



West Suffolk: Promoting Physical Activity

Guidelines for producing a framework for each locality that will enable
and encourage people to lead active lives

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1. Introduction

Undertaking some form of physical activity is widely acknowledged as an important element of increasing a person's health and wellbeing. This framework builds on work undertaken by independent consultants, 4Global to help us shape West Suffolk into a place that will enable local people to take part in physical activity that will improve their health and wellbeing. The aim is to provide opportunities for all levels of ability, including formal and informal activity. Types of activity are very wide ranging. Formal activity could include being part of a sports club or going to the gym for example. Informal activity might include children playing in the park or walking to work as part of a daily routine.

Nationally, the focus is on reducing levels of inactivity across the population, the benefits of which are wide-ranging. Crucially, populations who lead active lives have been shown to have improved health and mental wellbeing and to be less reliant on health care services. We also want to see people enjoying a healthier old age; in turn saving public money. These benefits will take time to realise but it's a place we need to work towards.

2. Aim of the framework

The aim of this framework is to set out what Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, working together as West Suffolk will do, with other partners, to enable and encourage people to lead active lives.

3. National context

Through this framework we are responding to the emerging national agenda which focuses on increasing levels of activity across the population. The information below sets out that context:

Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation

In December 2015, central Government published a strategy to tackle the flat lining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity. The strategy presents a new focus on **five key outcomes**: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.

The important role of local councils was discussed in the strategy. It is recognised that our understanding of communities enables us to target opportunities to encourage mass participation. Councils also play an important role in bringing together schools, voluntary sports clubs, national governing bodies of sport, health and the private sector in local areas. We need to ensure that there is a place based approach to provision, irrespective of the provider. We also need the industry as a whole to maximise provision and work together rather than providers competing against each other. It is acknowledged that getting national organisations to working together to support what happens locally can be a challenge, but this work is vital to local success and can add value especially through partnership working.

Sport England: Towards an active nation 2016-2021

In May 2016, Sport England published a strategy to set out how it, with partners, would respond to the change the Government's strategy will bring. Through the strategy, Sport England stated that it would focus on five main outcomes: physical wellbeing; mental

wellbeing; individual development; social and community development; and economic development.

In its strategy, Sport England has also stated that 25 per cent (£265 million) of its total investment over the next four years will directly benefit inactive people, including a proportion of funding for local delivery, children and young people and facilities. Furthermore dedicated funding is being directed towards getting children and young people active from the age of five. There is a shift in emphasis towards funding for people who are the least active and a sport and physical activity sector that operates in a more efficient and sustainable way. Future funding decisions will be linked to health work with councils that will encourage more generic facilities for a wide range of uses. New investment in initiatives will be more closely linked with delivering the five outcomes in the Government strategy (detailed above) thereby investing for a purpose not sport for sports sake.

Turning the tide of inactivity is a study that looks at how the issue of inactivity can be addressed through specific actions. It also talks about the positive effects of increasing activity.¹

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

The Framework sets out government policies for achieving sustainable development, including how planning policy can contribute to promoting healthy communities. It requires planning policies to plan positively for, amongst other things, the provision and use of shared space and community facilities such as sports venues, and it notes that “access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.” It requires planning policies to be based on “robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision”. The NPPF translates into the Vision 2031 documents and planned Forest Heath District Council local plan documents.

Public Health Outcomes Framework 2016-2019

The indicators in this framework help Public Health England to understand trends in public health. Their vision is *‘To improve and protect the nation’s health and wellbeing and improve the health of the poorest fastest’*. Following consultation in 2015, the framework was refreshed in May 2016. The overarching outcomes are:

- improving the wider determinants of health;
- health improvement;
- health protection; and
- healthcare public health and preventing premature mortality.

Planned growth across West Suffolk

Over the period between 2001 and 2015, 3,880 dwellings were built in Forest Heath, and 4,936 in St Edmundsbury. Both councils are planning for higher levels of growth over the next fifteen years. Planning policies have been put in place for West Suffolk that require the provision of appropriate open space, recreation, play and leisure facilities to support the planned levels and distribution of growth. The strategic and larger, mixed-use sites in the towns include the provision of such facilities within the development (required to be included in masterplans and secured through Section 106 agreements), and other developments will need to either make on-site provision, or contribute towards off-site

¹ Turning the tide of inactivity, ukactive, January 2014

provision through planning conditions, developer contributions (through “s106 agreements”), or, potentially through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments. Both councils have Supplementary Planning documents (SPDs) in place that provide the evidence for requiring the provision of open space, sports, play and recreation facilities associated with new developments. The Forest Heath SPD pre-dates the NPPF and needs to be reviewed, and both SPDs need updating. This approach and the evidence used to produce it will be key to producing a West Suffolk Open Space, Recreation, Play and Leisure SPD.

4. The benefits of physical activity

As set out by Sport England, regular activity can:

- prevent ill health and reduce the number of people dying prematurely;
- enhance mental health, quality of life and self-reported wellbeing;
- delay the need for care in older adults (age 65+); and
- reduce health inequalities and improve wider factors influencing health and wellbeing².

In 2014, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published evidence³ which showed that:

- sport participation is associated with higher wellbeing. This increase is valued at £1,127 per person per year, or £94 per person per month; and
- sports participants are 14.1% more likely to report good health than non-participants.

Physical activity delivers wider benefits too:

Economic - In 2010, sport and sport-related activity contributed £20.3 billion to the English economy – 1.9% of the England total⁴.

The contribution to employment is even greater – sport and sport-related activity is estimated to support over 400,000 full-time equivalent jobs, 2.3% of all jobs in England⁵.

Social and cultural - Published studies show the positive effects of sport on education, including improved attainment, lower absenteeism, lower numbers of students dropping-out, and increased progression to higher education. For instance, young people’s participation in sport improves their numeracy scores by 8% on average above non-participants.⁶

Other studies have found that sport programmes aimed at young people at risk of criminal behaviour can enhance self-esteem and reduce reoffending.⁷

² Source: Start Active, Stay Active. Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection – July 2011

³ Source: DCMS (1) Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport; and (2) Quantifying the Social Impacts of Sport and Culture

⁴ Source: Sport England ‘Economic value of sport in England’ June 2013

⁵ Source: Sport England ‘Economic value of sport in England’ June 2013

⁶ Source: CASE programme led by DCMS February 2013

⁷ Professor Fred Coalter, Department of Sports Studies, University of Stirling. January 2012.

Health and participation data for West Suffolk

Appendix A presents health data for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury which is split down to ward level. It shows any areas for concern across a number of indicators including the percentage of children who are obese at reception age and general health.

Appendix B presents participation rates in sport across Suffolk, data for which is taken from the Active People Survey. The number of people playing sport is monitored continuously through the Active People Survey. It is carried out on behalf of Sport England which provides a picture of sport participation levels across England, at a national and local level. It also looks at who plays sport and how they participate.

5. Local context

The West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016 sets out **resilient families and communities that are healthy and active** as one of its top three priorities alongside economic growth and homes for our communities. The councils want to see:

- a thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable;
- people playing a greater role in determining the future of their communities;
- improved wellbeing, physical and mental health; and
- accessible countryside and green spaces.

The Families and Communities team and local councillors have a critical role in understanding localities. This will be essential to understanding the gaps and opportunities that exist in terms of increasing physical activity and understanding the potential of facilities that are available.

Most Active County

In 2012 partners across Suffolk (including West Suffolk Councils) came together and created the Most Active County initiative with the objectives of:

- developing community-led participation in sport and physical activity;
- improving the use of physical assets and the environment for sport and physical activity;
- addressing sport and health inequality;
- delivering national governing body plans for an active lifestyle;
- increasing activity amongst children and young people; and
- developing Suffolk as a host for mass participation sports events.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board was established in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Board has a duty to "encourage integrated working" between health, care, police and other public services in order to improve wellbeing outcomes for Suffolk. The aim of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board is to improve health and decrease inequalities. The Board wants to ensure that those in Suffolk live long, fulfilling and healthy lives and to see a narrowing of the health inequalities between our affluent and poorer areas. The aims are:

- every child in Suffolk has the best start in life;
- improving independent life for people with physical and learning disabilities;

- older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life; and
- people in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

6. Outcomes

Our approach will ensure that we work with partners and our communities to achieve the following **outcomes**:

Social and community

- create an environment that provides the opportunity for physical activity for all;
- encourage personal responsibility for wellbeing through education and the development of life skills and healthy habits;
- improve the quality of life and the health and wellbeing of all our communities;
- ensure that physical activity is inclusive by understanding and addressing barriers to participation;
- maximise use of local assets including sharing assets where appropriate; and
- make connections between different communities through shared activities.

Economic

- ensure we are financially efficient and responsible in a changing financial environment, in line with the councils' Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
- understand how our impact on health and wellbeing will financially benefit the whole public sector;
- target our financial support and subsidies to improve outcomes that support our strategic priorities; and
- create wider value for money.

Personal experience

- provide opportunities for physical activity that are accessible, inclusive, welcoming, nurturing and convenient;
- acknowledge that there are a range of motivations to participating in physical activity and that some people want to be competitive, whilst others don't; and
- support the provision of facilities (including shared facilities) and opportunities in locations that encourage participation and keep active people active.

Health and wellbeing

- promote initiatives that will support the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- focus on activity to address preventable health issues by creating local opportunities that address local health needs, using the health data at Appendix A to this framework;
- ensure that active people remain active and that more people become active; and
- encourage natural exercise as a part of daily lives and acknowledge that this may not include traditional sport.

7. How we will achieve the outcomes

We aim to achieve these outcomes by:

- considering the information from the 4Global assessment to develop a holistic approach to local areas in order to identify current provision and gaps;
- setting out our commitment to whole place planning, so that we can make the most of all available assets and use space as flexibly as possible;
- prioritising future requests for support, in line with this framework;
- working with partners to delivery physical activity in West Suffolk; and
- acknowledging the benefits of informal activity, for example, children’s play in developing active lifestyle habits.

8. The principles of our approach

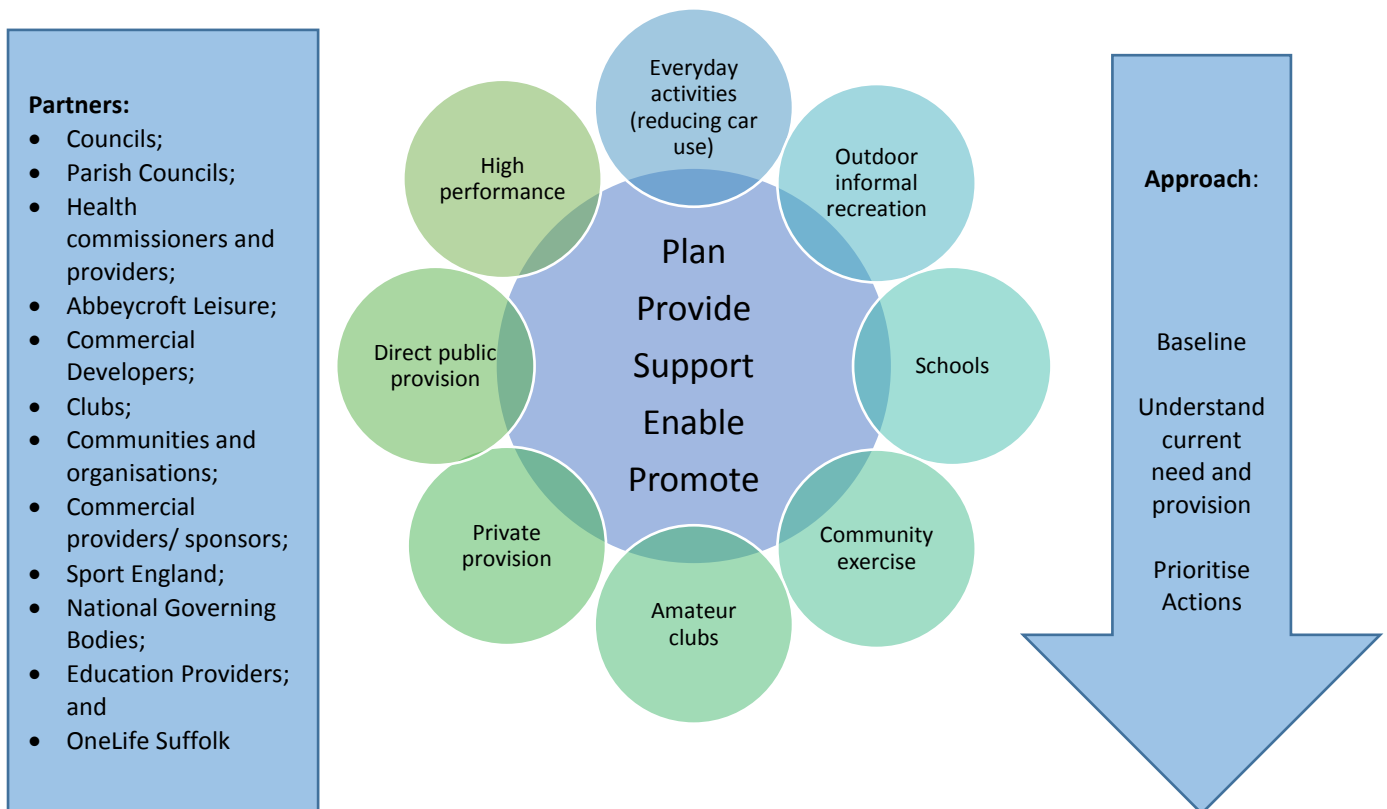
We have worked with a number of our partners to develop this approach, including Abbeycroft Leisure, Sport England and Suffolk County Council. Councillors from across West Suffolk have also contributed towards this document.

Together we have agreed to approach this using the following principles:

- taking a community based asset approach using market research and local intelligence;
- using health data at a local level to inform options and priorities;
- recognising and promoting both formal and informal activities;
- building on wider research and our and others’ experience of what works;
- taking a whole life cycle approach and focusing on the importance of physical activity in the early years of a person’s life;
- taking a whole system approach, working in partnership with statutory, voluntary and community groups;
- understanding sports and other physical activity provision holistically (including providers) and maximising what is already there;
- understanding and addressing individual barriers to access (finance, physical accessibility);
- understanding and addressing rural challenges (transport, timing of activities);
- developing a hierarchy of offer – a stepped-up approach;
- developing the breadth of offer in order to engage the maximum number of people in regular physical activity;
- making the most of digital technologies to encourage physical activity;
- developing meaningful measures to show progress against the framework; and
- exploring different financial and delivery models

9. How we will increase participation in physical activity across West Suffolk

The following diagram outlines how we will work with a whole range of partners to deliver physical activity in West Suffolk. We need local people to be able to access physical activity in a number of different ways.



The councils’ role in facilitating participation in physical activity is to:

Plan: Plan for the future to ensure that we provide opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity at any level and maximise the impact of developer contributions.

Provide: Provide accessible parks and green spaces in the local area (as set out in priority 2 of the Strategic Plan), creating opportunities for natural exercise.

Support: For schemes and facilities that align with our priorities, explore funding opportunities for groups and organisations.

Enable: Working with partners, enable local communities and individuals to participate in sport and physical activity in a way that works for them.

Promote: Promoting opportunities at a local level through our communities and with providers.

10. Supporting initiatives that promote physical activity

Based on what the councils' role is in facilitating participation in physical activity, we have developed a set of documents that will help us to determine how and in what ways we can support initiatives that promote physical activity.

Attached as **Appendix C** is *West Suffolk's physical activity 'offer'* which sets out the ways in which we can provide support for initiatives that promote physical activity. Attached as **Appendix D** is a checklist that we will use to help assess whether an initiative would meet our desired outcomes in terms of positive, negative or neutral benefit (see section 6 of this framework).

These documents are intended to be used as tools to help start discussions with our partners.

11. Next steps

In each place, we will use the information from the 4Global assessment plus other data to look holistically at the locality, to identify gaps and opportunities and prioritise actions in line with our priorities. This work will initially be focussed around the following major centres of population:

- Brandon
- Bury St Edmunds
- Clare
- Haverhill
- Mildenhall
- Newmarket

And will include the surrounding rural areas.

Furthermore, using the 4Global assessment we will develop an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Document for West Suffolk as a whole. This will help inform how we shape the local area to support our aim to enable and encourage people to lead more active lives.