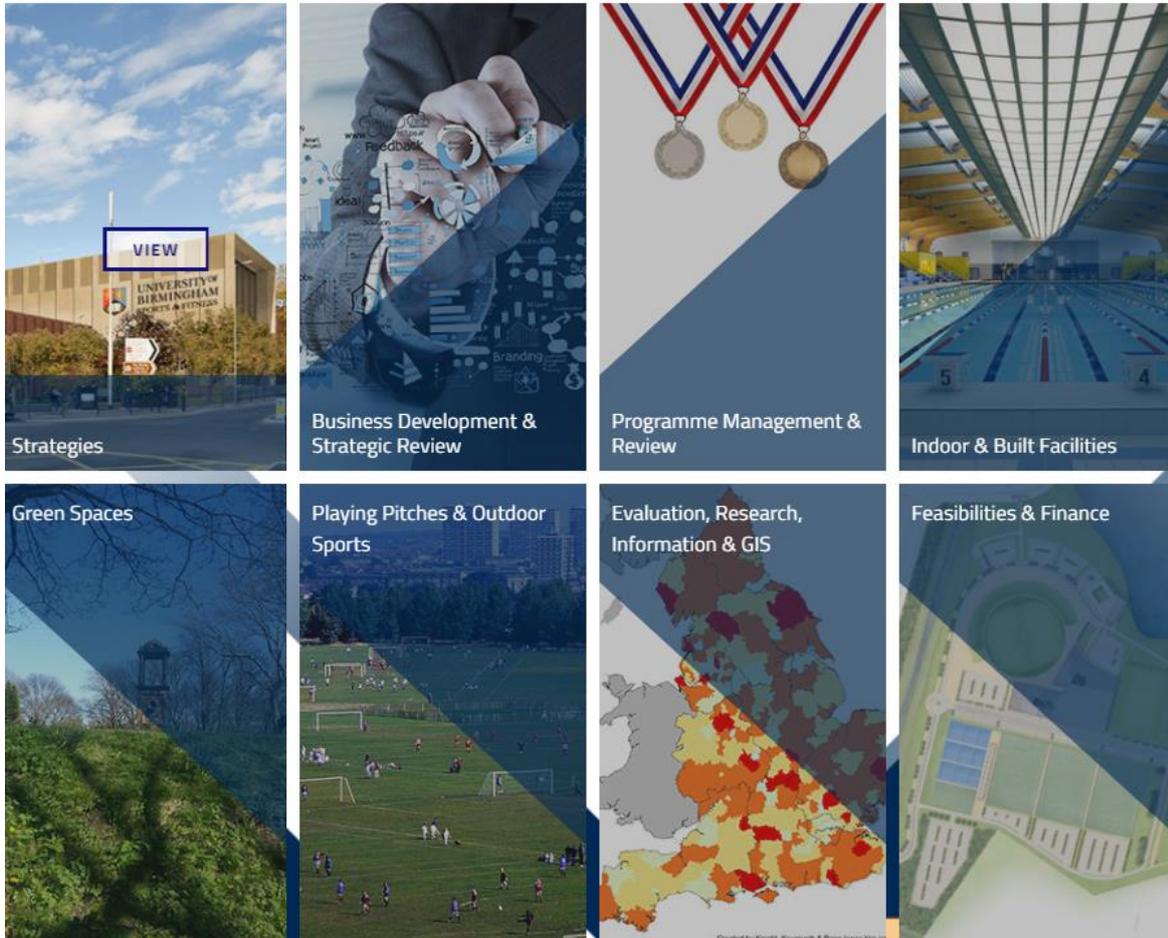


WIRRAL COUNCIL



SPORT ENGLAND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES PLANNING GUIDANCE

JANUARY 2021

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
Company No: 9145032 (England)

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WIRRAL COUNCIL SPORT ENGLAND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES PLANNING GUIDANCE

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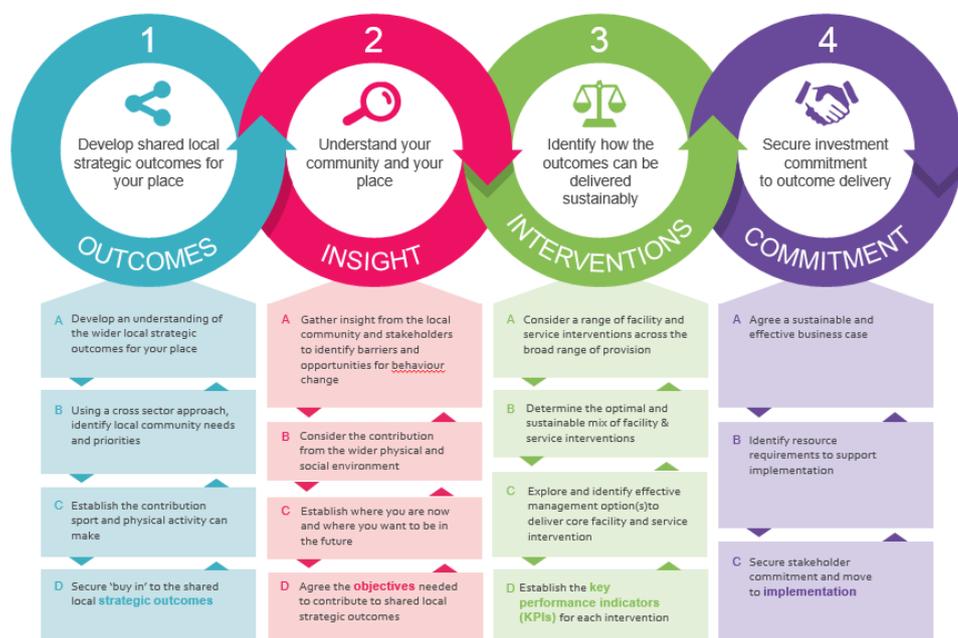
**WIRRAL COUNCIL
SPORT ENGLAND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES PLANNING GUIDANCE**

INTRODUCTION: STAGE 1 - OUTCOMES

This is the draft report by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) to undertake a diagnostic assessment of the Sport England Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SOPG) for Wirral Council (WC). Sport England produced its Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance to assist local authorities take a strategic approach to maximising the contribution that sport and physical activity makes within a given local area and to ensure that any local investment made is as effective as possible and is sustainable in the long term. Local authorities are currently responding to an unprecedented public health crisis and are under significant pressure to deliver physical activity and sport opportunities with ever diminishing resources.

WC has recently completed several major pieces of strategic planning work, including the Wirral Plan 2025, the Local Plan (2020-2035), an ANOG compliant Indoor and Built Facility Strategy (draft stage), Open Space Assessment (draft stage) and draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2020. Further, it is undertaking a Playing Pitch Strategy (due for completion in August 2021) which will supersede the previous Playing Pitch Strategy completed in 2016. The Council is now considering investment into its leisure facilities with a view to reducing health inequalities across the Borough.

Figure 1.1: Sport England Strategic Outcomes Planning model



Key steps

- ◀ **Develop shared local strategic outcomes for your Place**
- ◀ **Using a cross sector approach, identify local community needs and priorities**
- ◀ **Establish the contribution sport and physical activity can make**
- ◀ **Secure 'buy in' to the shared local strategic outcomes**

Figure 1.2: Wirral Council area with key roads and settlements



The area is located on a peninsula in North West England. The Metropolitan Borough of Wirral is part of the Liverpool City Region. It is bounded to the west by the River Dee forming a boundary with Wales, to the east by the River Mersey, and to the north by the Irish Sea. The roughly rectangular peninsula is about 15 miles (24 km) long and 7 miles (11 km) wide. Since the passing of the Local Government Act 1972 only the southern third of the Wirral peninsula is in Cheshire, with the remainder being in the county of Merseyside. Wirral contains both affluent and deprived areas; the affluent areas located largely in the west, south and north coast of the peninsula, and deprived areas concentrated in the east, around the built-up district of Birkenhead.

Population & deprivation¹

Wirral has a population of 324,011 of which 51.6% is female and 48.4% is male. With the exception of a slightly lower proportion of 20-39 year olds and slightly higher proportion of over 55's Wirral's population mirrors the North West average. There is a projected population growth (of around 4% to a total of 336,348 by 2043). This is expected to be driven by the increasing number of over 65's.

In respect of the deprivation, around a quarter of the population (25.5%, which equates to nearly 82,000 residents) in Wirral live in the top 10% most deprived areas in the country. Of these,

¹ (Data source: 2018 Mid Year Estimate 2019 indices of deprivation, DCLG, ONS births and deaths)

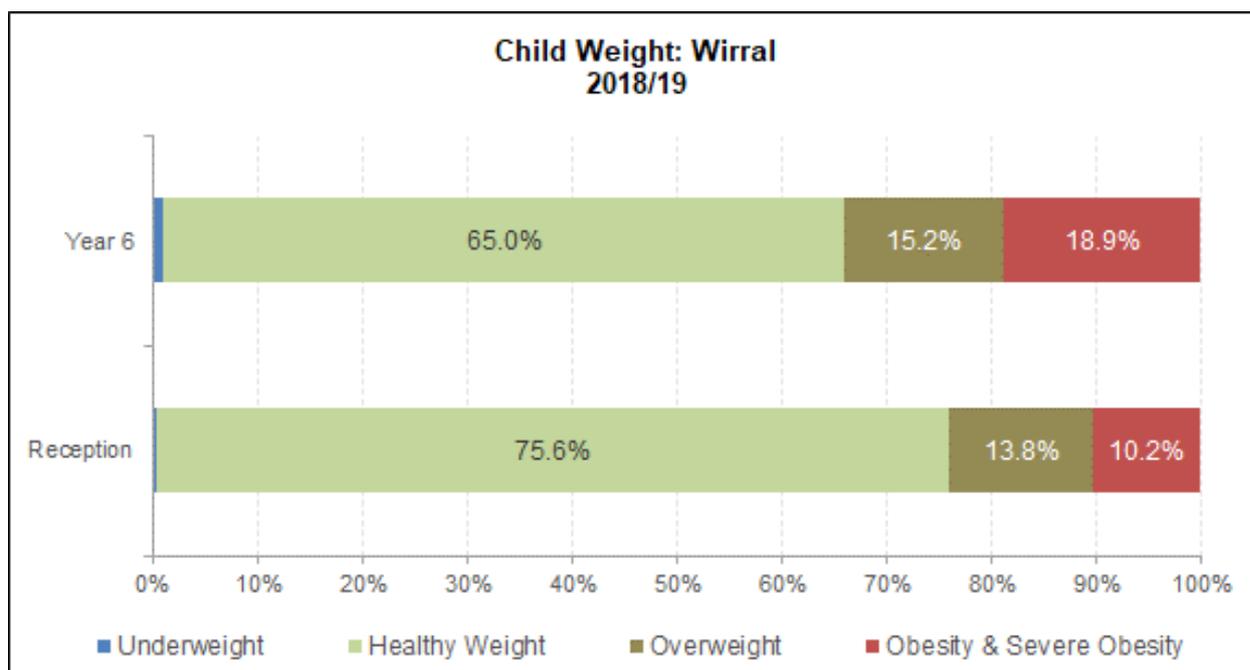
65.1% live in its four most deprived wards; Birkenhead and Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Bidston St. James. Within these four, 84.9% of the total population live within the top 10% most deprived areas.

In respect of health deprivation (2016-18), life expectancy at birth in Wirral was 78.2 years for males (a decrease on 2015-17) and 82.0 years for females (an increase on 2015-17). This is lower than the national average which is 79.6 for males and 83.2 years for females. At this time Rock Ferry was the ward with the lowest life expectancy at birth for both males (72.2) and females (77.3); Heswall was the ward with the highest life expectancy at birth for males (84.3) and Pensby & Thingwall was the one with the highest life expectancy at birth for females (88.0). These serve to illustrate that, at its most extreme, there is a difference of 12.1 years for men and 10.7 years for women between the lowest and highest life expectancy within the Borough.

Further, in the most deprived parts of Wirral the onset of poor health begins at age 54 for men and 56.5 for women, up to 13 years before state pension age. Despite life expectancy having increased rapidly over the last few decades, healthy life expectancy has not increased, but rather decreased, for both Wirral and England. Therefore, these additional years of life are being spent in poorer health and adding more strain to health and social care resources.

Adult obesity rates in Wirral are below regional but above national averages. As with many other areas, child obesity rates increase significantly between the ages of 4 and 11. Approximately one in 10 (10.2%) of children in Wirral are obese in their reception year at school while 13.8% are overweight at this point. By Year 6 this rises to just under one in 5 (18.9%) obese and 15.2% overweight. In total, by Year 6, more than one third of young people (34.1%) are either overweight or obese.

Figure 1.3: Child weight – reception and year 6



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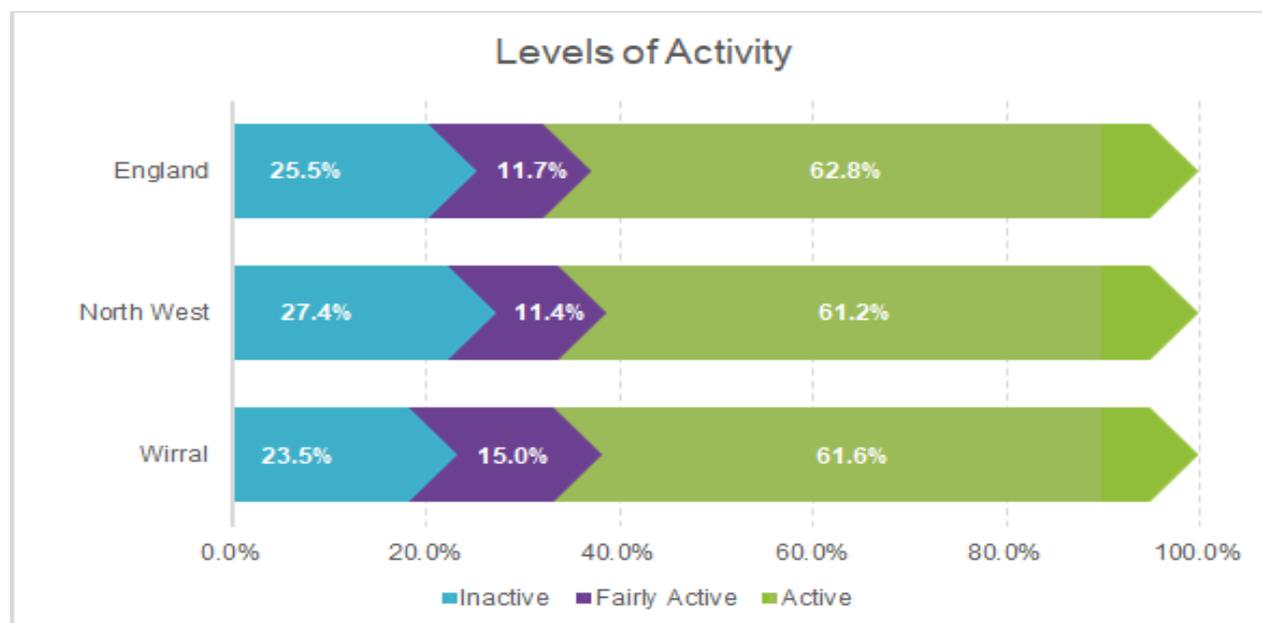
Ethnicity (Data source: 2011 census of population, ONS)

In broad terms, Wirral's ethnic composition differs from that of England as a whole. According to the 2011 Census of population, the largest proportion (97.0%) of the local population classified their ethnicity as White; this is considerably higher than the comparative England rate of 85.4%. The next largest population group (by self classification) is Asian, at 1.6% this is markedly lower than the national equivalent (7.8%).

Active Lives Survey 2019/20

Sport England most recent Active Lives Survey data (2019/20) is based on 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and other sporting activity. As identified in Figure 1.4, a lower percentage of the Wirral population is inactive compared to England and North West and a similar percentage is considered to be active.

Figure 1.4: Active Lives Survey data; Wirral 2019/20



The Wirral intelligence service summarises Wirral as if it was 100 adults and 100 children.

In summary, the key facts identified from Wirral Intelligence Survey are:

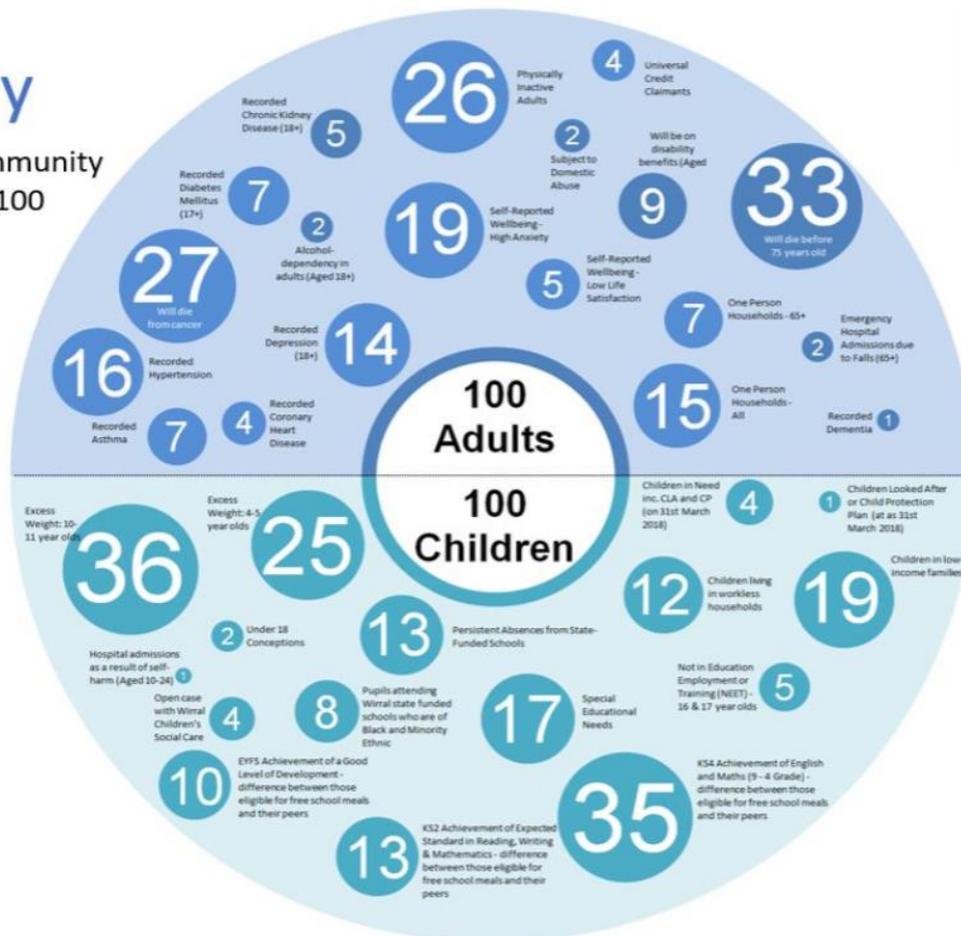
Adults	Children
33 Adults will die before they are 75 years old	36 10-11 years olds have excess weight
27 people will die from cancer	KS4 achievement of England and Maths (9.4 grade) difference between those eligible for free school meals and their peers.
26 will be physically inactive	25 4-5 year olds have excess weight
19 will self report has having high anxiety	19 children are in low income families

See illustration overleaf.

Figure 1.5: Summary of Wirral as a community of 100 adults and 100 children

Summary

If Wirral was a community of 100 Adults and 100 Children...



Governance arrangements: Wirral Council

On 14 October 2019 Wirral Council decided to change its governance arrangements. It moved from a “leader and cabinet” system to a “committee system” in September 2020.

Wirral Plan 2025

The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out a series of 20 pledges which the Council and its partners will work to achieve by 2025, focusing on the following key themes:

- ✦ A prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations.
- ✦ A cleaner, greener borough which celebrates, protects and improves the environment and urgently tackles the environmental emergency.
- ✦ Brighter futures for young people and families – regardless of background or where they live.
- ✦ Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families.
- ✦ Services which help people live happy, healthy, independent and active services there to support them when they need it.

To ensure that the Council and partners deliver against the priorities set out in the Wirral Plan 2025, there will be regular measurements of performance. This can be compared to previous performance and that of other areas.

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The Council suggests that regularly reviewing performance will help it to:

- ◀ Identify and address areas of under-performance.
- ◀ Plan for the future.
- ◀ Ensure we deliver value for money.
- ◀ Be accountable to our customers and stakeholders.
- ◀ Demonstrate transparency and good governance.

The vision is to secure the best opportunities and outcomes for residents, meaning that they will:

- ◀ Live in a safe, pleasant and clean communities where people want to live and raise families
- ◀ Live in a cleaner, greener borough which defends and improves the environment.
- ◀ Have access to services which help people live happy healthy independent and active lifestyles with public services there to support them when they need it.
- ◀ Benefit from a prosperous inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations.
- ◀ Young people and families will have brighter futures regardless of their background or where they live.

The previous Wirral Plan (2015-20) had a series of pledges. Some key ones are identified below which suggest the importance of taking part in sport, physical activity and/or recreation can have and the areas which it has an influence within different directorates within the Council.

Wirral Plan Pledge action plans: 2019-2020	Priorities
Older People Live Well Action Plan 2019-20	Being an active part in strong, thriving, local communities Enjoying a happy home life Being physically and emotionally healthy Being financially secure Having better access to the right information and support
Action Plan –Vulnerable Children reach their Full Potential	Support children to live at home in their own community and preventing them entering statutory social care. Children and young people enjoy good health and well-being into adulthood Children who cannot live at home with their family, or extended family, live in homes where they feel safe, secure and supported to reach their full potential.
Action Plan – People with disabilities live independent lives	People with disabilities live independent lives Young People and Adults with disabilities have access to employment and are financially resilient All people with disabilities have choice and control over their lives
Wirral Plan 2019-20 Action Plan – Growth	Increasing Employment Opportunities Workforce skills match business needs Growing competitive businesses
Healthier lives strategy	Our Ambition: “We want all of our residents to have a good quality of life and live healthy lifestyles in clean and safe environments” Facilitate a system wide approach to reducing smoking in Pregnancy Reduce the impact of alcohol misuse on individuals and communities Increase the number of people with a healthy weight Support people to take more control of their health and wellbeing
Community Services are joined up and accessible	Inspiring people to become more involved in their communities Encouraging more people to volunteer in Wirral Working together to remove barriers

How Wirral Council intends to do this



Development of a sport and physical activity strategy for Wirral (formerly the Leisure Strategy) 2020

The key focus of the strategy is to set out the priorities for sport and leisure facilities, services and activities. It also seeks to redress the balance between being a provider of facilities and tackling inequality through preventative, outreach and early intervention work across services. It is not a statutory requirement to have a strategy, but it is (correctly) seen as good practice to outline the Council’s plans for leisure services for the period 2020-2025 based on the evidence base and emerging COVID19 landscape.

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The stated vision is: “To work with residents and partners to provide accessible and affordable services that help to make physical activity a part of everyone's everyday lives”.

The Strategy represents an important next step in how WC helps residents to take up physical activity and remain active throughout their lives. It has four key strategic ‘active’ priorities:

- ◀ *Active people* - to increase participation in sport and physical activity among Wirral residents, working to reduce barriers and recognise the benefits of an active lifestyle by providing relevant and accessible activities targeting residents and communities with the highest identified needs.
- ◀ *Active partnerships* - to develop strong partnerships and community networks to support the delivery of a dynamic and cohesive offer that provides inclusive activities for people of all abilities.
- ◀ *Active place* - to provide modern, accessible, affordable, energy efficient facilities offering a quality experience that encourages our residents to be more active more often.
- ◀ *Active open spaces* – to influence place shaping to ensure a network of high quality and accessible spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

It expands on these priorities to describe what the Council is aiming to achieve and deliver. A high-level delivery plan has been developed to guide strategy implementation. A more detailed action and delivery plan will be completed following full consultation with residents, communities and other stakeholders and development of a comprehensive needs assessment. The final strategy will be outcomes based and monitored and refreshed annually in recognition of the success or otherwise of delivering on its aims, objectives, and targets, changing policy landscape, resources, partnerships and ongoing Covid-19 implications

Consultation with senior officers and councillors indicates an in-depth understanding of the wide and varied needs of local residents. The requirement to address health inequalities is universally acknowledged. It is also recognised that levels of need in different parts of the Authority area are totally different and that any future provision should take account of local variations and not be a provided in a ‘one size fits all’ format.

Another example is the clear understanding within WC that the Council’s role is to provide statutory services for families and young people having difficulties. There is a consistent view that discretionary services such as sport and leisure should be better-utilised to reduce the extent to which families go on to require such services and to mitigate the position for those already ‘in the system’.

It is also recognised that, in general, people who take health and wellbeing seriously (for themselves and their families) are often those who socially, financially and in the context of life outlook, have a wider range of choices in the first instance. They tend to be relatively financially stable (this may change in the shorter term because of the impact of the Covid pandemic) have good social networks and positive relationships. They live longer and have better life chances. A consultation acknowledged role of the Council is to enable those in areas of higher deprivation to aspire to and have the same life chances as others who are more affluent and enjoying healthier lifestyles in the authority.

Summary – Stage 1

Develop an understanding of the wider local strategic outcomes for your place
<p>Strategic outcomes have been identified and examined at a corporate level (Wirral Plan 2025 and the delivery framework) and in relation to the specific areas of health and physical activity (sport and physical activity strategy and draft indoor and built facilities strategies). This has been combined with analysis of the demographic profile of the Borough, and consultation with senior Council officers.</p> <p>Reducing inequalities across the borough and improving the health and well-being of all residents are the main shared strategic outcomes where there is potential for WC’s leisure team to demonstrate impact based upon implementation of the Wirral Plan 2025.</p>
Using a cross sector approach, identify local community needs and priorities
<p>Review of the Council’s strategic documents suggests an increasingly cohesive approach to developing local strategic outcomes, built upon a joint understanding of the need to reduce inequalities across the Authority. The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy clearly identifies aims to redress the balance between being a provider of facilities and tackling inequality through preventative, outreach and early intervention and prevention work - across services.</p> <p>The Wirral Plan 2025 identifies active and healthy lifestyles as part as a key component of its objectives.</p> <p>Community need and priorities are set out in the abovementioned documents, and evidence suggests that strategy development in Wirral is increasingly the result of a cross sector approach.</p> <p>There is a consistently espoused policy thread related to the ambition to increase levels of physical activity across the Borough whilst, as noted earlier, also recognising that one size does not fit all.</p> <p>KKP’s review of strategic evidence demonstrates a clear and consistent policy thread through from the Wirral Plan, Public Health Annual Report through to the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.</p>
Establish the contribution sport and physical activity can make
<p>WC’s Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2020 has established a framework and the Council is in the process developing the action plan which will represent an important next step in how it (and partners) help residents to take up physical activity and remain active throughout their lives.</p> <p>It is clear that this strategy needs to make reference to, and build up, the draft indoor and built facilities, playing pitch and open spaces strategies as all three are predicated upon extensive consultation. Many senior managers recognise the importance of and role of walking and cycling with regard to health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The vision and objectives set out in the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy reflect a considered approach to addressing inactivity, which starts to build on previous practice in the borough and correlates more directly with health and well-being outcomes. Further work and support are required to develop insight around community needs and wants in respect of addressing inactivity, especially in those areas of higher deprivation, where inequalities abound.</p>
Secure ‘buy in’ to the shared local strategic outcomes
<p>The Council’s Plan 2025 demonstrates corporate buy in to shared outcomes in respect of health & well-being by determining that residents will have access to services which help people live happy healthy independent and active lifestyles with public services there to support them when needed.</p> <p>The translation of the overarching Sport and Physical Activity Strategy into specific policy actions, working across directorates and with elected member representation should ensure and secure buy in to shared local outcomes.</p>

STAGE TWO - INSIGHT

Key steps

- ◀ Gather insight from the local community and stakeholders to identify barriers and opportunities for behaviour change
- ◀ Consider the contribution from the wider physical and social environment
- ◀ Establish where you are now and where you want to be in the future
- ◀ Agree the objectives needed to contribute to shared local strategic outcomes

Wirral Draft Local Plan 2020-2035

The Government requires each local planning authority to produce a local plan and then review it at least once every five years to ensure that it is up to date. It sets out policies and proposals to guide the future development of the Borough over that time. It will set out where future development will take place, and allocate land for housing, employment, mixed-use and other development. It will also seek to protect the most important characteristics of the Borough, by preserving its unique natural and historical assets from development.

The new Local Plan for Wirral is being prepared to shape the future of the borough for the 15-year period from 2020 to 2035. The latest stage was publication of a Local Plan Issues and Options document for public consultation. It addresses a wide range of issues, from strategic planning matters that affect the whole local authority area right through to finer detail related to the design of specific developments on individual sites.

Wirral Council Draft Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy - December 2019

The overall aim of the BFS is to locate the right sport and physical activity facilities in the right places to ensure that the maximum number of local people take part in regular, meaningful physical activity. These facilities will also need to be set up to achieve short, medium and longer-term financial goals. The council has an aspiration and need to consider its facilities planning, particularly in the context of its current and growing population and the changing economic and demographic profile of the area - particularly via its Local Plan, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State during 2020.

Key strategic issues raised by the BFS Needs Assessment in alignment with Sport England's Planning Framework include the following:

Protect

- ◀ Commit to making the identified short and medium-term investment in maintenance and refurbishment to protect and improve existing WC public sports facilities.

Enhance

- ◀ Ensure that Council owned/managed facilities make a progressively greater (and measured) contribution to reducing health inequalities and are fully accessible to people from all the Borough's communities through targeted initiatives, appropriately targeted concessionary pricing, programming and staff training.
- ◀ Ensure that all school sports facilities are made fully available for community use (through binding, appropriate and detailed community use agreements) and that an agreed minimum level of availability is agreed.

- ◀ Link this, wherever feasible, directly to judicious investment in improving the quality of school sports halls (and associated changing provision) particularly if/where other facility plans are likely to lead to increased reliance on the school stock both overall and in specific localities.
- ◀ Support other developments (via planning and officer expertise) which assist in increasing the level and quality of provision catering for sport and physical activity in the wider community (specifically in sports including gymnastics, sailing and athletics).
- ◀ Continue to work with the LTA to create a flexible solution to enhance the viability, financial sustainability and contribution to increasing participation in tennis and other sports at the Indoor Tennis Centre.

Provide

- ◀ Given that WC owned swimming facilities are collectively ageing and, in some cases, reaching the end of their useful life and in need of significant investment over the lifespan of the Local Plan, commission a long-term Borough master plan for swimming facilities in the Authority. This should be done with a view to the creation of an appropriately located and specified stock which will accommodate a high volume of swimming lessons, club activity and the full range of public swimming opportunity.
- ◀ Link this (in terms of physically co-terminus provision) to a review (and improvement of) health and fitness provision (fitness rooms and studios) and, as appropriate other indoor sports/activity spaces. This should be done both in the context of servicing existing demand with high quality provision and with a view to addressing the next phase of fiscal improvement and efficiencies in respect of the net cost of Council leisure centre provision.

Other/general

- ◀ Improve the breadth, depth and quality of performance management data collected (and shared) and the associated analysis of facility usage to inform future marketing, promotion, programming and pricing etc.
- ◀ Working with the Wirral Sports Forum and specific NGBs, create a workforce development plan to counter shortfalls in volunteers, officials and coaches across a range of sports.

Wirral health and wellbeing 2017

This year's Public Health Annual Report 'Expect Better', focuses on the inequalities in life expectancy across Wirral. It recommends that Wirral partners, health and social care organisations and residents put prevention first by supporting each other to live healthier lives.

The Wirral Plan 2020, thus, pledges to:

- ◀ Reduce the number of people who smoke in Wirral.
- ◀ Reduce the impact of alcohol misuse on individuals and communities.
- ◀ Increase the number of people with a healthy weight in the borough.
- ◀ Support people to take more control of their health and wellbeing.

The Plan asks that Wirral residents take control of their own health and wellbeing by:

- ◀ Following health advice.
- ◀ Making use of the many opportunities to improve their wellbeing that Wirral offers.
- ◀ Seeking appropriate treatment for their symptoms.
- ◀ Attending offers for vaccinations and screening tests.
- ◀ Most of all, expecting better for their own health and that of their families.

The recommendations highlight potential measures to reduce avoidable deaths across Wirral. It is, however, in no way exhaustive. It is recognised that, in reality, there will always be some deaths from avoidable causes simply due to the range of factors that impact on people’s lives, including lifestyle, health beliefs, availability and access to healthcare, accidents, etc.

This said, reducing avoidable deaths by improving the health of the population and reducing or delaying the onset of long-term conditions, such as heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, etc., is an essential part of increasing the quality of life for local people, whilst helping to reduce the impact of an ageing population on health and social care services

Wirral open space draft standards report-2019

This has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); which sets out the Governments planning policies for England. In order for planning policies to be ‘sound’ local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities². Paragraph 96 of the NPPF refers to the need to identify qualitative or quantitative deficiencies or surpluses of open space. This was undertaken in 2019 in Wirral.

For mapping purposes and audit analysis, Wirral is divided into eight sub-analysis areas based on the Councils Local Plan settlement areas. This allows more localised examination of open space surpluses and deficiencies and local circumstances and issues to be taken into account. The areas and their populations are shown in the table below.

Table 2.1: Population by analysis area

Settlement area	Population (2019)
Birkenhead Commercial Area	2,231
Birkenhead Suburban Area	89,334
Bromborough Eastham Urban Area	55,765
Heswall Urban Area	28,467
Mid Wirral Urban Area	53,581
Rural Area	7,084
Wallasey Urban Area	61,083
West Kirby Hoylake Urban Area	25,250
Wirral	322,796

The following provides a summary on the key findings through the application of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards. It incorporates and recommends what the Council should be seeking to achieve in order to address the issues highlighted.

Recommendation 1: *Sites helping or with the potential to help serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping should be recognised through opportunities for enhancement*

Recommendation 2: *Ensure low quality/value sites helping to serve potential gaps in accessibility catchments are prioritised for enhancement*

Recommendation 3: *Recognise low quality and value sites and how they may be able to meet other needs*

² Playing pitches are the subject of a separate assessment prepared by the Council

If no improvement to quality and/or value can be implemented for sites identified as low quality and/or value, a change of primary typology should be considered. If no requirement for another type of open space site is recognised, or it is not feasible to change the primary typology of the site, then the site could be potentially redundant/ 'surplus to requirements'.

For instance, 141 parks, natural, amenity and play sites are identified as either lower quality and/or value. This includes 18 which receive no quality/value score due to being predominantly observed as inaccessible.

Wirral Playing Pitch Strategy (2016)

The Strategy is in two parts: an Assessment Report, setting out the latest background information for each sport; and a Strategy and Action Plan, setting out a series of initial recommendations for further consideration by a Steering Group, which will be chaired by the Council's Strategic Hub. The Strategy shows that there is still strong and increasing demand for the use of a full range of facilities. There is a particular shortage of football pitches across the Borough, as well as more localised shortfalls for cricket and rugby union and growing demand for hockey. Demand for bowls and tennis is currently being met, although qualitative improvements for tennis will be required in the future.

The Strategy goes on to conclude that there is a need to protect levels of provision; improve quality where possible, to create additional capacity; and, if viable, create access to school sites or bring some disused sites back into use, if the needs identified are to be fully met. The revised Strategy will support Wirral Plan pledges related to leisure opportunities for all; helping residents to live healthier; and will contribute towards an attractive local environment; and delivers one of the agreed actions of the Wirral Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

WC is currently in the process of updating the PPS; the new strategy is due for completion in August 2021. Extensive consultation is being undertaken with residents, sports clubs and national governing bodies of sport which will not only ensure compliance with Sport England's NPPF requirements, but will also help the Council to better understand local need.

Grassroot football report 2020

There is a recognition of the importance of football to local communities. Working with the local community, officers have developed a business case and are applying for grants to the Football Foundation for the first two priority AGP proposed sites at Woodchurch Leisure Centre and Wirral Tennis Centre, Bidston. There is a need for match funding from WC's capital programme.

Further developments will follow the development of a business case and grant application process to the Football Foundation, for the remaining three priority sites Leasowe, Arrowe Park and Bromborough. Again, this will be subject to Council approval for the match funding from the capital programme.

All the strategies cited above are predicated on extensive local consultation. The draft Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy notes that WC owned swimming facilities are collectively ageing, in some instances reaching the end of their useful life. Most will, at the very least, be in need of significant investment over the lifespan of the Local Plan. There is, thus, a need to commission a long-term Borough master plan for swimming facilities. The Strategy also identifies the requirement to improve the breadth, depth and quality of performance management data collected (which will enable the WC to assess impact and target resources in line with its identified corporate responsibilities).

Summary: Stage 2 - Insight

Gather insight from the local community and stakeholders to identify barriers and opportunities for behaviour change
<p>Analysis above highlights that WC has a robust evidence base in respect of barriers and opportunities in relation to its facilities infrastructure. These studies are informed by extensive consultation with communities and stakeholders, meeting relevant guidance and provide a defensible position within the Council's Local Plan evidence base.</p> <p>In respect of its broader sport and physical activity strategy, community consultation will take place before the strategy is published (due in June 2021) and therefore WC should ensure that the future range of interventions to address inactivity is informed by ongoing research.</p>
Consider the contribution from the wider physical and social environment
<p>The Draft Open Spaces Assessment and Standards Paper (2019) and the recently commissioned PPS (due August 2021) considers the wider physical environments across Wirral. Walking, cycling and active travel were raised as concerns and important elements during consultation with senior managers. There is a specific keenness to develop cycle routes (and get them better used) across Wirral.</p> <p>The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy identifies Active Place and Active Open Spaces with a view to encouraging residents to be more active more often and provide a network of high quality and accessible spaces that make it easier for people to be active.</p>
Establish where you are now and where you want to be in the future
<p>The previously mentioned strategies provide robust assessments of community need (based on extensive community and stakeholder consultation) and suggested interventions linked to the sport and physical activity strategy need to be developed.</p> <p>They provide a clear direction of travel for the Council in relation to its Local Plan evidence base and justification for future investment from a range of sources (including planning gain).</p> <p>There is an understanding amongst senior officers in respect of the need to work across directorates but there is a need for better understanding of the financial pressures, for example, placed on Leisure Services. This service does generate income for the Council (but operates at a net financial loss). Further work is required to assess and improve levels of understanding in respect of the social value of Leisure Services as well as their trading performance. There is a recognition amongst officers that they could/should look to commission services in-house (where possible) in the first instance. Any future investment in leisure facilities needs to ensure that social value is as well understood (and planned for) as financial value/income. Further consultation and insight is likely to be needed in order to determine 'place-based' solutions in respect of existing communities and new housing growth.</p>
Agree the objectives needed to contribute to shared local strategic outcomes
<p>The stated priorities and commitments within each of the key strategic planning documents reflect the strategic outcomes identified within the Wirral's Plan 2025 and Local Plan as well as wider health and wellbeing strategic plans.</p> <p>Objectives set out in the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy in respect of health and wellbeing do demonstrate how they can contribute to those at a corporate and cross-directorate level. In particular, the need to support the reduction of inequalities across Wirral.</p>

STAGE 3 - INTERVENTIONS

Key Steps

- ◀ Consider a range of facility and service interventions across the broad range of provision
- ◀ Determine the optimal and sustainable mix of facility and service interventions
- ◀ Explore and identify effective management model(s)
- ◀ Establish the key performance indicators (KPIs) for each intervention

Stages one and two of this report have established that WC sees physical activity as playing a critical role in addressing its public health outcomes and addressing health inequalities across the Borough, particularly those around life expectancy. It has set out its approach within Wirral Plan 2025 and the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy2020.

There is an underlying message that Leisure Services is not achieving as well as it might. This is attributable to a number of factors including facility quality, location and the prevailing emphasis on driving income. This is, arguably, presently done at the expense of internal commissioning and on the basis of a realisation among other directorates of the financial pressures the Service faces. It is universally accepted and agreed that leisure facilities are inherently important but it is also recognised that, at present, that most of the current ones are not fit for purpose – either now and for the future.

Colleagues in Children’s Services suggested that access to sport and leisure should be an entitlement not an ‘add on’. Other consultees confirmed the importance that access to and the take up of sport and physical activity can make to a range of services including adult services as well as the wider public health agenda.

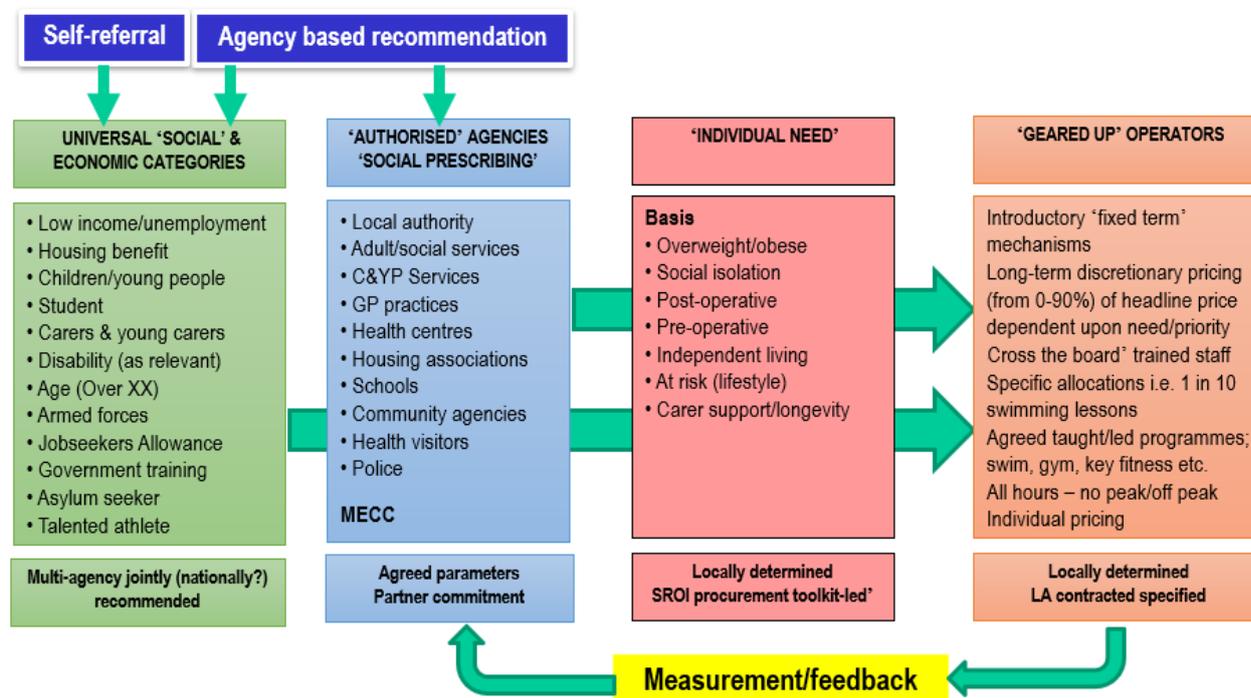
The Covid epidemic has highlighted the ability of the Leisure Team to reach out and offer online services (fitness classes) to those unable to attend leisure centres. These have been relatively successful. The Assistant Director of Leisure is keen to raise aspirations and ensure that local neighbourhoods are serviced by appropriate facilities. An example of the issues faced is facility at Woodchurch Leisure Centre which is in poor condition. Its quality (or lack thereof) has a knock on effect among local people who are unlikely to use it due to its condition (even if they had the time, money and energy to wish to do so). This also affects people’s perception of the importance placed on their local area by the Council.

Consultation with senior officers and Members identified core messaging throughout. All consultees identified the need to deal with inequalities in the Borough and all acknowledged that improved access to and take up of sport and physical activity is one key method of so doing. The need to achieve the desired transformational changes in residents’ behaviour via the adoption of a ‘whole system’ approach, working at a neighbourhood level via its integrated neighbourhood teams is also confirmed .

Senior Council executive staff recognise the need to further develop the concept of (and importance placed on) social value and the need to build ‘making every contact count (MECC) into a customer offer. This needs to be considered against the backdrop that a solely business case/income generation focus on leisure services - in particular facility operation is incompatible with embedding social value.

Figure 3.1 below identifies how a MECC type system could work in Wirral alongside and as part of facility improvement and development. This will need to entail wholesale support for the programme of change and organisational development (which WC is currently initiating) led by the Assistant Director responsible for HR and organisational development.

Figure 3.1 Social outcome delivery model



WC is committed to working cross departmentally. The model identified above identifies how this might happen in respect of improving access to leisure facilities but it will take all directorates to understand their potential role in order to make it a success. For example, WC is aware of people children and young people in care, those people who enter the benefits system (who may be the poorest and most vulnerable in society).

The opportunity (GDPR regulations notwithstanding) exists to use this data to identify and target sport and physical opportunities at them. WC has experience of allowing young people who leave care not to pay Council Tax for a specific amount of time (which reduces the financial burden on them) so will be able to build on its expertise in this respect. It may be that the wider family of a child in care can access facilities or programmes (depending upon need).

Consideration of price elasticity needs careful consideration. Identifying where the subsidy goes and who can afford to pay (potentially) more.

There will be a need for the Council to identify the facility mix requirements, based on supply and demand and for this to inform the wider regeneration proposals.

Development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

In relation to facilities, and on the assumption that new centres are to be developed, a suite of outcome focused KPIs is likely to be needed to measure their impact against the key objective of reducing health inequality across the Borough.

Summary Stage 3 – Interventions

Consider a range of facility and service interventions across the broad range of provision
<p>The Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, alongside the Built Facilities, Open Space and emerging PPS Strategies present a good range of planned interventions and a clear evidence base for the Local Plan.</p> <p>There is also a clear and eloquently expressed desire to work cross departmentally which with Regeneration moving at a pace, provides opportunity to make a difference sooner rather than later. The Council should consider how it ensures active design and active travel principles are built into the master planning of any new facilities. It is also universally agreed that different communities have different needs and one size does not fit all.</p>
Determine the optimal and sustainable mix of facility and service interventions
<p>The Draft Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy identifies that the current swimming stock in Wirral is not sustainable, is coming to the end of its lifecycle and there is a need to commission a long-term Borough master plan for swimming provision. This needs to align to consideration of investment in more and better health and fitness facilities (ability to cross subsidise). Concurrent improvement to the use of front-of-house systems, data and communications (linking to understanding of where there is greatest need and, for example where and how people access the benefits system) to ensure that Leisure Services with the aim of continuing to reduce inequalities across the Borough</p> <p>There is a plethora of asset-based information as well as pressure being placed on leisure officers to identify facility developments based on emerging regeneration needs.</p> <p>A twin -track approach whereby a borough wide plan for swimming (based on the needs assessment) is undertaken in parallel with leisure facility investment options appraisal is recommended, whereby facility options can be flexed' in response to emerging findings and direction of travel of different directorates within the Council. Co-location and an agreed understanding of the role of leisure needs agreement across the Council, which can then be further extended to the wider public.</p> <p>Whilst extensive community consultation has taken place for the strategies identified above, there is a need to continue to engage with different communities ensuring facilities are relevant and accessible.</p>
Explore and identify effective management model(s)
<p>Leisure Services is the second largest income generator for WC (second to Council Tax) but still operates as a net subsidy per annum. This is set against a backdrop whereby the Council needs to achieve further cost savings. This has been exacerbated by the pandemic lockdown.</p> <p>There is no real drive, within the Council, to externalise facilities. It is worth noting that facilities and staff have been used to good effect throughout the pandemic due to the ability of the Council to use both flexibly to support wider Council services.</p> <p>As part of the investment strategy the process in respect of indoor facilities should include a full options appraisal in respect of management models and recommend a preferred option to the Council (this may need to be externally supported) in order that WC is able to achieve some of the abovementioned outcomes.</p>
Establish the key performance indicators for each intervention
<p>The Wirral Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, alongside the Draft Indoor and Built Facilities and Open Space strategies and the emerging PPS contain a mix of outcome focused and quantitative based KPIs. It is acknowledged that more work is needed to ensure that the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy contains the right KPIs, that they are adhered to and that the community is engaged in this process</p>

STAGE 4 – COMMITMENT

- ◀ Secure investment commitment to outcome delivery
- ◀ Agree sustainable and effective business case
- ◀ Identify resource requirements to support implementation
- ◀ Secure stakeholder commitment and move to implementation
- ◀ Approval from cabinet/members to progress to implementation

This report has established that Wirral Council has in place a set of jointly agreed outcomes supporting the role that sport and physical activity has/will have in contributing to improved health and wellbeing in the local area and in the reduction of health inequalities.

Initial commitment in respect of stakeholder financial contributions can be evidenced in terms of the investment in the Grassroots Football proposal whereby pitches are being installed at Woodchurch Leisure Centre and Wirral Tennis Centre, Bidston

As highlighted earlier, the Councils Sport and Physical Activity Strategy is in the process of being formally adopted and endorsed (due for completion in June 2021). This should facilitate securing funding and resource in the future.

Fundamentally, proving the business case for investment (investment strategy) into, and sustainability of WC indoor leisure facilities (underpinned by the indoor facility needs assessment) is the critical piece of work that should be undertaken. It is one of the priority recommendations arising from this report.

WC has the information it needs to move forward. As is noted elsewhere in this report, the next step must be a facilities master plan for the Borough (based on where swimming pools need to be situated, their scale and configuration). This may lead to a reduction in the actual number of pools but could lead to increased water space. On agreement upon this as the way forward, a business case analysis needs to be prepared for the Borough (taking account of short, medium and long-term interventions) with information being fed in 'real time' into capital investment proposals.

It will be important for WC to set down a roadmap geared to gaining full commitment to a programme of leisure centre renewal and to approach this in a coordinated fashion. This will require the commissioning/recruitment of specialist project management expertise in order to marshal resources from across its various departments but critically regeneration, planning, children's services, adult services and public health.

Summary – Stage 4 - Commitment

Secure investment commitment to outcome delivery
A capital investment strategy in respect of indoor facilities, linked to a new master plan (based on the recently completed facilities audit and needs assessment (and the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy) will provide an evidence-based approach to securing investment into leisure centre renewal.
Agree sustainable and effective business case
Business case development in respect of new leisure centre development will need to be progressed for all of Wirral. This must be based on an agreed master plan and then specific feasibility studies for each new facility development or major investment. A co-ordinated approach should be taken to the commissioning of the investment strategy, business case development, management options appraisal. The potential impact of Covid-19 will need to be factored into the business case in respect of anticipated pricing (and elasticity therein). There is scope to consider whether longer term changes in behaviour can be accommodated within the facility mix and considered as part of the associated community consultation.
Identify resource requirements to support implementation
Project management requirements and agreement re appropriate KPIs is required. Project management resource requirements in respect of delivering the investment strategy and relevant feasibility studies (co-ordinating respective regeneration, leisure, planning teams via steering group) should also be identified. Cross departmental communication is essential to ensure that opportunities are maximised, especially with regard to co-location. In addition, consideration of wider community partnership options need to be explored.
Secure stakeholder commitment and move to implementation approval from cabinet/ members to progress to implementation
Stakeholder consultation and commitment in respect of a delivery plan linked to the new Master Plan and Sport and Physical Activity Strategy need to be secured. Committee approval also needs to be sought. Stakeholder consultation and commitment in respect of an investment strategy in relation to the new master plan and relevant feasibility studies should be secured based on a co-ordinated set of proposals. This should be informed by the already completed needs assessment and regeneration proposals. Clarification is required on the level of financial contribution the Council can make to the project and the level of support required from capitalised revenues. WC should determine, at the point where progression through RIBA design stages is ongoing, whether there is a requirement for additional external financial commitment from Sport England and other funding bodies.
Approval from cabinet/members to progress to implementation
A timetable should be developed in respect of gaining committee / member approval for both the new master plan and leisure centre investment strategy.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this report has found that WC is well positioned in terms of its progress through the four stages of the Sport England Strategic Planning Model Guidance. WC is in the process of developing/refining a coherent set of outcomes in relation to sport & physical activity's contribution to health and well-being and the reduction of health inequalities underpinned by good levels of cross directorate buy in. This emerging position appears to be gathering momentum.

WC's insight (in certain areas of the Council) is well developed, particularly in respect of its built and outdoor facilities evidence base. The development of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2020) has added further momentum to this process. Its community-level research into the needs and wants of residents, and specifically what interventions may influence a change in behaviour will require further attention (as identified in the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy), both in respect of its facility offer and wider outreach plans.

There is scope for a wider examination of how the active environment can contribute to the delivery of WC's strategic objectives, bringing to bear Sport England Active Design principles and a more fully embracing cross-directorate approach to developing the Authority's walking and cycling infrastructure.

Finally, the Authority manages its own leisure facilities and whilst there does not appear to be a strong desire to alter the status quo, it is recommended that a management options appraisal be undertaken to ensure that (existing and new) facilities provide the best social and financial return for the Council. A summary of key next steps for the authority is outlined below.

Stage 1 – Outcomes

Ongoing work and support are required to develop insight with regard to community needs and wants in respect of addressing inactivity.

Stage 2 - Insight

There is potential, using the current evidence base augmented by community consultation and through greater joint planning across the Wirral Council Planning, Regeneration, Children's Services, Adult Services and Financial teams to develop a more all-embracing 'place based' approach to influencing behaviour change.

Stage 3 – Interventions

A twin-track approach whereby a borough wide plan for swimming (based on the needs assessment) is undertaken in parallel with leisure facility investment options appraisal is recommended. Complementary facilities based on local need and a strong business case need to be considered leading to a Facilities Master Plan for Wirral.

Facility options can be flexed' in response to emerging findings and the direction of travel of different Council directorates. Co-location and an agreed understanding of the role of leisure needs can then be further extended to the wider public.

Further community consultation will be required to validate the Council's investment proposal(s) and refine the wider facility development proposals and mixes.

Further investigation of interventions in the active environment (parks, open space, urban environment) and incorporation of active design principles into future proposals should be considered.

Future review should consider the remaining facility strategy recommendations in light of anticipated housing growth in the Authority.

Stage 4 - commitment

Clarification is required with regard to the level of financial contribution the Council can make to the project and the level of support required from capitalised revenues.

WC should determine its likely requirement for external financial support.

A set of anticipated KPIs should be developed both in the context of their own value and in the event of them being required to underpin Sport England capital investment.

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In summary SOPG based policy-based progress in the Authority is strong as is the alignment with Public Health outcomes. The Council is moving away from its former silo-based approach to a much more collaborative cross-departmental approach to delivering services. Senior officers and Council elected members are determined to reduce health inequalities and this ambition is widely supported. It is now imperative that the Council continues to communicate well and achieves community buy-in prior to the development of a detailed delivery plan.

The SOPG and Draft Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy evidence base validates an investment strategy for indoor facilities to address the fundamental strategic challenge of an ageing, inefficient indoor sport and physical activity stock. The Council needs to act decisively to put in place a long-term transformational plan for the Borough accompanied by a clear approach in respect of resourcing the associated work and facilitating its progress through its own decision-making process. It should, in a value for money context, probably take the form of a single commission which comprises a Facilities Master Plan for the Borough which, in turn, informs a Leisure Investment Strategy.

The rationale for a single commission is that there is a need for the Council to build momentum with respect to its facility needs and to provide senior managers and Members with an overview of what is needed, the high-level capital cost and the revenue impact of an improved facility offer. This will enable it to gauge the potential impact of an improved revenue position on its overall affordability threshold. This is also important in the context of the Council's emerging Regeneration Strategy.