

Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee**21st September 2023**

REPORT TITLE:	SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report highlights the annual progress (April 2022 to March 2023) that has been made since the launch of Creating an Active Wirral 2026, the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Wirral. The report contributes to the Active and Healthy Lives Wirral Plan 2021-2026 priority.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee is recommended to consider and note the progress made against the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy between April 2022 to March 2023.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The progress report sets out the current progress of the work being undertaken as part of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 1.2 One of the challenges Wirral faces is reducing the stark health inequalities that exist between different parts of the borough and improving the life chances for all. Sport and physical activity can contribute significantly towards combatting this, due to its well documented and scientifically proven potential in improving a person's physical and mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development.
- 1.3 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will guide and influence both internal teams and external partners, Planning Teams, Public Health, Constituency Team, Children's and Adult Services, national governing bodies of sport, local sports clubs, and community groups. This final strategy will be a consideration in planning decisions, the development of planning policy and the community funding panel decisions. The strategy will also be a key document that articulates the needs of Wirral residents as part of the Wirral Plan 2026. The final strategy will be integrated into the wider Children's, Adult Social Care and Health agendas, as well as linking into all aspect of the wider Wirral 2026 plan: focusing on the contribution sport and physical activity provides to each of the thematic areas, active and healthy lives, safe and pleasant communities, sustainable environment, inclusive economy and brighter futures for all.
- 1.4 It is not a statutory requirement to have a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, but it is seen as good practice in setting out the council's priorities and plans for meeting sport and leisure needs. The council's previous Leisure Strategy aligned with the Wirral Plan 2020 and placed a significant emphasis on outdoor spaces and tourism. In seeking to support the new Wirral 2026 Plan, this strategy, whilst continuing to support and build on the benefits of outdoor space, will place a greater emphasis on inequality and the need to tackle the significant degree of health inequality across our Borough – magnified by the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options as this as it is for information, to allow the Committee to comment and note.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 This is the annual progress between April 2022 and March 2023 that has been made since the approval of Creating an Active Wirral 2026, the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Wirral at the January 2022 Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is acknowledged that upfront investment in physical activity could lead to longer term reductions in costs of other whole system costs including front-line public sector (children's, adults etc) and health services.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is no legal requirement to have a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, as the Council's Leisure Services are non- statutory. However, it is seen as good practice to outline the council's plans for the period 2021-2026, based public consultation and the Council's aspiration to have healthier and happier residents were activity forms part of everyday life.
- 5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, Legal advice will be sought where relevant, in relation to any proposed partnership arrangements, arising from the action plan.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 One of the principles of the new strategy is to make best use of available resources and community assets, and it is assumed that staffing and other costs connected with the delivery of the strategy will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no relevant risks associated with this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As set out under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty (PSED), an equalities impact assessment was carried out during the development of the strategy.
- 9.2 The Equality Impact Assessment of October 2021 has been reviewed and this report makes no change to it. It is available at the following link, <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments> .

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Modernising the leisure centres will reduce the environmental impact whilst investment will result in more attractive buildings which will enhance the local townscape.
- 10.2 Keeping leisure provision within local communities and increasing our outreach offer, will all serve to minimise emissions from car usage. Our leisure centres will all have cycle storage and active travel access with associated infrastructure facilities, under the government's 'gear change' initiative, will be considered and implemented where

appropriate.

- 10.3 Where possible there will be investment in environmentally friendly solutions and designs when buildings are improved and modernised, and when purchasing new equipment in order to reduce our carbon footprint by supporting the outcomes of the Cool 2 climate change strategy for Wirral.
- 10.4 As a result of the initiatives outlined above, the content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
- 10.5 Officers are in the process of applying for capital funds, administered by Salix, on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to decarbonise our leisure facilities in line with the climate emergency plan, whilst also looking to save on utility costs through efficiencies delivered by retrofitted modern technology.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The social value generated from the leisure centres reached £9.96million, broken down includes a contribution of £5.4million to subjective wellbeing (the estimated cost saved of achieving the same level of wellbeing outside of sport), £2.48million to social and community development (costs saved in criminal justice costs), £1.96million to physical and mental health (Health and social care savings) and £73,000 to individual development (additional earnings generated through the correlation between participation in sport, and educational attainment). The average social value per person is valued at over £100.
- 11.2 Data from the Moving Communities platform will be regularly presented to members as part of the Leisure Service dashboard and will be used a baseline to monitor the social value added, as a result of the implementation of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 11.3 In addition, it is envisaged that the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will have other social value benefits for both the organisation, and the wider community, developing and building back communities post covid, creating local opportunities for local people to thrive, especially in the most deprived areas.

REPORT AUTHOR:

Sarah Robertson

Neighbourhoods

sarahrobertson@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Progress Report 2022/23

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Creating an Active Wirral, a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Wirral 2026

<https://bepartofthemovement.com/>

Wirral Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2021

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/gi2.1-wirral-indoor-sports-facilities-strategy-2021.pdf>

Wirral Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan, 2021

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-planning-evidence-and-research-report-37>

Sport England Strategy, Uniting the Movement 2021 – 2031

<https://www.sportengland.org/about-us/uniting-movement>

Wirral Borough Council: Re-Imagining Libraries, Leisure, Parks and Cultural Services, Phase 2 Report, October 2017

Measuring the Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England, 2020

Sport England – Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance 2019

Merseyside Sport Partnership Strategic Framework (2017-2022)

<https://merseysidesport.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Agenda-item-4-MSP-Mission-Vision-Values-5-1.pdf>

Department of Culture, Media and Sport: Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity 2023

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181262/11187-DCMS-Sports_Strategy_Report_CM_ACCESSIBLE-02.pdf

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee in accordance with section (d) of its Terms of Reference “for the provision and management of leisure, sports and recreation facilities”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	January 2022
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	November 2020
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	July 2021

APPENDIX 1
Wirral Borough Council
Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee
Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Progress Report 2022/23

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In January 2022, 'Creating an Active Wirral 2026', the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Wirral was launched with the ambition to make sport and physical activity part of everyone's everyday life.
- 1.2. The strategy consists of four main themes that are the priorities to increasing activity levels of our residents. These are:
- ACTIVE PEOPLE -To provide opportunities for all Wirral residents to be more active.
 - ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS – To build partnerships and collaborations that provide inclusive activities for all.
 - ACTIVE SPACES & PLACES – Influence place-shaping to ensure network of high quality and accessible spaces that makes it easier for people to be active.
 - ACTIVE FACILITIES – To create accessible, affordable, environmentally sustainable facilities offering a quality experience and environment that encourages Wirral residents to be more active, more often.
- 1.3. Inactivity presents as a key contributor to poor health and this strategy places delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents as our number one priority. In order to support our most inactive residents become more active, whilst retaining the number of residents who are active, the need to work collaboratively to design and shape opportunities that meet their individual needs is key to reducing inactivity. We will be working universally across the Borough to drive up activity levels as well as targeting the specific groups we know are at greater risk from inactivity.
- 1.4. Wirral has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working and residents expect public sector and community, voluntary and faith partners to work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration.
- 1.5. A Whole System Approach is required to concentrate energy, effort and resources to provide efficient and effective services to local communities to enable people to become more active.

2.0 Annual Report – Progress on Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

A summary against each strategic theme is set out below.

2.1 Theme 1 – Active People

- 2.1.1 The most recent Active Lives Survey results were published in November 2022 and the direction of travel is positive and shows recovery through from the pandemic. Since November 2021 to November 2022 the number of active adult residents has increased by 1,400, to 60.5% of the Wirral population. The number of inactive adult residents, those undertaking less than 30 minutes activity per week has decreased by 3,700 people to 26.3% of the population. The number of fairly active adults (those partaking in over 30 minutes of activity per week, but not meeting the required 150minutes per week) has also improved.
- 2.1.2 Wirral is above the England average of 36.9% and the Cheshire and Merseyside average of 38.4% of adults who don't meet the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) guidelines for physical activity. There are 39.5% of adults in Wirral who don't meet the CMO guidelines. With regards to the CMO guidelines of 2 muscle strength building activities per week, 59.5% of residents don't meet the level.
- 2.1.3 The most recent Active Lives data for children and young people published for the academic year 21/22 shows an increase in the number of children taking part in an average of 60+ minutes of activity per day In the academic year 19/20 43% of children met this threshold rising to 51.2% in the academic year 21/22. It was also noted that 77.8% of children (school year 3-11) stated that they would like to swim more often, this is higher than the national average.
- 2.1.4 Messaging – Active Wirral is the new overarching brand for Wirral Council's extensive sport and physical activity offer and was launched alongside the strategy in January 2022. The brand provides the platform to encourage Wirral residents of all ages and abilities to be active through the diverse range of activities and environments that are aligned with the Wirral wellbeing agenda i.e.. Keep. Wirral. Well. Active Wirral is supported by 3 pillars: happier, healthier, stronger.
- Stronger: Regular exercise adds to life expectancy, the more you exercise, the greater the benefit. But as well as increasing muscle mass, strength training increases bone density and joint flexibility, helping joints stay flexible and keeping you active.
 - Healthier: Staying healthy physically can help you stay healthy emotionally too. If you're eating the right food and keeping fit, your body will be strong and help you to cope with stress, fight illness and will also help you stay in good health later in life.
 - Happier: Happiness lowers your risk for cardiovascular disease, lowers your blood pressure, enables better sleep, improves your diet, allows you to maintain a normal bodyweight through regular exercise and reduces stress.
- 2.1.5 In March 2022 the first campaign of Active Wirral was launched called 'Be part of the Movement'. This was a campaign to create a movement across Wirral to get people more active and healthier by promoting a healthy lifestyle as well as free and affordable activity for everyone. The photography campaign reflected the campaign messaging, using real people partaking in physical activity across Wirral locations. It not only focused on a healthier lifestyle but also Wirral's fantastic community spirit. The campaign included 36 posters across 7 railway stations, 2 48 sheet illuminated billboards in Wirral and 17 bus rears. This successful 4-week outdoor campaign resulted in 65% of the Wirral population seeing the campaign. The digital campaign

included a microsite, social media content and a digital download pack featuring certificates, charts and other digital assets. The website can be viewed here www.bepartofthemovement.com.

- 2.1.6 Walking & Cycling – Beat the Street (pilot project) is an evidence-based population level, behaviour-change programme that creates a social norm around being active. It connects people to each other and their environment and addresses health inequalities through small changes to daily behaviour. In Moreton East, Leasowe and Seacombe it brought partners together to deliver shared objectives on improving people's health and wellbeing, promoting active travel and being active in their local environment.

Sustainability is in the behaviour change of participants, enabling them to take control of their health. The headline findings included 2,863 people took part with 38,794 miles travelled. 58% of inactive adults became active and 38% of less active children became active. 50% of players were adults and 50% were children. 26% had a long-term medical condition and 90% of participants were living in the 20% most deprived areas in the country, with 94% living in the 40% most deprived. Throughout the 4-week game, 89,339 taps were recorded on Beat Boxes position on lamp posts and 38,794 miles were travelled an average of 14 miles per person. 110 children provided qualitative feedback post-game.

These responses suggested children had become more physically active and more connected to each other and the local area.

“it made us want to walk instead of being in as it was fun to do” (boy under 12).

“It encouraged us to get out more as a family, walking and cycling” (boy under 12).

“We went the longer way to school and for more walks then we were used to so we could play the game” (girl under 12).

The proportion of adults reporting being inactive decreased from 48% to 25%, whereas the proportion reporting undertaking 150+mins per week increased from 42% to 68% (based on 125 adults). 79% of adults felt the game had made their commute to work more enjoyable (based on 150 responses). The proportion of children reporting being less active (<30 mins per day) decreased from 59% to 49%, whereas the proportion reporting undertaking 60+mins per day increased from 23% to 35% (based on 124 children). 84% of children felt the game had made their commute to school more enjoyable (based on 142 responses). 116 adults provided qualitative feedback post-game. Open question feedback from adults suggested the game brought families together and increased physical activity, especially walking.

“It helped me to get my children out and do some exercise as a family as they usually prefer to stay indoors” – (Female, aged 30-39)

- 2.1.7 Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Wirral organise short, friendly walks in and around Wirral. The walks are led by a Walk Leader and take place from West Kirby Concourse, Birkenhead Park, Arrowe Park and Royden Park. 52% of walkers live in the most deprived areas of Wirral, 85% living with a long-term condition and 70% have a disability. In total 280 walkers have taken part with 60 now trained walk leaders. Volunteers have been trained as leaders from groups including Wirral Ways,

Journeymen, GP practices & Health Coaches, Spider Project, Ferry Families and Heart4Refugees.

- 2.1.8 Wirral's Wellbeing Weight Management Project – In March 2021, additional funding from government for a tier 2 weight management programme to support people living with excess weight and obesity to lose weight and maintain healthier lifestyle was provided to expand the existing tier 2 weight management offer (Slimming World and Weight Watchers). This set up a short-term programme to deliver classroom-based nutrition advice with the Wirral Weigh curriculum, developed by One Wirral CIC along with opportunities provided by Active Wirral of guided physical activity sessions, motivational support, behaviour change, confidence, anxiety, peer support and 1:1 guidance.

The project was successful, delivering outcomes requested by the funder and in some cases, four times higher than the national average. A total of 964 people signed up to the intervention, with 64% completing the 12 weeks, compared to the national average of 37% completion rate. Most participants were from some of Wirral's most deprived areas, with more than a quarter of those taking part living in the most economically deprived wards. In addition to weight management outcomes, the programme produced long-lasting wellbeing benefits, with 84% reporting improvements on the SWEMWBS (Short Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) wellbeing scale, often 20 out of a possible 35 points. how 'good' somebody feels – as well as how well somebody thinks they are functioning.

The legacy of the project has led to strong links and partnership work with Liverpool John Moores University to investigate the viability of a GP Referral programme on Wirral and the social value of physical activity. Active Wirral are determined to carry on supporting all Wirral residents to live 'stronger, healthier, happier' lives. Due to its success, the project Wirral Council has been shortlisted in the 'Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative (including Social Care)' category at the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Service Awards 2023.

- 2.1.9 The Active All Sports activity programme is for children and young people with a disability or additional needs and their immediate family. In 2022/23 there were 1,004 visits with 395 people taking part. The activities provided were based in a variety of venues across Wirral and offered a wide range of sports and activities for the whole family. Some of the more popular activities included family swim sessions, sensory tennis and indoor Wheels Extreme (scooting, skating and cycling). This programme provides families with activities in an inclusive and understanding environment that has considered and made the relevant adaptations to meet the needs and abilities of all participants.

- 2.1.10 Holiday Activity provision was introduced at 5 leisure centres with the focus on providing sport and physical activity opportunities and food for children eligible for free school meals during school holidays, with funding secured from the Department for Education through the Holiday Activity Fund. 204 children took part in the activities with 92% in receipt of free school meals.

- 2.1.11 Tennis for Free operate fully inclusive mass participation alternative tennis sessions for all ages and sections of the community nationwide at public parks for free primarily

targeting those most in need in the current climate. 909 people took part in parks located in New Ferry, New Brighton and Seacombe.

2.1.12 Community Safety Activity – Friday night football took place in 3 of Leisure Centres where Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) is at its most prevalent in some of the most deprived areas. Leasowe, Leisure Centre, Guinea Gap and The Oval all now have regular opportunities for young people to take part in football for free. 90 young people have been involved in the programme and the numbers are continuing to rise. The activity is funded through the Youth Justice Sport Fund, which is being managed by the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice and StreetGames and co-ordinated by the Sport for Development Coalition, will deliver an investment of up to £5million nationally into a mixture of organisations with a proven record of using sport effectively to reduce crime, between now and 31 March 2023. The fund is part of a £60million investment into early intervention made earlier this year by the Ministry of Justice.

Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour is one of the key areas that the Youth Justice Sport Fund is aimed at, as well as improving physical and mental wellbeing, to increasing employability and educational attainment. Wirral Council is working in close partnership with several trusted local organisations to deliver these sessions.

The Positive Futures project saw 93 individual young person referrals were made from key partner agencies including Response, Youth Justice Services, ASB teams and Police into the Positive Futures Mentoring Scheme to undergo 1-2-1 personal training and activities. The Mini Pathfinder and Secondary Pathfinder programme funded by Violent Reduction Partnership (VRPU) have delivered in 33 schools across the Wirral, working in partnership with Merseyside Police sport and diversionary activities were delivered engaging over 400 young people as part of a programme of ‘taster’ hourly sports sessions including football, cricket, golf, tennis, yoga, and boxing.

Targeted activities as part of the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) have been delivered working in partnership with Response and Youth Justice Service. 22 ‘at risk targeted’ young people who have been involved or coerced into county lines activities took part. Activities included INVIGOR8 gym passes, mountain biking and fishing and were all delivered over the school holiday periods of February half term, Easter, Summer, October half term and Winter / Christmas holidays. Violent Reduction Unit (VRPU) made several young people referrals were made through Operation Stonehaven from the Compass and complex safeguarding teams for gym passes. (8 young people) As part of Operation Banger Seacombe was identified as a HOT-SPOT location by the ASB team and an attempt to engage as many young people as possible from the area in ‘outreach’ Door-Step style sessions including 6 sessions of Football in Central Park MUGA and 4 sessions in Guinea Gap 3G pitches. Delivery took place in and around Mischief night, Halloween and Bonfire night when reported Anti-Social Behaviour was at its most prevalent across Wirral engaging over 50 young people in positive diversionary activities.

A bike maintenance course was delivered to 9 young males. This took place working in partnership with Merseyside Police and Wirral Youth Services. Cycle charity partners, Energise Cycles delivered an accredited maintenance course. This was run over an 8-week period with a cohort of 9 young males ‘targeted’ who were referred in either involved or at risk of being involved in criminal activity and / or county lines activity. Outcomes included improved relations with Police officers, reduction of substance

misuse, improved communication skills and with a new skill learned. Further opportunities may arise from this course, including the possibility of MIAS coaching qualifications and leading onto volunteering opportunities. Two young people have achieved and passed their MIAS Level 1 course to assist us when delivering some of our HAF mountain bike activities and 1 other young person has recently qualified as a lifeguard following a rigorous NLPG course. The partnership approach with locally trusted partners has been key as we move forward into different and a more shared approach, thus ensuring duplication of schemes of work is minimised.

2.1.13 Kit Link project was developed by graduates to reuse sports kit and equipment in the borough, the initiative was launched in March with a collection point located in Cheshire Lines as part of a pilot with Wirral Council staff. The aim is to create a circular economy for sports kit, whereby residents can donate or collect items, to reduce barriers to being active and reduce waste going to landfill contribute positively to the council's Climate Emergency ambitions. Colleagues were able to donate pre-loved sports equipment and clothing throughout the pilot, which will be used as starting stock for wider implementation of the scheme across the Council's Leisure Centres. Funding has been secured from the National Lottery to launch the programme fully.

2.1.14 Pilot work - A number of co-produced pilot projects being created and delivered across the borough to test the new way of working, through a system approach to increasing the number of people live more active lives. One example is the development of youth led project funded through the Rugby Football Union to introduce young people aged 14-19years to the sport of rugby.

2.2 Theme 2 – Active Partnerships

2.2.1 The Launch of the Active Wirral COLLABOR8 Network took place in December 2022 at the Floral Pavilion with an event that brought organisations and individuals from across Wirral together all with the common goal to make sport and physical activity part of everyone's everyday life. Over 100 people attended from 70 organisations to discuss new projects, investment opportunities, gain support and to hear from local community representatives. Updates and information were provided from the Active Wirral team, Sport England, Merseyside Sports Partnership and the Integrated Care Board, along with thematic and place-based workshop sessions from National Governing Body of Sports and community partners and networking opportunities. This event was the launch of the Active Wirral COLLABOR8 Network, a new network that will bring organisations and individuals together on a regular basis with the purpose of tackling inactivity across Wirral. 1,400 people have signed up for the COLLABOR8 digital newsletter.

2.2.2 Two subgroups formed from the Network Event to look at tackling inequalities for the audiences of older adults and women and girls. Following the COLLABOR8 Launch in December the Women and Girls working group, currently made up of 24 partner organisations, have met twice to discuss and identify key priorities around women and girls' health and wellbeing. The working group have established an initial delivery plan which will start to focus on improving opportunities for women and girls to become more active. The older adults group now called 'Stay Stronger for Longer' and has a vision to keep the population of Wirral independent through physical activity. The group have defined the objectives as:

- Improving opportunities and access to activities for older adults and those with long term health conditions.
- Working together with health, social care, leisure and voluntary settings to identify needs and opportunities and create an active network.
- To affect a cultural change towards a more positive approach to ageing exercise and activity.

2.2.3 Wirral was invited by Sport England to be one of the 9 local authorities to pilot the new digital Moving Communities Place Platform. Moving Communities Place is a detailed, place-based view of participation in physical activity, demonstrating the scale, impact and value to the local community. The platform will be used to achieve the following three objectives.

- Create a baseline for current activity levels across Wirral through the inclusion of community programme data.
- Evaluate participation from public leisure facilities and how this compares to the local community.
- Understand resident views and perceptions of physical activity in Wirral through the Community survey.

2.3 Theme 3 – Active Spaces and Places

2.3.1 Parks Tennis - In October 2021 the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the LTA announced a funding pot of £28million that will see public park tennis courts in very poor or unplayable condition brought back into life for the benefit of the community. Of this total sum, grant funding of £280k has now been provided to Wirral Council to improve park courts across the Borough. This new tennis delivery model for parks will increase tennis participation, improve the quality of more park courts across the borough and drive an income which contributes significantly to ensuring self-sustainability and significantly less reliance on capital and revenue investment from reducing Council budgets. The LTA capital investment is being used to install a gate entry system at all 12 identified sites. Of those 12 sites, 9 will undergo court upgrade work. The LTA objectives for Wirral's Parks Tennis are:

- To achieve an operating model that protects Wirral parks tennis courts for the future.
- For Wirral residents to be provided with an affordable and accessible tennis option for tennis.
- For programming and activation opportunities to engage with local communities.
- For those with financial barriers to have an opportunity to access free tennis (court bookings and programmes)
- To improve the tennis courts currently in the poorest playable condition.

The full scope includes capital works investment focusing on improving courts that are in the worst condition (unplayable, poor), activation through accessibility and targeted programmes, providing support to communities in IMD areas 1-5 and enabling a smooth journey to court via a gate access system (with viability confirmed by insight). Over the last 3 years the Council in partnership with the LTA have implemented several interventions to increase participation and provide accessible and affordable tennis at a local level. Throughout this initiative, the Council has seen significant

increases in players participating in parks having created free and affordable tennis activities, introduced accessible technology to improve the customer journey through online booking system and established databases to market further opportunities and track usage. Data from ClubSpark, the online booking system indicates that 6,918 court hours have been booked in the last 12 months, across 12 sites and 36 tennis courts.

2.4 Theme 4 – Active Facilities

- 2.4.1 Visits to leisure centres continue to rise during the recovery from the COVID19 pandemic. Across the 5 operational leisure facilities, The Oval, West Kirby Concourse, Leasowe Leisure Centre, Guinea Gap Baths and Europa Pools there were 1.6million visits, 595,000 pay and play sessions and the INVIGOR8 membership base continuing to 11,000 members. 22% of INVIGOR8 members reside within the top 10% most deprived areas of the country.
- 2.4.2 The social value generated from our leisure centres reached £9.96million, broken down includes a contribution of £5.4million to subjective wellbeing (the estimated cost saved of achieving the same level of wellbeing outside of sport), £2.48million to social and community development (costs saved in criminal justice costs), £1.96million to physical and mental health (Health and social care savings) and £73,000 to individual development (additional earnings generated through the correlation between participation in sport, and educational attainment). The average social value per person is valued at over £100.
- 2.4.3 The leisure capital improvement programme continues to progress with works being undertaken at The Oval and Arrowe Park Golf Course and the addition of audio-visual equipment in the main studios at Guinea Gap Leisure Centre, West Kirby Concourse and Leasowe Leisure Centre. Immediate health and safety works, replacement of dangerous rebound boards with more robust steel fence mesh on the short-sided football pitches and athletics track improvements works have taken place at The Oval and the enhancements of the 4 short-sided football pitches at Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre has taken place. Major capital works continue on the approved redevelopment to the indoor facilities at the Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre. The capital investments and addition of a new tennis operator to deliver a cost neutral tennis programme will very much future proof the facility and local activity offer in line with the ambitions set in the Wirral Plan.
- 2.4.4 The Football Foundation Local Football Facility Plan sets out the need for additional full size 3G football pitches due to an undersupply. Progress continues with the development of 2 new artificial grass football pitches at Woodchurch Leisure Centre and Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre. The scheme is funded through the Council capital programme and with grant funding from the Football Foundation. The Woodchurch pitch is programmed to be completed in October 2023 and includes a new changing pavilion. The pitch at Wirral Tennis and Sports centre in Bidston will be completed in early 2024.
- 2.4.4 Work is ongoing to continually improve the gym in Europa Pools including investment in additional gym kit, roll out of the Active Wirral branding throughout the centre and the introduction of a cash pass INVIGOR8 membership option along with partnership

working with NHS colleagues to introduce a falls prevention programme to be based at the centre. As at March 2023 there are 1,628 members regularly using Europa Pools.

- 2.4.5 Council leisure centres make up a significant proportion of the overall emissions from Council assets. In 2022/23 a programme of works was started to identify energy efficiency initiatives to be implemented in the short to medium term to compliment the heat decarbonisation plans and strengthen future funding bids. The research has identified efficiencies to make the most of the building management systems and equipment already installed at the sites. This includes a “Planned Preventative Maintenance” regime which will ensure equipment is operating as efficiently as possible, estimated at saving 76 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year, and £115,000 in energy expenditure over five years. The interventions include the installation of new equipment, such as “Low Flow” shower technology, which utilise less water and energy whilst maintaining the same level of comfort for service users. This has been estimated as saving approximately 41 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year and £136,000 over five years. Pool covers are also to be installed at the sites in October of this year which, by reducing heat loss and evaporation, reduce energy demands for heating the pools and dehumidify the pool halls.
- 2.4.6 On the 30th August 2023, the UK Government published “Get Active: A Strategy for the future of Sport & Physical activity”. The last strategy Government published was [Sporting Future](#), in 2015 and this new strategy is designed to update and build on this by building a more active nation through tackling high levels of inactivity, and ensuring that the sport and physical activity sector is accessible, inclusive and sustainable through working with all sector stakeholders. There will be a focus on children and the introduction of national participation targets. The work within the Active Wirral agenda will in many cases be aligned to this new agenda however officers will consider the content of the new strategy and how it will shape and influence our approach to Sport & Physical Activity on Wirral.