



## ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
30 March 2021  
Agenda Item 6

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected: All

### **Enabling and encouraging an Active Adur and Worthing**

#### **Report by the Director for Communities**

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide:

- An update on the progress of the Activities Strategy
- An overview of work already happening across the Councils to enable and encourage physical activity across Adur and Worthing
- What we are experimenting with, across the Councils, to encourage people to be active

##### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to note the content on this report and to strategically support the approach to enabling and encouraging our place, businesses and communities to be more active.

#### **3.0 Context**

3.1 Increasing people's physical activity has a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing. Being active often connects us to nature, promotes connection with others, improves productivity and concentration, and is fun.

3.2 Health is not something that is felt equally across our communities. More recently, Covid has highlighted those inequalities and in Marmot's [Build Back Fairer](#) it provides evidence to do things differently and the importance of building health equity. Public Health England's [Understanding and addressing inequalities in physical activity](#) also helps us to understand levels of inequalities in physical activity across and within protected characteristic groups and highlights that changes are needed to reverse these.

3.3 As a District and Borough, we have an important role to play:

- As a **leader of place**, through design, encourage and enable people to easily be active
- As a **manager of green and blue spaces**, provide good quality and easy access to these spaces
- As a **leader of an organisation**, encourage and enable our workforce to be active through the working practices (eg walking meetings, activities for staff)

3.4 Through our experience of Covid, we have seen people changing their activity behaviour and we need to learn and build on this going forward.

3.5 Enabling and encouraging activity spans across the delivery of our work across the Councils. This predominantly sits as part of our health and wellbeing work, but has significant links to environment, planning, economy, development, and sustainability.

3.6 This report is an interim report which highlights some examples of what we are already doing to encourage and enable activity across Adur and Worthing. Once the Activities Strategy has been updated it will follow.

#### **4.0 Why is Activity important?**

4.1 Physical activity can improve our health and wellbeing and reduce the risk of long term health conditions. Being active has a positive impact on the immune system, it supports the cardiovascular system, reduces the risk of diabetes, has a proactive effect on mental health and emotional wellbeing and slows down cognitive decline.

4.2 As well as the benefits highlighted above, physical activity promotes social cohesion, improves productivity (both in school and work) and is enjoyable and fun.

## **5.0 An update on the progress of our Activities Strategy**

5.1 Intelligent Health has been working with us on developing an Activities Strategy, engaging key stakeholders via interviews and workshops. Through Covid there has been a delay on finalising the development of the Strategy and because of the impact that the pandemic has had on our communities and assets, the draft Strategy and recommendations are being reviewed. These will be brought to a future JSC along with other key documents that encourage activity across our communities.

## **6.0 A look at our current work**

### **6.1 Design of our Place**

6.1.1 As leaders of our place we can influence its design through the plans and policies that we approve to ensure that activity becomes the default. Here are a number of examples of plans that promote activity:

6.1.2 The [Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan](#) (SDWLP) is currently the subject of public consultation which closes on 23rd March 2021. This proposes a Strategic Policy on Healthy Communities (Policy SP3) which states that new development must be designed to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, which enable and support healthy lifestyles and address health and well-being needs in Worthing, as identified in the Adur & Worthing Councils' Public Health Strategy. Paragraph 2.32 of the SDWLP acknowledges the preparation of the Physical Activity Strategy.

The SDWLP also includes a policy on Open Space, Recreation & Leisure (Policy DM7) which sets out identified needs for open space, playing pitches and built facilities in order to accommodate the demands arising from future development growth.

New residential development will be required to provide on-site open space in accordance with the standards. If it is not feasible to deliver open space on site due to, for instance, the density of development proposed, then the potential to make off site provision will be considered on a case by case basis. S106 contributions towards off site provision can assist in enhancing both formal and informal open space provision.

These planning policies will encourage developers to consider people's health, wellbeing and safety when they are preparing plans for new developments across Worthing.

6.1.3 **Worthing** has also implemented a [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) (CIL) on all new developments and this enables the Council to secure financial contributions from developers to fund infrastructure and for communities to be involved in influencing their spaces.

6.1.3 **Adur** District Council adopted its [Local Plan](#) in 2017 and the commencement of its review will begin later this year. The Local Plan contains Policy 32: Open Space, Recreation & Leisure which contains standards as identified in the Open Space Study (2014). As mentioned above a new up-to-date study (2019) has been published and therefore the policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect the recommended standards.

6.1.2 The Local Walking and Cycling Plan ([LCWIP](#)) is a vision to create a place where walking and cycling becomes the preferred way of moving around Adur and Worthing. It provides a network plan for a place where people will walk and cycle in places they are attracted to and will feel safe to do so.

6.1.3 In Autumn 2020, Adur & Worthing Councils held a Climate Assembly with 43 randomly selected local residents to address the question of how collectively we could tackle climate change whilst supporting our places to thrive. Eighteen recommendations were put forward. The assembly members wanted to see low carbon transport and active, connected travel promoted, encouraged and supported.

Recommendation 13: Promote more cycling by implementing clear and safe travel routes, ensure cycle safety training for all ages and ability and ensure legislative changes are pursued to promote access e.g. through parks. This recommendation is being delivered through the Sussex-wide LCWIP group, led by WSCC, alongside the internally focussed Travel Action Plan and the community-wide Walking and Cycling Action Group.

6.1.4 Adur and Worthing Councils received funding from the Government's **Active Travel Fund** to help encourage and support local people to feel safe whilst travelling actively. The first tranche of funding led to the temporary 'pop-up' cycle lanes on the A24 in Worthing and Upper Shoreham Road in Shoreham. The 2nd tranche of funding was also awarded to Adur and Worthing (out of the whole of West Sussex) for the permanent cycle lane to be built on the A24 in Findon and for the development and public consultation around road improvements and a cycle lane in Shoreham - this consultation, led by WSCC is currently open.

6.1.5 As a manager of our open spaces, with regards to activity, we have been focusing on getting our **open air gyms** in full working order to ensure that these are

available for use and are safe. We have invested in some of our assets eg new tennis courts at Homefield Park. The kilometer (kms) marking along the seafront have been popular in encouraging people with their walking and running.

## 6.2 Active Places/Spaces

6.2.1 **Active Park** is a new initiative being delivered through the Get Active and has been established to increase the choice of activities across our parks, in response to community need.

Adur & Worthing Wellbeing programme is working in partnership with local group *Activ8* throughout the Spring, to deliver eight week courses suitable for people aged 18+ with a range of abilities in our parks . Activities include: walking sports, jogging, dance and outdoor gym sessions in the following parks: Victoria Park, Tarring , Longcroft, Homefield, Broadwater Rec, Durrington Rec, Lancing Beach Green, Sompting Rec, Monks Rec, Lancing Manor, Buckingham Park, Fishersgate Rec, Parklands Park, Shoreham Beach, Southwick Rec, Middle Road and Southwick Green.

Volunteers are being recruited who will support people's motivation to attend, and to encourage the formation of self funded activity groups which will continue beyond the life of the courses.

6.2.2 **Active Events** in public spaces have been long established as part of the outdoor events programme. This includes events such as the Worthing 10k, Parkrun and 3 Forts Challenge. Greater scope exists to bring further activity events to the calendar to enable our residents and visitors to engage in outdoor recreation.

6.2.3 The Councils created the **Donkey Bike rental scheme** in Worthing for residents and visitors to use. We are now working with Brighton & Hove City Council to extend their hugely successful **Bikeshare scheme** into Adur & Worthing by 2022 offering electric bikes as well as standard pedal cycles for enjoyment and active commuting.

## 6.3 Active People

6.3.1 A partnership project between Adur & Worthing Councils, Table Tennis England (TTE), and Worthing Ping United, established in 2019, is helping to encourage participation by young people and adults in parks and open spaces. The aims of the work are to:

- establish a long-term inclusive table-tennis scene, initially in Worthing

- increase levels of physical activity and the benefits that this brings
- tackle issues associated with loneliness and mental health problems, and
- promote healthy lifestyles to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Worthing Ping United, is a newly formed grassroots club which has delivered a range of activities to support community engagement and link the project with the club, to ensure sustainable outcomes are achieved.

To date, the Councils have been awarded and installed 11 table tennis tables in local parks including: Homefield, Victoria, Beach House Grounds, Kitties Field and Buckingham Park. Two indoor tables have also been provided to support Worthing Homes residents to increase tenants' activity levels.

In addition, TTE 'play at home' kits were successfully applied for, to support some of those most in need when Covid restrictions have been in force. The Councils distributed 250 kits to people on a lower income, people with Black Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds and people living with long term health conditions with the support of Mutual Aid Groups, Food Banks and Mencap.

As lockdown restrictions ease, further grants will be applied for to install more tables and provide further activities across parks and open spaces in Adur and Worthing.

6.3.2 The **Get Active** program was established in 2013 as part of the WSCC Public Health funded Adur & Worthing Wellbeing Programme. *Get Active* provides an evidence based approach of low level physical activity taster sessions and courses for inactive and or sedentary adults (18+) to increase their activity levels in line with public health guidelines (150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week).

The courses are carefully designed and are targeted to meet the needs, wants and motivations of people who we know are likely to be at risk of greater health inequalities. These include people on a low income or who are from a more deprived background for example. eight week beginner exercise courses include opportunities to try activities such as: Learn to Run; Multi Activity, Yoga etc . All courses are linked with community and leisure centre settings, are free or low cost, and have built in sustainable pathways to aid long term behaviour change.

Since its formation, the project has built up a steady participation rate and has proved to have had a positive impact on community health and wellbeing outcomes. The program recruits approx. 150 people annually, of which approx 70% of participants are from disadvantaged groups. Approximately 80% of those who complete a course say they have increased their activity levels and have seen improvements to their overall wellbeing.

Since the pandemic, the program has changed and adapted in line with Covid 19 Guidelines. Where possible, the small group based outdoor sessions have moved

online with people linked up to use [GetActive@home](#) resources. The online sessions have been less successful than face to face sessions, with people saying they would prefer to be outdoors and/or wait until indoor group based activities can resume.

The current focus of the project is to rebuild its full program of activities which links with leisure services, community centres and parks; to ensure people can confidently build physical activity back into their lives as Covid restrictions ease, in a variety of community settings.

## 6.4 An Active Workforce

6.4.1 Adur & Worthing Councils have developed a **Travel Action Plan** with support from transport charity Sustrans, to gain a better understanding of how staff and councillors currently travel to, from and for work. This is to better understand how to encourage more sustainable means of travel such as walking, cycling, car sharing and public transport more of the time. The Travel Action Plan Working Group is delivering this plan.

6.4.2 The new draft **Staff Travel Policy** is now focussed around a Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which helps employees select the most suitable mode of travel by:

- Avoiding travel wherever possible through use of technology such as audio and web conferencing
- Prioritising and increasing the use of active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport
- Minimising the impact of road travel through the use of low emission vehicles, car sharing and eco-driving
- Minimising the use of employee-owned vehicles through provision of low carbon managed pool cars.

6.4.3 Following the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, using public transport for business travel is encouraged as this helps minimise the number of cars on the road, reducing congestion and pollution. It can also give people time to relax, read, socialise and there is usually an associated walk to the bus stop or train station, so includes more physical activity too than driving a car. The Councils have created EASIT Adur & Worthing, discount green travel offers to employees, benefitting 25 businesses, 25,000 employees.

6.4.4 Pre Covid and seen more through Covid, staff have been more creative in ways of meeting. When permitted and out of restrictions, there have been many more walking meetings arranged and feedback has been that this has helped creativity and staff wellbeing.

## 6.5 Promoting Activity

6.5.1 A range of both community based (eg Green Tides/community gardening) and Ranger led activities to support and encourage people to be active in our Parks, Open Spaces and Foreshore have/will be promoted.

6.5.2 The Councils' recent **Spring Forward campaign** highlighted positive things to do in Adur and Worthing, with an emphasis on improving health and wellbeing. The campaign achieved significant reach on social media across the week (114.5k total reach and a 20% engagement rate on Facebook). The resources, including the Spring Forward podcast series which promote the benefits of outdoor life in Adur and Worthing, will continue to be promoted over the coming months to highlight the Councils' wellbeing services.

## 7.0 How Covid has affected activity

7.1 Through Covid, as outlined in 3.2, inequalities in our communities have been further highlighted and we need to work towards making changes to address these by targeting appropriate activities for these groups. There's a realisation that people who were previously less active and for people to whom fewer opportunities were available would be hardest hit - highlighting equity issues.

7.2 Green spaces have been a lifeline for many people through Covid. With the restrictions around activity these open spaces have provided a place for people to enjoy their permitted activity.

7.3 Through Covid, the virtual offer has made some activity more accessible to some people who might not have previously engaged in a face-to-face session. We will need to consider what is appropriate for online offers as we move out of Covid.

7.4 There's a worry that people won't return to any activity that they have been unable to do in lockdown. This may be because of a confidence issue, they may have found alternative activities or may not be motivated to return.

7.5 Where people have changed their behaviour to being more active and particularly using the outdoors, we need to harness this behaviour change and encourage them to continue.

## 8.0 What we're working on and experimenting with

8.1 Insight gathered by Sport England has highlighted certain groups have been disproportionately affected by Covid and that it was impacting on their ability to be active. These groups included: lower socio-economic groups, Black, Asian and



Minority Ethnic communities, disabled people and people with long term health conditions. To reduce the negative impact on these groups we want to focus appropriate activities on these groups.

Locally we are exploring **equality of access** to our open spaces. We are looking at the distribution of quality open spaces to identify gaps where we can then focus services.

8.2 We include leisure uses as part of the **seasonal concession programme** - this is mostly Water Sports provision. There has been an increase in the request for outdoor fitness instructor licences.

8.3 As part of our management of open spaces, once lockdown restrictions ease and we are able to, we are planning wellbeing activities in our open spaces.

8.4 We are keen to plan heritage tours and walking trails across our open spaces. These will be free of charge covering a variety of topics/interests to encourage engagement. These will run throughout the calendar year and our Rangers will lead them.

8.5 Building on the success of marking distances along the seafront, we are planning to plot out multiple distances across our open spaces for people to run or walk around depending on their fitness levels - accommodating all levels of fitness. This will be free to access and circular in nature with fitness stations to stop at along the route.

8.8 Supporting sports clubs in a better way regarding access to good quality accessible facilities and promotion of clubs on site. Eg leases, bringing clubs together,

8.8 SLC has been commissioned by Adur and Worthing Councils to develop a clear role for leisure in helping the Councils realise their ambitions for their places and their communities and to help identify the potential role and narrative for leisure across the Councils.

## **9.0 Issues for consideration**

9.1 As highlighted in 8.0, Covid has affected how some people view and are accessing their activity. We need to learn and build on the lessons and opportunities that Covid has presented us with and build these into our delivery going forwards.

9.2 As we build back out of Covid our focus will be on really understanding what people in our communities want and need.

9.3 Over the next couple of months the Activities Strategy will be finalised and brought back to this Committee for ratification.

## **10.0 Engagement and Communication**

10.1 Engagement with our communities is key to our approach moving forward. We need to really understand data and insights from our local communities to inform how we deliver activity in the future and who we should target.

10.2 The development of the Activities Strategy to date has involved around 50 stakeholders through a series of workshops who have been key to helping us understand the current picture and where we could focus to make the most difference and increase activity levels across all our communities.

## **11.0 Financial Implications**

11.1 The cost for producing the Activities Strategy will be met from within existing resources, primarily through staff time.

## **12.0 Legal Implications**

12.1 The legal services department will be consulted on the various proposed projects in order that any legal issues can be identified and addressed at an early stage and in order to check that the Council holds the relevant statutory power or duty to implement the proposals.

### **Background Papers**

- [Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)
- [Staff Travel Action Plan](#)

### **Officer Contact Details**

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Increasing people's physical activity will have a positive impact on the local economy. Being more active can improve productivity at work. Physical activity during the working day has been shown to improve concentration immediately and for several hours.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

Increased physical activity will have a positive impact on the lives of people in our communities. The greatest health benefits of physical activity occur in getting the inactive person a bit more active and therefore we will need to identify those that are least active in the community to see the most benefit.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Reducing health inequalities means targeting our approaches towards people and communities where we can make the most difference. This approach will be key to delivering an impactful Activities Strategy.

The Councils are subject to the general equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council's legal duties (Equality Act 2010) will shape the development of this work, helping to ensure that our services (and interventions) are designed to meet specific needs and address areas and issues of historic disadvantage and inequality. Our adoption of the 'proportionate universalism' model forms a key part of this response where we seek to provide services for all, but targeted most at those in need.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Physical activity will have a positive effect on crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour as it is often seen as a tool to address such issues.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

Connecting to nature through physical activity is a key theme of the Activities Strategy and the activities that the Councils already enable and encourage. The key benefits include reducing stress, blood pressure and anxiety, increased social connections and an increased sense of purpose and belonging.

Active travel is another key theme to the Strategy - encouraging people to move about using active travel which also brings the benefit of reducing air pollution.

#### **4. Governance**

Encouraging and enabling people to be active contributes to many priorities in the Councils' Platforms for our Places - Going Further including **2.3,2.4 2.5, 3.2, 3.7.**