

Culture, and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny
Committee

Active Leicester Strategy – emerging action plan

Date of meeting: 5th December 2023

Lead director: Miranda Cannon

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report author: Andrew Beddow / Vicky Ball

■ Author contact details: Andrew.beddow@leicester.gov.uk / Victoria.ball@leicester.gov.uk

■ Report version number: v1

1	Summary
1.1	This report introduces the emerging Active Leicester Strategy action plan, following the launch of the strategy in July 2023.
1.2	The Active strategy strives to support individuals, communities, partners, and businesses to experience increased opportunities to be physically active.
1.3	The city has 34% of its population who are inactive / sedentary. Long term inactivity can be linked to numerous health conditions. This places an additional strain on healthcare resources. Therefore, by targeting this population, supporting them to move more will provide a healthier, happier and more prosperous population.
1.4	This strategy has been developed in partnership with public health, and a wide range of stakeholders, partners, professionals, community groups and forums. This has ensured that the priorities of the strategy reflect and respond to the priorities and needs of the population and addresses the barriers that many residents' faces in relation to becoming more physically active.
1.5	Active Leicester – Turning the Tide on Inactivity , is a five-year strategy for stakeholders and organisations working in the field. It focuses on the city's most inactive population through an approach called proportionate universalism. This approach recognises that the city has a strong universal offer for physical activity and sport. There is a wealth of opportunity in the city from public spaces to leisure centres, to the club infrastructure to the commercial operators. However, access to these services / assets is not always equal. Therefore, through this strategy Active Leicester's ambition is to shine a light on these inequalities and target resource to where it is most needed.
1.7	The strategy is a guidance document. It is designed as blueprint for organisations to target resources to where there is most need in the city. There is no budget allocated to this strategy. Therefore, the aim is for organisations to adapt existing resources or to use the strategy to draw down investment.
1.8	This report follows a report taken to the Heritage, Culture and Tourism scrutiny commission in February 2023, where the draft strategy was shared. This report provides an update on the action plan to date.
1.9	In response to the strategy action plan, the report will also shine a light on Active Leicester's response to the strategy, with a pilot approach that is being adopted at Aylestone Leisure centre.
1.10	The report will also share the approach being taken to further develop the action plan and galvanise collaborative working through an internal seminar that is being planned in the New Year.

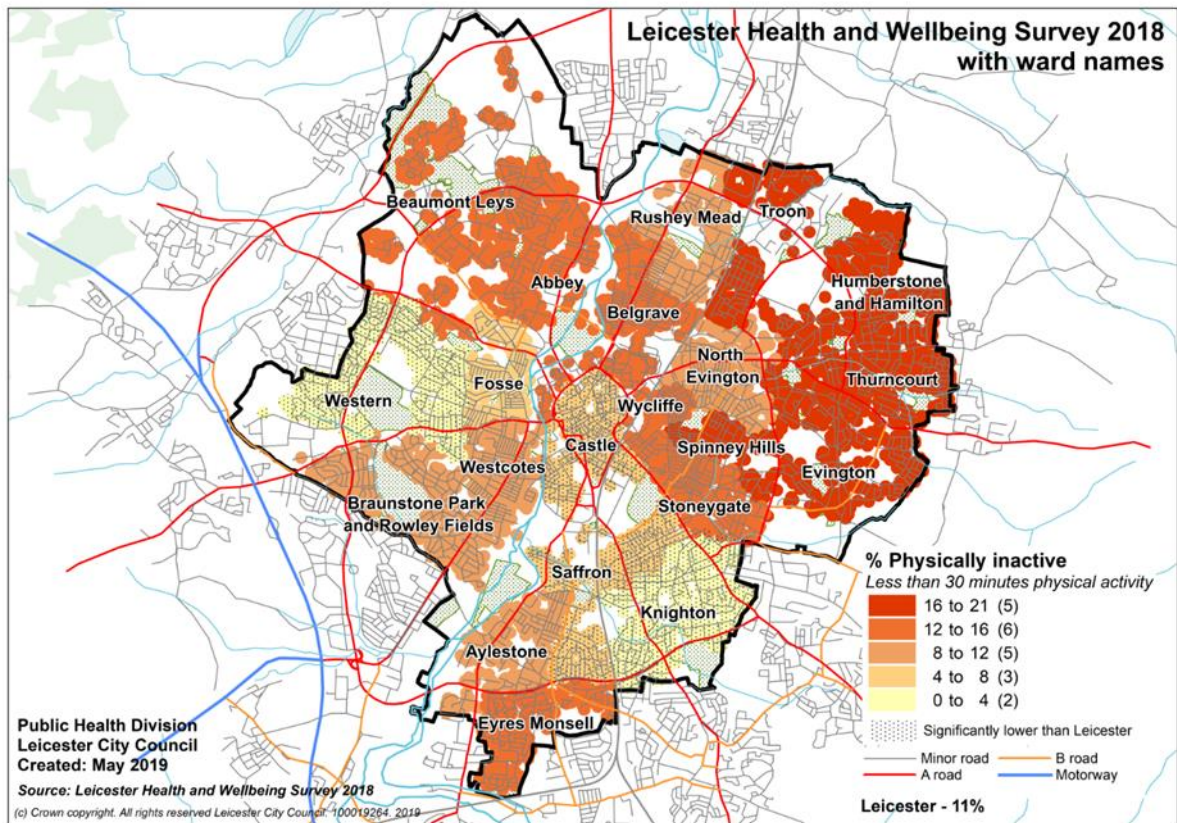
2.	Recommended actions/decision
2.1	The commission are asked to note the contents of the action plan and provide comment to help shape its development.
2.2	The commission are asked to comment and feedback on Active Leicester's approach to piloting a health and wellbeing hub at Aylestone Leisure centre.
2.3	The commission are asked to comment and feedback on the internal seminar planned for the New Year.

3.	Stakeholder engagement
3.1	None at this stage.

4.	Main Report
----	--------------------

4.1	<p>Despite the highly publicised benefits of physical activity, most adults in the UK do not meet the minimum recommendations of doing 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of moderate intensity activity (such as brisk walking or cycling) or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity each week. Nationally, nearly 3 in 10 adults do not meet this guideline. The story is no different in Leicester, with approx. 34% of the child and adult population being physical inactive, which is doing less than 30 minutes moderate exercise a week.</p>
-----	---

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



4.3	<u>Active Leicester Strategy – key principles</u>
-----	--

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

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

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

1. To focus resource (full or part) on the city's inactive population, with a focus on:
 - People in bad health (including mental health) or living with a disability or limiting health condition
 - Women and Girls
 - Residents with no formal qualifications and tend not to be working.
 - Residents who reside in the East of the City and associate with being Black/Black British or Asian/Asian British.
 - Older adults, aged 65+
2. To focus resource for generational change, for the cities under-five and school age population.
3. To focus on activity that is informal, local to where people live, which recreational in nature, and an activity type that promotes participation with family and friends.
4. Engage, listen, support, and empower the local community. Utilising the role of community-based leaders and partners, whom have an in-depth knowledge of the community, and can support with the creation of sustainable activity models.
5. Create and engender collaborative working, by partners, to deliver appropriate and tailored communications which facilitate long-term behaviour change, along with the sharing of resources, to where it is most needed, where inactivity exists.

4.4 Action Plan

Since the launch of the strategy in July 2023, Active Leicester have been facilitating an action plan. As previously mentioned, there is no funding or budget allocated to this strategy, therefore, partner (internal or external) engagement must take a different approach. There is a level of galvanising, collaborative and creative thinking that is required. There is also an additional level of resource required from Active Leicester to facilitate and keep warm these discussions and actions.

A key message from the consultation conducted as part of the strategy development, back in 2021, was the amount of good work that is being undertaken by internal council departments. However, departments don't often communicate their work. Opportunities for improved messaging or collaboration are missed.

Therefore, given this feedback and the level of resource required to create an action plan, officers felt the action plan should be split into two phases. The first phase is with internal council departments, moving out to external partners in phase 2.

During the development of phase 1, officers in Active Leicester took the strategy on a road show with around ten different council departments. They have raised awareness of the strategy, discussed opportunities for collaborative working and attempted to tease out tangible actions for the strategy.

Following this first phase of discussions, an action plan is emerging for the commission members to comment on and provide feedback. The actions are provided as an addendum to this report.

4.5

Active Leicester Response - Health and Wellbeing Hub Pilot

Active Leicester operates 7 leisure centres, a golf course, athletics track and range of outdoor sports provision. In response to the new Active Leicester Strategy, we are developing an approach at one of our centres to become a health and wellbeing hub.

It will attempt to balance the need to provide an excellent leisure experience, alongside a shift towards creating community wellbeing hubs, that will enable people to become active, by working in a more holistic behaviour change way.

Active Leicester is looking to break the mould of a traditional leisure operation, which can be seen to market to the products to the motivated community, where the customer service is transactional and where there is limited partnership working to reach out to the sections of the community that really need the benefit of being active. We also, want the leisure centre to be the go-to place for social prescribing.

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

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

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

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

4.6

Active Leicester Seminar

In the New Year Active Leicester will be hosting a seminar to bring together the senior and middle managers, from departments across the local authority to start and develop the conversation around doing more with less, in direct response to the strategy, and building on the emerging action plan.

With the support of a keynote speaker, Active Leicester, are looking for departments to think and act differently, about the systems, resources, and policies that they oversee, to see how they can better influence and support localities and communities to become active.

This seminar, we hope will be the start of an annual or twice-yearly event that will broaden to external partners but for now, the focus is internally, with council officers.

