to enable togetherness as this will then help to enable their children.
- c) We all come together in Leicester for sports and partnership working, but 'netball' should be included too.
- d) A facilitator (not a coach) of sports and activities needs to better understand what individuals need and help them to participate.
- e) Women need to be involved in sports governing bodies, and community leaders, to influence decision-making. Women remain less represented in leadership and coaching roles and face continued challenges in terms of equal pay and coverage in media.

- f) Gaps exist around community champions, ambassadors and mentors
- g) Videos and real stories are powerful to empower and influence women. Inspiring women with videos and real stories they can relate to can help to encourage participation.
- h) Increasing use of women role models and also sports women makes it more real, inspiring and interesting and women can relate to this in a positive way.

Good practice example:

*A mural of England women's rugby star, Emily Scarratt MBE, has been painted in Leicester to celebrate her achievements and her role in establishing the England Rugby women's team. **Emily, who was born and raised in Leicester, has gone on to be England's record point scorer and is currently Vice-Captain of the national team; she was awarded an MBE in 2021 for her service to the Rugby union.***

Emily was supported by Active Together's GO GOLD Funding Programme (now Team Leicestershire Talent), for a number of years and has previously expressed her thanks saying "I was extremely fortunate to have been helped during my development through the GO GOLD Funding Programme. It provided valuable funds that enabled me to use the best training facilities and equipment to continue to push on and improve".

- i) How you engage with women is key. Invite women for taster sessions and let them experience the activity. Create an environment where women feel comfortable, safe, valued and involved.
- j) For some women it is about getting away from family and into an activity (escapism). So the activity needs to be enjoyable. Create new ways that focus on health fitness and fun. Create new ways to educate, develop skills and progress women.
- k) For some women it's about socialness and togetherness, so come to an activity to enjoy the experience, for example previous research in Leicester City found:

While mums wanted activities they could do with their children, one of their main motivators for participating in different activities was the chance to socialise with friends and meet other young mums. "That's the biggest thing, and I like to meet, like, the mums that I've made friends with. That's the only time I would see them because I come to the mamas, baby thing sometimes" - participant from Wycliffe ward, Leicester City.

(Practitioners also highlighted the important role that activities can play in building social networks for young mums).

Togetherness can make fitness and activities more attractive and for some women there is also greater safety in numbers. Socialising with friends is rewarding and bonding becomes a strong external motivator.

- Engagement with the local environment we are encouraging people to use our parks, open spaces, leisure centres and waterways to support their mental health and wellbeing, by promoting outdoor gyms and encouraging walking and cycling.
- Increasing the number of residents taking part in physical activity, through initiatives like Active Leicester and by working in partnership with organisations and communities, particularly those who are currently inactive.
- Supporting healthy ageing e.g. support for informal carers to improve their own physical and mental health and wellbeing by using cultural and community resources; and encourage older people to access leisure and cultural spaces in their local communities to overcome social isolation and improve mental and physical health.

7.83. A new five-year strategy is being developed to tackle the high levels of inactivity in the city. The strategy, called ‘Turning the Tide on Inactivity’ is due to launch in the New Year and will be a step change from previous strategies, as it will focus on the inactive. Women and Girls feature, as a priority group, as we know they participate less than their male counterparts in the city. We hope that the strategy will shine a light on the priority groups and align organisations work themes and resources to where it is most needed.

7.84. Active Leicester will also be piloting an approach in one of its centres to become a health and wellbeing hub. We know that just 26% of city residents utilise a local leisure centre. Therefore, there is far more that the service needs to do to encourage a wider audience to use the service. The learning from this pilot we hope to rollout across the service.

The pilot will focus on the following objectives:

1. Increase physical activity rates and reduce inactivity rates, in and around the pilot location. Location defined as a 20-minute walk to the centre.
2. Better skilled and empathetic workforce, to support behaviour change for inactive residents.
3. Improved reach, systems, processes, and programmes that support a customer’s journey to being active.
4. Improve collaboration with internal and external partners.

8. Women in Sport Review – Supporting Research

Active Lives Adult Survey 2020 – 2021 PowerPoint Presentation (sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

[Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2020 – 2021 PowerPoint Presentation \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

[This Girl Can Campaign Summary Campaign-Summary.pdf \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

[Go Where Women Are Insight PowerPoint Presentation \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

[PowerPoint Presentation \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com) – Barriers

[PowerPoint Presentation \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com) - Motivations

[LLEP Area Profile LLEP-Area-Profile-Leicester.pdf](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

[Active Together Physical Activity and Wellbeing Resident Survey 2021: Least Active Summary Report Physical Activity and Wellbeing Resident Survey 2021: Least Active Summary Report | Active Together \(active-together.org\)](https://active-together.org)

[Women's Sporting Journeys: How to keep women engaged in sport throughout their lives Women's Sporting Journeys: How to keep women engaged in sport throughout their lives – London Sport Insight Portal](https://london.sportinsightportal.com) – Will need to be downloaded

[Teenage Girls in Lockdown Infographic WIS TDA33909 Infographic Teenagers-in-Lockdown-003 \(womeninsport.org\)](https://womeninsport.org)

[Additional Adjustable Online Data Active Lives | Results \(sportengland.org\)](https://sportengland.org)

[Physical Activity - Data - PHE](https://phe.gov.uk)

[Area reports | Sport England](https://sportengland.org)

9. Appendices:

App A.: Task Group Survey responses

App B: Active Leicester: Women in Sport Current Best Practice

App C: Active Leicester: Local Context and Future Vision

10. Contacts

Councillor Elaine Halford,

Chair of the task group

Email: Leicester City Council

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/>

Anita Patel, Scrutiny Policy Officer

Email: Anita.Patel@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council

scrutiny scrutiny@leicester.gov.uk

11. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
Rohit Rughani, Principal Accountant

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from these recommendations, but legal advice should be sought if future decisions are to be taken that affect operational practice.
 Kevin Carter, Head of Law - Commercial, Property & Planning

Equality Implications

All public bodies must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In doing so, they must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics. This report highlights several equalities issues particularly related to the protected characteristic of ‘sex’ in relation to providing sport and physical activities for women in the city. The recommendations in the report may lead to positive outcomes for women and people of all protected characteristics if proposals are developed. There does need to be greater consideration given to the impacts on women that might share some of the other protected characteristics and how they may need to be engaged with differently, for example, women with a disability may not be able to partake in ‘conventional’ physical exercise and engagement for women of different races and religions may also need to be different to encourage participation. Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
 Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager, Ext 37 6344

Climate change implications

There are no Climate Emergency implications arising from this report.

‘Executive Response to Scrutiny’ template

The executive will respond to the next scrutiny meeting after a review report has been presented with the table below updated as part of that response.

Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Decision	Progress/Action	Timescales

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

**Museum Service's National Portfolio Organisation
Programme 2023/24 funded by Arts Council England**

24th October 2023

Lead director/officer: Mike Dalzell

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All.
- Report author: Joanna Jones
- Author contact details: Joanna.jones@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

1.1 This briefing provides an overview of the museum service's National Portfolio Organisation programme which is funded by Arts Council England

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 To note and comment on the programme and the impact which it is making.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 The programme is designed to involve local communities and is being co-produced with local communities. The museum service is working in partnership with several Leicester City Council services and departments, including Neighbourhood Services and Education.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1 Leicester City Council's museums service has been awarded £1.2m in total by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation for the period 2023-26. The funding supports posts and activities which will increase access to museums and collections.

5. A presentation about the 2023/24 activity programme accompanies this report.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

6.2 Legal implications

It is noted that £1.2m has been awarded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation for the period 2023-26. There is little detail relating to how this will be spent but in the event there are any external purchases then the Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015 will need to be complied with (where required). Legal and Procurement can support where required.

If any funding is to be paid by way of grant Legal can support with required agreements being put in place but also support compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022, should it apply.

Alex Powers, Solicitor (Commercial).

6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

- Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Museums can increase our sense of wellbeing, help us feel proud of where we have come from, can inspire, challenge and stimulate us, and make us feel healthier.

They can also enhance everyone's life chances by breaking down barriers to access and inclusion. Museums are doing this through active public participation, engaging with diverse communities, and sharing collections and knowledge. The programme is designed to involve local communities and is being co-produced with local communities. Posts and activities that increase access to museums and collections should lead to positive impacts for people from across all protected characteristics. The programme supports the council in meeting its equalities duties by seeking to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by people in relation to a protected characteristic or in relation to their socioeconomic status, and by encouraging people who are underrepresented to participate in arts, culture and heritage activities.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Leicester City Council has declared a climate emergency and set a target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Engagement with city residents is a vital part of the council's efforts in working towards this ambition and encouraging action on climate change across

Leicester. As detailed in this report the 2023/24 programme includes a project directly addressing this, through the development of a new climate change gallery at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, which will have a positive impact through directly supporting the council's Climate Emergency Strategy. As part of this piece of work consultation has been carried out with the council's Sustainability service to inform the development of this project. More widely, as project delivery generally contributes to the council's carbon emissions, any impacts can be managed through measures such as encouraging sustainable staff travel behaviours, using buildings efficiently and following sustainable procurement guidance, as applicable to the programme.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None

7. Background information and other papers:

A presentation accompanies this report.

8. Summary of appendices:

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

10. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?

No

Leicester Museums & Galleries

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny
Commission
October 2023

Museums Programme 2023-24

Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation Funding

£1.2M funding over three years 2023-26

2023-24 : £403,360



Leicester
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A Healthier, Happier City

Develop a new gallery about climate change at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery



A Healthier Happier City

Development of a New Climate Change Gallery

- Development of co-produced gallery to provoke debate about climate and evolutionary change
- Advocacy role, supporting Council's Climate Emergency Strategy
- Themes developed – long list
- Initial public engagement/consultation plan drafted
- Outline delivery plan and budget drafted
- Meeting with Heritage Fund, EOI submission Oct
- Meeting with LCC Sustainability Team
- Identification of potential partners in progress

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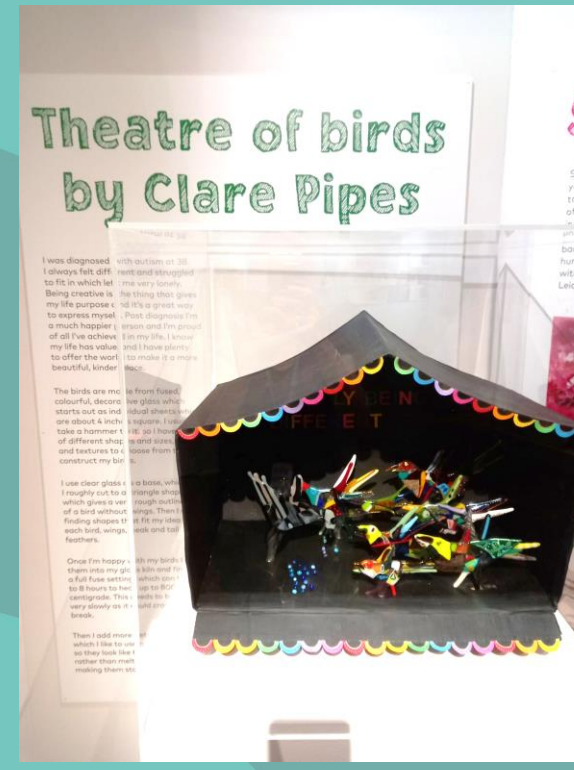
A Healthier, Happier City

Telling The Story of Leicester Through Co-curation

3 Co-Curated Exhibitions in Leicester Stories galleries

First exhibition 'ME' – 35,887 visitors.

Second exhibition 'Through My Eyes' delivered, third exhibition in development.



A Healthier, Happier City

Telling The Story of Leicester Through Co-curation

Popping to the Shops exhibition at Newarke Houses Museum and Westcotes Library

100 leaflets distributed

4 workshops delivered both at library

and in shops

43 participants

12 objects identified from participants



Leicester Museums & Galleries Contemporary Collecting Project

Popping to the Shops

"Calling all local people"

Come and be part of an exciting new project about people who live and work on the Narborough Road. We want your stories of the Narborough Road.



A Healthier, Happier city

Telling The Story of Leicester Through Co-curation

3 Co-curated library exhibitions

- New Parks: **Western Wild**, Install date – 27th October
- This exhibition is a partnership with **Leicester Environmental Volunteers and Parks Services**, celebrating the wildlife we have all around us

6-7
5 workshops completed, 2 in progress, 30 participants



A Healthier, Happier City

Telling The Story of Leicester Through Co-curation

Online Content

Key Achievements

- Promo film for Punks exhibition – x5 films published to social media channels.
- HAF film created and published - to promote Museum Holiday Club. Very well received by funders and partners.
- x73 Stories of Leicester posts 1 June – 31 August 2023.
- x148 Leicester Museums posts 1 June – 31 August 2023.
- Plan to create online version of Shoes using text and images from exhibition – after run has finished.
- **Website sessions: 330k 2022/23; over 100k in Q1 2023/24.**



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HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING

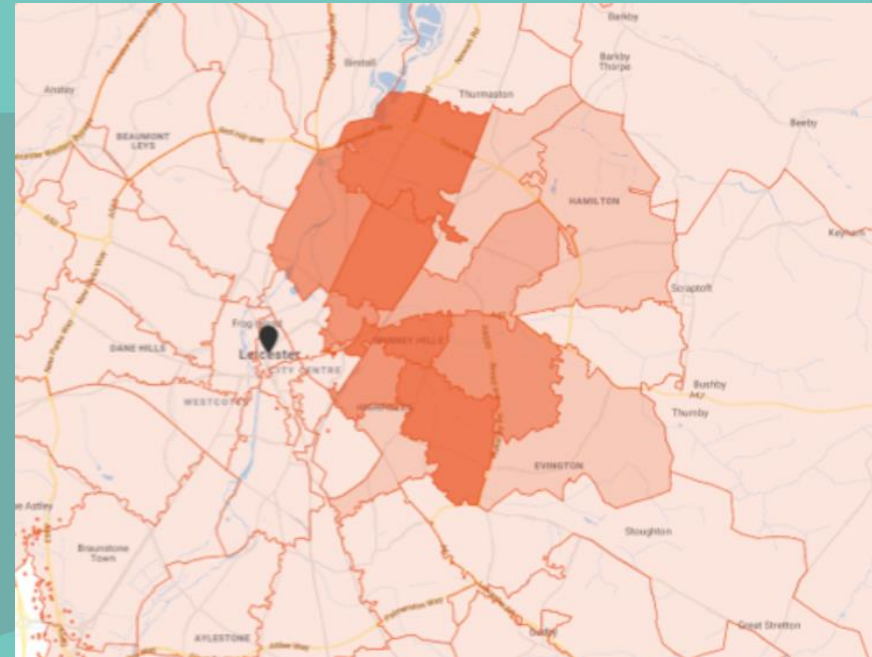
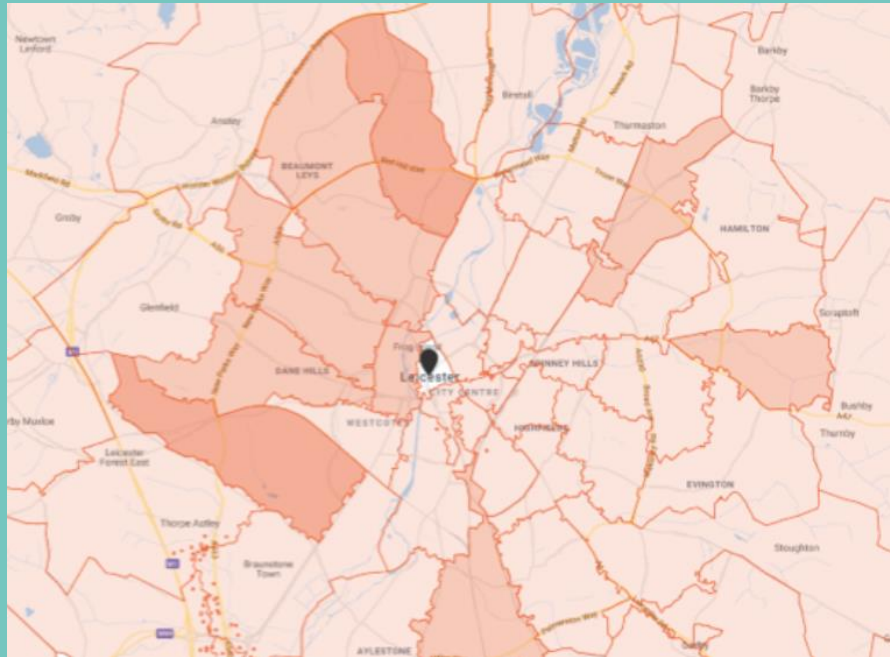
Deliver a programme of free activities



Engaging target audiences through free offsite & onsite events

Engagement events in Facebook Family and Kaleidoscope Creativity target wards

70



Help With the Cost of Living

Engaging Leicester's target audience segments through offsite & onsite events

Festivals and pop-up museums

- Mela - 1000 direct participants (500 adults / 500 children & young people)
- Pride festivals – 1200 direct participants (700 adults / 500 children and young people)

Pop-Up museum events planned for Feb and March 2024



Help with the Cost of Living

Engaging Leicester's target audience segments through offsite & onsite events

Co-produced community events

- **BHM: 18th October 2023** – designed to complement the Casta exhibition, **Object of the Month**; Anthony Amoako-Attah glass bag – ‘Take me Home’

- **Diwali: 11th November 2023** – designed to also inform the Diwali event planned for 5th November

Purpose: leading to a more diverse interpretation of collections from a broader range of voices



Help with the Cost of Living

Engaging Leicester's target audience segments through offsite & onsite events

Engagement events in Facebook Family and Kaleidoscope Creativity target wards

X 4 Holiday Activity & Food Programme events

Delivered with Cabinet of Curiosities

X 85 participants





LEICESTER MOSAIC PROJECT

**COME ALONG TO MAKE YOUR OWN ARTS
AND CRAFTS INSPIRED TILE!**

**SATURDAY 5TH AUGUST 11AM -
3PM AT LEICESTER MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY**



**Inspired & Inspiring Volunteer
Development Programme**

Help with the Cost of Living

Engaging Leicester's target audience segments through offsite & onsite events

Inspired & Inspiring volunteer development programme

- Inspired & Inspiring Training Programme 4 intakes over the year
- New Gardening Activity at Abbey Pumping Station
- Programme of In Community Events
- Programme of In Museum Events
- Programme of Garden Events

Combine 4 intakes into 3.



Leicester
City Council

Inspired & Inspired Volunteer Training

7 courses
completed

94 attendees

64 from target
wards

3 completions

2 work
placements

2 in
employment





5 of 5 community event completed

3,707 visitors (target 2,500)

2 of 2 garden events completed

596 visitors (target 400)

Heritage Open Day Exhibition

4 of 9 museum events completed

683 visitors (target 1,800)

Cultural Inspiration & Access For Young People

Holiday activities & food programme

- 16 sessions delivered over August
- 93 participations
- Positive feedback from young people & parents
- Lessons learnt – need for more & better marketing of the HAF programme; video and photo footage, webpage, direct to schools.

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Combatting exclusion

- Programme for 10 sessions in Nov 2023 working with Graffwerks to achieve Bronze Arts Award for participants
- Advertising to secondary schools for referrals.
- Conflict management training for team
- Recruiting volunteers from DMU



Delivering world class museums

Develop learning resources for schools

- Two self-led learning resources for the Guildhall COMPLETE
- 79 Second activity postcard to be sent out to all primary schoolchildren before October half term.
- Offer free Curriculum Enrichment session as prize to encourage take-up.



Delivering world class museums

Develop family resources for temporary exhibitions

- 'Play time' COMPLETE
- 'Out of the Stores: SHOES Best Foot Forward'
- 'Open: The People's Exhibition'
- Monitoring participant numbers through volunteers on gallery

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Culture & Neighbourhood Scrutiny Commission

Burial Strategy Update

Date of Commission meeting: 24th October 2023

Lead director: Sean Atterbury, Director of Neighbourhood &
Environmental Services

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Alan Brown, Bereavement Services Manager
- Author contact details: alan.brown@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: v1

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the Burial Strategy Update slide presentation appended.
- 1.2 Action has been taken to mitigate the pressure on burial space following increased demand from the coronavirus pandemic and the reducing availability of burial space in the council's cemeteries.

2. Recommendations to scrutiny

- 2.1 That the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission note the contents of the report and presentation.
- 2.2 That the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission review and comment on the delivery of the burial strategy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The council is a burial authority by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.2 The provision of burial space is a discretionary service, and the council has no statutory duty to provide cemeteries.
- 3.3 In 2022 the council undertook 1,031 burials, in addition to 1,826 cremations.
- 3.4 The coronavirus pandemic led to a significant increase in demand for burial space. A re-evaluation of the demand for burial space, and options to mitigate the increased demand, has been carried out.
- 3.5 As a result of changing population demographics and the different funeral needs of faith communities, it was forecasted that the existing dedicated burial space for Muslim communities would reach capacity in 2025, and by 2033 for all other communities.
- 3.6 Action has been taken to mitigate the increased pressures on Muslim burial space, and the general availability of new graves, by rebalancing the allocation of burial space in our cemeteries and the introduction of a new policy on the sale of graves.
- 3.7 As a result of the mitigating action taken the overall availability of burial space is now forecasted to reach capacity by 2030-31 for all communities.
- 3.8 Additional space has been allocated for Muslim burials at Saffron Hill Cemetery providing an additional 800 graves to meet burial needs.

- 3.9 There has been a significant increase in recent years of graves being purchased in reserve (without a burial) for future use. The purchase of graves in reserve reduces the short-term availability of graves for immediate burial (point of need).
- 3.10 Engagement with faith communities was undertaken through a series of focus groups to inform a change of policy in relation to the purchase of graves in reserve, following which an Equality Impact Assessment was completed.
- 3.11 The focus groups recognised the pressures on existing burial space and supported a change of policy to stop the sale of graves unless required for an immediate burial. Many other local authorities have already ceased the sale of graves in reserve.
- 3.12 Stopping the sale of graves in reserve has increased the short-term availability of burial space to meet immediate burial needs.
- 3.13 To meet future burial needs a new cemetery will need to be built to provide additional burial space.
- 3.14 Work to identify a location for a new cemetery has been started by Estates and Building Services, working with Bereavement Services and Planning. This involves conducting desktop assessments of site availability, Local Plan designations, Planning constraints, Environment Agency restrictions and ground suitability surveys. This work is ongoing.
- 3.15 A meeting has taken place between council officers and representatives from Muslim organisations who have expressed interest in self-building a Muslim cemetery.
- 3.16 An evaluation of the organisations plans for a new cemetery highlighted that none of the organisations had yet acquired a site or had secured funding in place. While these organisations are unlikely to provide any additional burial space in the short-term, they may potentially provide some longer-term capacity if they secure a site and build a new cemetery
- 3.17 It is recognised that there is a growing shortage of burial space across the UK, and that legislation related to burials and cremations is outdated and not fit for purpose. The Law Commission for England and Wales has commenced a review of all legislation related to the disposal of the deceased.
- 3.18 National bereavement sector organisations are lobbying for a change in legislation to allow the re-use of old graves for new burials.

4. Background information and other papers:

N/A

5. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Burial Strategy update slide presentation

6. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

7. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

No

Burial Strategy Update

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee
October 2023

Burial Strategy overview

Space demand	Evidence and track existing demand
Muslim burials	Assessment of the uptake of graves and ability of faith groups to provide their own spaces
City growth	Using census data to inform our decision making and future death projections
Future provision	Planning the shape of bereavement services in the future
Policy development	Ensuring our policies are robust and reflective of the needs of Leicester's residents
Sustaining Existing Provision	Ensuring the service remains financially viable and is able to perform into the future, recognising the ongoing demand of the service and private sector provision

Context

- The purpose of this slide deck is to summarise the work of the burial strategy which is intended to appraise the demand and options for the council's cemeteries.
- LCC Burial Space Strategy 2014 highlighted that a new cemetery would need to open by 2030 to meet long term burial needs. It is almost 100 years since the last new cemetery was built to serve the city.
- The demand for space across all cemeteries was further qualified in November 2022, following increased demand from the Covid pandemic, with mitigation options identified.
- In the UK 20% of all deaths will involve a burial. However, in Leicester this is higher due to the city's population demographics.
- 1,031 burials & 1,826 cremations carried out in 2022

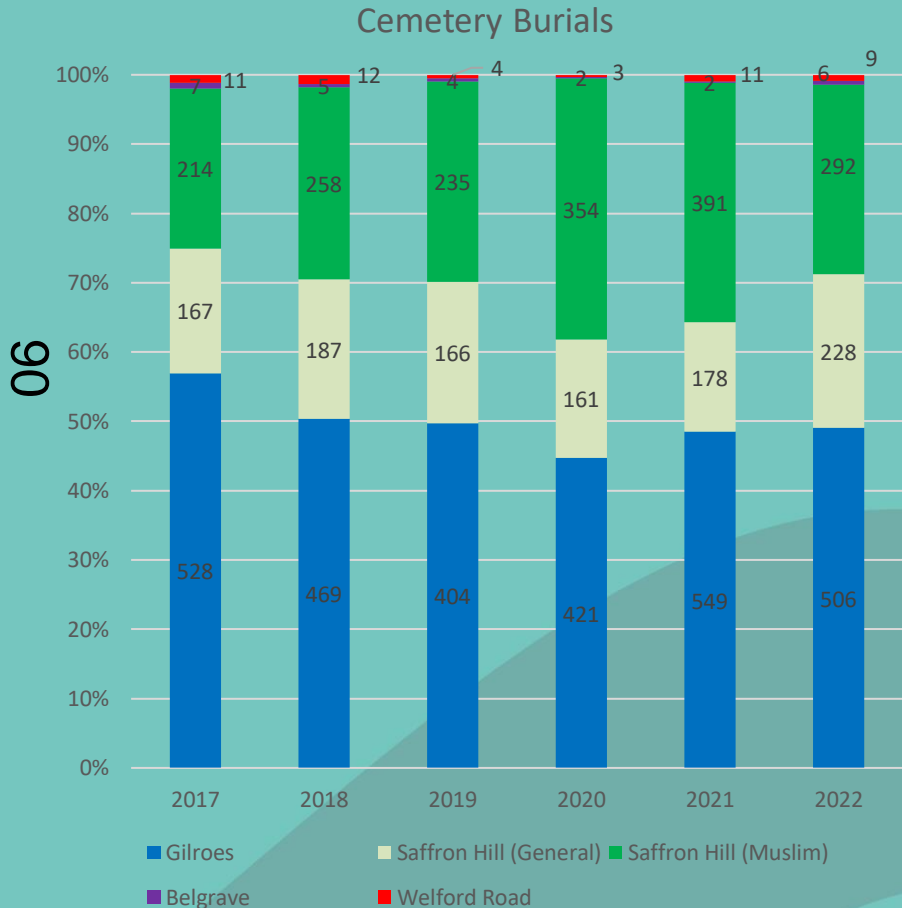
Context

- Muslim and Jewish faiths forbid cremation and are reliant on a burial
- Muslim residents make up 23.5 % of Leicester's population and have grown by 23% since 2011 to over 86,000 (ONS Census 2021). The Jewish community makes up 0.1% of Leicester's population.
- Muslim burial space is particularly in high demand and was forecast to reach capacity by **2025** without mitigating action.
- Projections for non-Muslim burial space was this would reach capacity by **2033**
- Mitigating actions have been taken to rebalance the overall needs for all faith communities resulting in capacity being reached in **2030-31** for everyone

Provision of burial space

- No statutory duty on local authorities to provide burial space
- Cemeteries are a discretionary service
- Local Government Act 1972
 - s.214(1) Empowers local authorities to act as burial authorities
 - s.214(2) Burial authorities **MAY** provide & maintain cemeteries whether within or outside their area.
 - s.214(6) A burial authority **MAY** contribute to any expenses incurred by any other person in providing or maintaining a cemetery in which inhabitants of the authority's area may be buried
- Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (As amended)
 - Regulates local authority cemeteries
 - Does not apply to private cemeteries

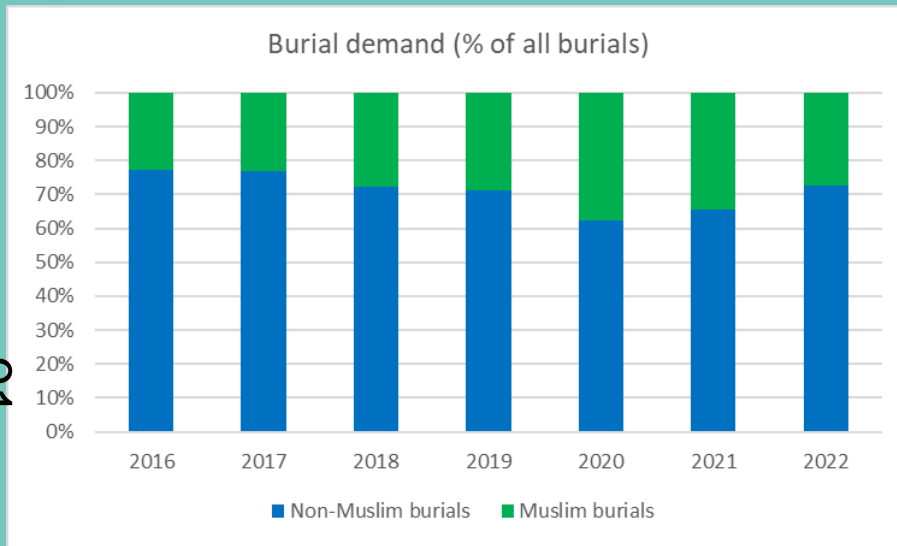
Leicester cemetery burials



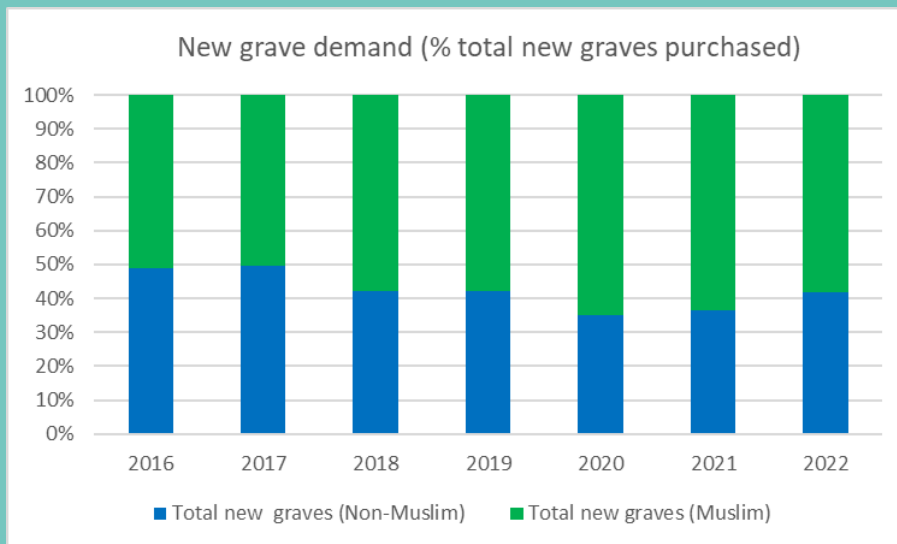
- The council operates 4 cemeteries
- New graves are only available at Gilroes and Saffron Hill cemeteries
- Burials can take place in either a new grave, or in an existing grave with other burials where space allows
- Muslim graves have been dug to accommodate two family burials since 2015. Better uptake required to make efficient use of space

Comparison burial & new grave needs

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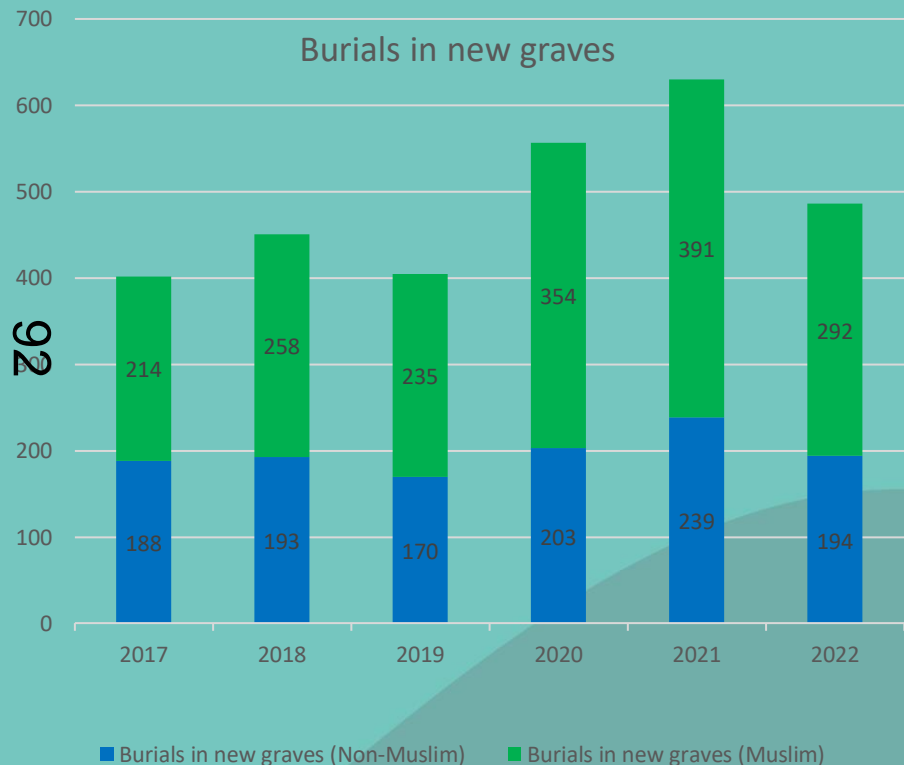


- Demand for Muslim burials is on average 25% - 30% of all burials per year



- Demand for Muslim new graves is on average 50% - 65% of all new graves per year

New graves – point of need



- New graves (point of need) are graves purchased requiring an immediate burial at the time of purchase
- Risk that demand for burials in new graves exceeds supply of available graves
- High demand for new Muslim graves
- Directly related to death rate

Risk 1: New graves (point of need)

- Risk: High demand for new Muslim graves at point of need vs reducing supply
- Mitigation measure
 - 1a) Increase burial space allocated for Muslim graves at Saffron Hill Cemetery
- Mitigation impact
 - Creates 800 new Muslim graves
 - Reduces non-Muslim capacity by the same number, however additional supply available at Gilroes Cemetery

Re-allocated graves

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The map is reproduced from 'Saffron Hill Cemetery Survey' material with the permission of Leicester City Council. The map is the property of Leicester City Council. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any errors or omissions. Leicester City Council is not liable for any damage or loss arising from the use of this map. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any changes to the map after the date of publication. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any changes to the map after the date of publication.

SAFFRON HILL CEMETERY - SECTION MAP

Date: 16/04/18
Scale: 1 : 1 850
Paper Size: A3
By: CM

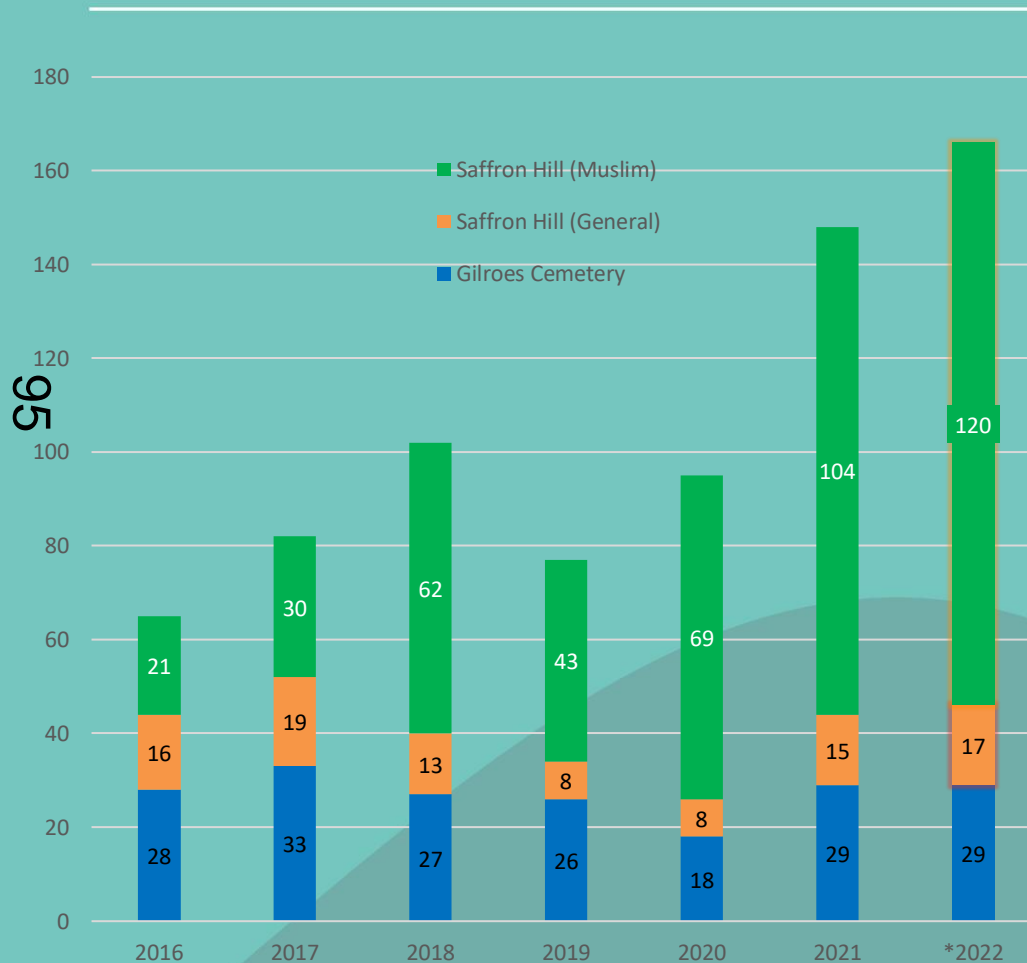
Leicester City Council
Neighbourhood & Environmental
Services
Standards & Development



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Re-allocate section M to Muslim graves

New graves – in reserve



- New graves (in reserve) are graves purchased for future use and without an immediate burial. Can often be decades before first burial takes place
- Indirectly related to death rate
- Reduces availability of graves at point of need
- Not permitted by many burial authorities
- Significant increase in Muslim purchases

Risk 2: New graves (In reserve)

- Risk 2: High demand for new graves purchased in reserve without a burial
- Mitigation measures
 - Review options for graves in reserve & publish new policy
 - 2a) Do nothing
 - 2b) Stop sales of all graves in reserve
 - 2c) Restrict sales of graves in reserve
- Mitigation impact
 - Options B and C increase the availability of space for new graves at the point of need

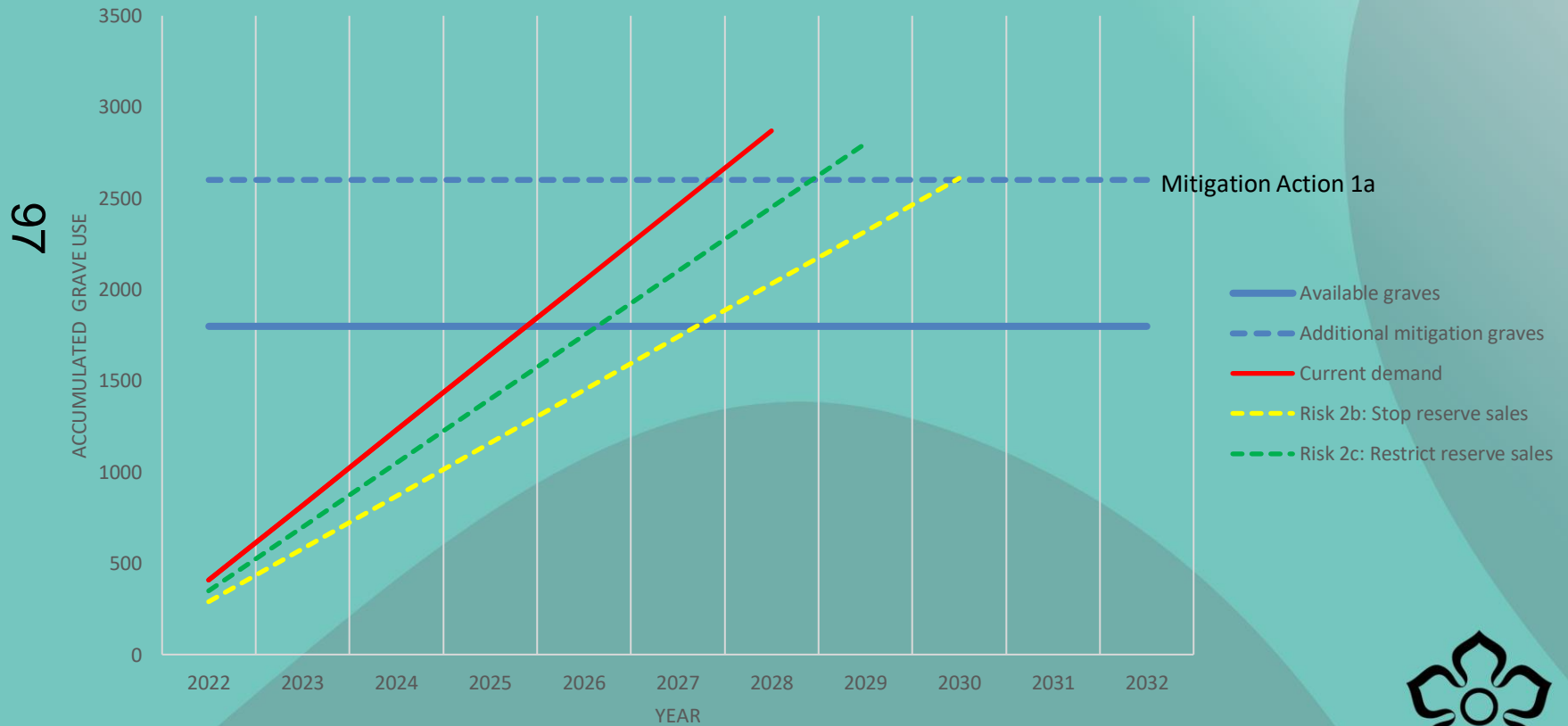
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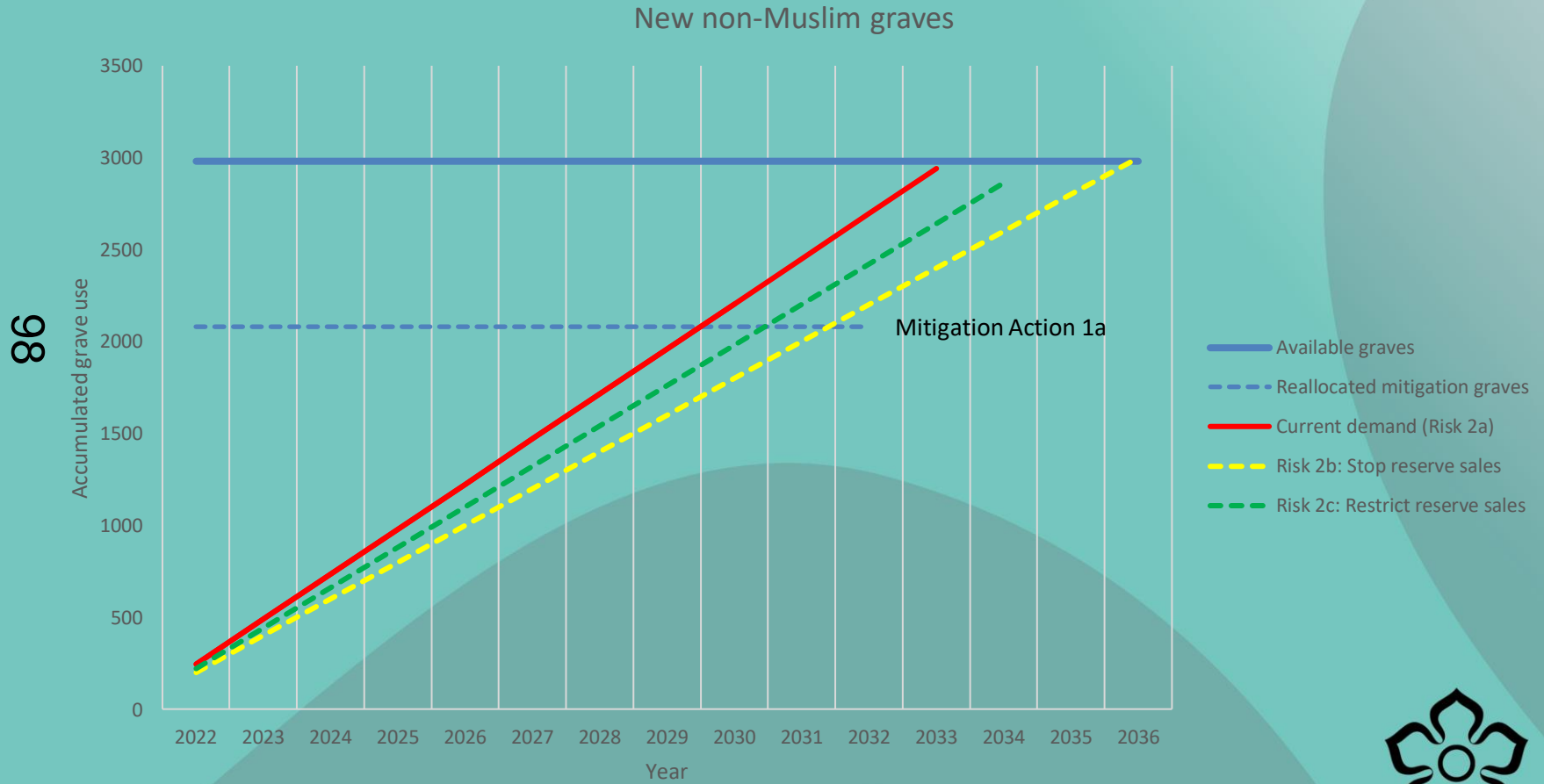
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Muslim grave projections

New Muslim graves



Non-Muslim grave projections



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Policy change (Grave Sales)

- Focus group meetings arranged with faith representatives to inform a policy change for the sale of graves in reserve
 - Leicester Council of Faiths
 - Muslim community stakeholders
 - Leicester Hebrew Congregation
- General support to restrict graves sales to meet short term burial needs
- Equality Impact Assessment completed
- Reserve grave sales stopped in April 2023
- The change in policy has increased availability of burial space in the short-term to meet immediate burial needs

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Future burial space

- Work to identify a new cemetery site has started, but no confirmed site at present
- Focus on opening a new cemetery site before 2030
- Potential sites need to consider:
 - Site availability
 - Local Plan commitments
 - Planning constraints
 - Environment Agency restrictions
- Potential new Muslim cemetery
 - Meeting held with representatives from organisations who have expressed interest in self-building a Muslim cemetery
 - Aspirational plans. No site secured
 - Unlikely to provide additional burial space in the short term, but may provide longer term capacity if built

100

Review of legislation

- Law Commission for England and Wales commenced a review of all burial and cremation legislation in December 2022
- Recognition that current legislation is outdated and not fit for modern bereavement needs
- Growing shortage of burial space identified nationally
- Bereavement sector organisations lobbying for a change in legislation to allow the re-use of old graves for new burials

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**Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
Work Programme 2023 – 2024**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
16 August 2023	Introduction presentation to Culture and Neighbourhoods services.	Suggested topics for scrutiny to be added to the work programme.	Complete
26 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Community sector engagement strategy report • Draft Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy report • 2 reports: a) Ward Funding Policy and b) Ward Funding Annual Report • Work Programme – draft work programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To explore formalising structures with VCS. b) To explore LCC and VCS joint funding initiatives / boards. c) LCC to provide helping hand to VCS to empower communities. d) To explore a business pledge for LCC to sign up to. e) To engage more with ward cllrs. 2) A fuller report to be brought back to a future meeting. 3) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) to consider increasing the ward funding budget. b) Vice chair to lead a Review group to be set up to look into this topic. c) The engagement of volunteers to be explored. d) To consider best practice. e) For the members training re: ward meetings on 11th Oct - suggested 2 levels of engagement needed – one for more experienced cllrs and one for newer cllrs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In progress – officers to respond in due course. 2) Listed on the work programme. 3) b) Initial discussions taking place between officers and members.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
24 October 2023	Executive response back from previous review re: Encouraging women to participate in sports and physical activities. Bereavement Services/Burial Policy Museum Service Overview		
5 December 2023	Active Leicester Strategy Action Plan Tree Strategy review		
29 January 2024	Council budget reports – general fund and capital Draft Museum Strategy VCSE Strategy/Crowdfund Leicester Update		
25 March 2024	Possible items tbc		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Culture and Creative Industry Strategy	A fuller report to be provided following the item on 26 September.	
Community Safety		
Fly-tipping strategy		
Library and Community needs assessment programme		
Growing spaces strategy		
Festivals and Events review	Requested at meeting on 16 August	
Tourism Plan review		Possibly March 2024
Jewry Wall museum development, progress update		
Heritage panels, inviting members suggestions for new panels		
Enabling volunteers		

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