

REPORT OF THE CABINET

A. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH 2019

Introduction

1. This report concerns the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2019 "Leicestershire's Health – Physical Activity – Moving to a Whole System Approach".

Background

2. The Director of Public Health is appointed jointly by Leicestershire County Council and the NHS and leads on improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Leicestershire. This is done by reporting publicly and independently on trends and gaps in the health and wellbeing of the population and by making recommendations for improvement to a wide range of organisations.
3. One of the roles of the Director of Public Health is to be an independent advocate for the health of their population. The Annual Reports are the main way by which Directors of Public Health make their conclusions known to the public.

Focus of the report

4. This year's report presents data on physical activity across Leicestershire. Physical inactivity directly contributes to one in six deaths in the UK. Around a quarter of the population are classified as inactive, failing to achieve a minimum of 30 minutes of activity per week. Across Leicestershire, the percentage of physically active adults (64.3%) is significantly worse than the national average (66.3%). Similarly, the percentage of adults walking for travel at least three days a week is significantly worse than the national average.
5. A complex set of circumstances have contributed, nationally and internationally, to this decline in physical activity. Changes in social, cultural, and economic trends have contributed to people participating in less physical activity whilst the introduction of more technology at home and in the workplace has encouraged sedentary behaviours, coupled with an over reliance on cars and motorised transport.
6. The approach outlined in the report accepts that there is no one solution to address such an ingrained problem and that local action to promote healthy weight across the life course requires a coordinated collaborative approach across many different organisations. The report identifies seven key components to a successful physical activity system:

- a. Active Environment
 - b. Active Travel
 - c. Active early years and schools
 - d. Active people and families
 - e. Active workplace and workforces
 - f. Active communities
 - g. Physical activity as medicine
7. The report recommends that policy makers and public sector organisations should adopt the seven components set out above as the basis of thinking about their approach to improving physical activity levels. In doing so they should be underpinned by strong systems leadership, active policy and partnerships and research. A summary of how each of the seven key components can be delivered is set out below

Active Environment

8. Organisations across Leicestershire need to work towards a future where active design principles are embedded in planning policy and are central to planning decisions across Leicestershire. This will be facilitated by the development of healthy planning design guidance, currently being produced, which would ideally be adopted by all district councils. Further work is also needed to promote the use of the County's green assets for physical activity purposes.

Active travel

9. Public Health will continue to seek opportunities to work closely with local planning authorities to increase provision of active travel and high-quality walking infrastructure within new developments. Developers will be encouraged to ensure newly built areas promote cycling and walking as the preferred means of transport and the adoption of 20mph limits/zones where appropriate. The 'extended workforce' pilot role of Sport England, where a shared post between Sport England and Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport is helping to deliver 'active design' strategy locally to meet key strategic challenges.

Active early years and schools

10. Public Health will advocate additional work in pre-school settings and with parents generally, to promote 'active play' and by encouraging the uptake of the Whole School Approach to Physical Activity (WSAPA) programme across all Leicestershire schools. All schools working with Sport and Physical Activity Networks in Leicestershire have begun working towards taking a Whole School approach.

Active people and families

11. Leicestershire's district councils all provide a comprehensive programme of events and campaigns throughout the year to increase physical activity,

aimed at all ages and abilities and at addressing barriers to participation. Lessons learnt from these programmes will help identify and target opportunities better to promote affordable and flexible physical activity through culture and leisure services.

Active workplaces and workforces

12. Public Health, working jointly with Leicestershire and Rutland Sport, will work with employers to encourage a health needs assessment of their workforce and to introduce interventions to reduce sedentary time at work and support people as they transition into retirement to continue to be active.

Active communities

13. Active communities sit at the heart of a systems approach to physical activity. More research and community engagement is needed to understand how to break down social and cultural barriers to participation and local programmes need to use this intelligence to achieve a better, more equitable, participation.

Physical activities as medicine

14. Public Health will promote the opportunity for health professionals to prescribe physical activities such as guided walking, gardening or light conservation work which are viable alternatives to attending a gym or prescribing unnecessary medicines.
15. By pursuing coordinated action across the seven components detailed above it is envisaged activity levels in Leicestershire will increase to, and remain, above that of the national average within three years. Learning from areas of best practice, such as Greater Manchester where activity levels are now above the national average, will also help inform the whole systems approach.

Consideration by Scrutiny, Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet

16. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 November welcomed and supported the Annual Report. The Committee welcomed the approach in the report which was easy to read, visually attractive and clearly set out the actions that needed to be taken to improve the health of the population of Leicestershire.
17. The Health and Wellbeing Board will consider the Annual Report at its meeting on 28 November 2019 and its views will be reported to members.
18. The Cabinet at its meeting on 22 November 2019 noted the report and supported the recommendations contained therein.

(Motion to be moved:-

That the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2019 be noted with support.)

Background Papers

Director of Public Health Annual Report

http://www.lsr-online.org/reports/director_of_public_health_annual_reports

Appendix

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2019.