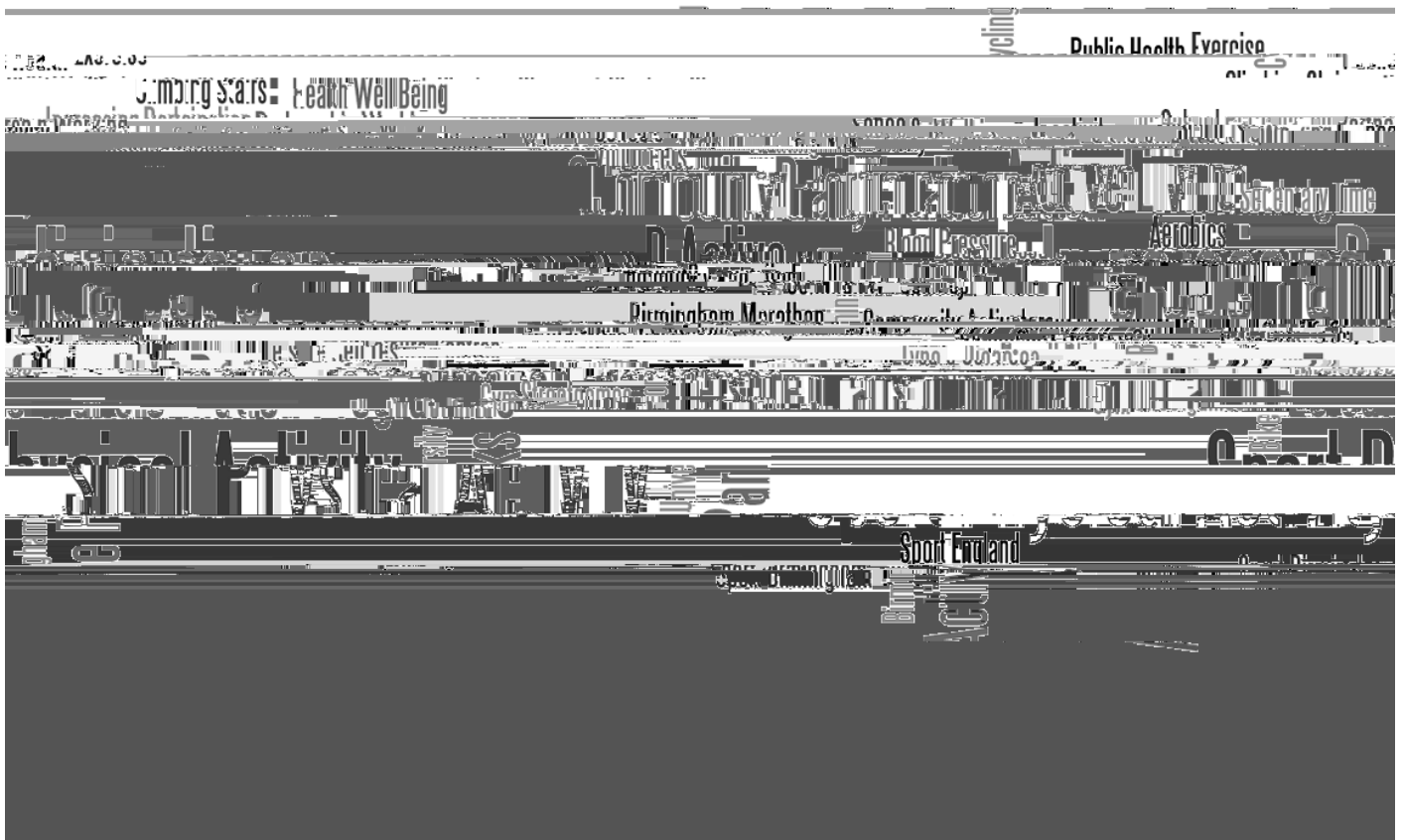


A means to an end – increasing participation in sport and physical activity



A report from Overview & Scrutiny





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Reports that have been submitted to Council can be downloaded from
www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny.




Prefac

**Cllr Zafar Iqb
Scrutiny Com**

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Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R01	<p>a) Continue work to identify and remove barriers to engagement for all citizens, especially the hardest to reach and most inactive.</p> <p>b) Work with existing structures like Sport Birmingham's Network, the Active Wellbeing Delivery Board, Wellbeing Service Operations Board and NGB forums to take a whole systems approach to identifying and building an effective delivery network for sport and physical activity such as walking; so that resources are grown and put to best use in order to bring the biggest benefit to inactive communities.</p> <p>c) Bring all stakeholders together on an annual basis to agree a shared action plan that goes beyond sport into wider activity initiatives and active travel.</p>	<p>Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>in partnership with</p> <p>Sport Birmingham and</p> <p>University of Birmingham School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences</p>	<p>a0 Tem401 4st1rt122]Jem[a.*6(m0</p>

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R04	<p>a) Ensure that the City Council continues work to develop an evidence base for future work with national and local partners to evaluate lessons learned on ensuring the diversity of the city's population in increasing participation in sport and physical activity.</p> <p>b) This should include further specific work identifying the barriers for women and specifically for women from BME groups in engagement in sport and physical activity.</p> <p>c) Explore the feasibility of a further Overview and Scrutiny committee investigation in the new municipal year to report back on b).</p>	Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	September 2015
R05	That the potential for workforce initiatives that include student placements/volunteers to support an improved evidence base and increased range of 'community activators' for physical activity projects (for example those undertaken with third sector partners) be explored with University partners and other third sector providers. Work with schools, particularly primary schools, is key and this should be integrated into any initiative.	Deputy Leader in partnership with the University of Birmingham School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences and other relevant Further and Higher Education establishments along with Third Sector Organisations	September 2015
R06	That the City Council looks at ways to reduce bureaucratic processes that might act as barriers to engagement and participation within its service provision, for example exploring the scope to streamline existing induction processes and those for new wellbeing centres to make it easier for potential users to use them.	Deputy Leader	September 2015
R07	That the StreetGames approach is incorporated into future work on sport and physical activity, to ensure that young people in Birmingham have access to non-traditional sporting activities in their local area. The concept of recognising Birmingham as a 'StreetGames' city be explored and further capitalised on.	Deputy Leader	September 2015

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	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R08	<p>a) That Councillors be both kept up-to-date with local activities in which the Council is a partner (e.g. relevant Active Parks programme schedules) and contacted at the project inception stage to inform who the Council and partners might work with locally to recognise their local knowledge and connections which could support active lifestyles</p> <p>b) That this is integrated into work with Public Health and District Committees on healthy priorities and outcomes for Districts.</p>	RthyircCeD	

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Inquiry

1.1.1 Physical inactivity is increasingly recognised as an important precursor of chronic ill health with large costs for individuals and society in economic, social and cultural as well as health terms. Some powerful data made the case for our looking at how to support Birmingham's citizens to be more physically active:

Nationally, physical inactivity is responsible for around 17% of deaths or 1 in 6 and costing the country an estimated £7.4 billion a year¹;

Around 80% of Birmingham's population are considered to be inactive²;

Inactivity levels in Birmingham are esti

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 Physical activity is a general term used to describe any and all movements of the body. This deliberately broad definition means that virtually all types of activity can be of benefit including: exercise, sport, play, dance and ‘active living’ such as walking, cycling for transport also known as ‘active travel’, housework, gardening and work. The terms physical activity and exercise are often used interchangeably. UK guidelines for minimum levels of activity for health are set out in section 2 of this paper.

1.3 Terms of Reference

1.3.1 The key question for our Inquiry was: How is the Council enabling more people to take part in sport and physical activity?

1.3.2 Key lines of inquiry or further questions included:

How are the Council and partners removing barriers to sport and physical activity, especially for those:

Currently inactive?

From the most deprived communities?

Where there are fewest facilities/least formal provision?

What is working well in Birmingham and elsewhere?

How are the Council and partners ensuring links between existing and planned programmes and projects to make the most of their potential to deliver across a number of Council priorities including:


Health and Wellbeing;

Community Cohesion and

Learning and Skills?

How are the Council and partners enabling volunteers to develop and sustain opportunities for increasing participation in sport and physical activity – recognising increasing financial and organisational challenges?

1.3.3 The Inquiry was conducted via two formal committee meetings during October and November 2014 following an initial call for evidence in September; we heard evidence from a range of stakeholders.



for sport. A full list of witnesses is set out in Appendix A and we are grateful for their time and contributions.

1.3.5 In producing this report we have taken into account findings and recommendations from the following Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry reports:

2014 Tackling Childhood Obesity in Birmingham;

2013 Changing Gear: Transforming Urban Movement through Cycling and Walking in Birmingham and

2011 Community and Sport – A Cricket Case Study


2 Inquiry Context

2.1 National

Physical Activity Guidelines

- 2.1.1 The first UK guidelines for physical activity were adopted relatively recently in 2004. Between then and the timeframe for our inquiry the structural and policy landscape for organisations with a remit for physical activity and sport has changed significantly. Public Health England (PHE) published the latest national framework to address the UK-wide problem of physical inactivity, 'Everybody active, every day',⁴ during our evidence gathering towards the end of 2014.
- 2.1.2 According to current UK guidance, how much physical activity you need to do to stay healthy or improve health each week depends on your age. Adults need to do two types of physical activity each week: aerobic or something which raises heart rate and muscle-strengthening activity. It is pointed out that adults can be active daily by accumulating activity in minimum duration chunks of 10 minutes and do:

At least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity that require



2.1.3 Guidelines for children are much higher. Children who can walk on their own should be physically



Relevant Council projects and programmes

- 2.2.8 The Be Active scheme was launched in September 2009 as a partnership between the Council and the NHS to tackle health inequalities such as low levels of activity, high rates of Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, Diabetes, Obesity and certain Cancers by providing free access to physical activities for all city residents. It allocates

2.2.12 Council provision is clearly only one part of community provision for sport and physical activity in the city. Physical activity can and does take place in a wide range of settings. For example there are 800-900 groups in Birmingham that could be classified as sports clubs. We were reminded during evidence gathering that some are very small, inclusive and not about performance pathways for elite sport.

Sport Birmingham

2.2.13 Sport Birmingham is an independent charity established as a separate entity from the Council in 2014 and is one of a network of 45 County Sports Pa



3 Findings

3.1 Remembering the transformative power of sport and physical activity

3.1.1 While we started the inquiry with some appreciation of the transformative power of sport and physical activity the various case studies presented during evidence gathering reinforced its importance. We heard that as individuals can be reinvigorated through physical activity and sport this in turn can reinvigorate communities.


3.1.2 Bringing people together to be active is an important way to make new connections within communities and perhaps even overcome some local fractures. Increasing accessibility and lessening barriers to opportunities are vital to making this happen and we were encouraged to hear that Birmingham is the subject of a national pilot project with Sport England and other partners in developing a toolkit to support opening up secondary school and community facilities so that they can be used safely for sport and physical activity.

3.1.3 All of the case studies we heard (see sections 3.2 and 3.6) highlighted the community aspect of their projects and the role of individuals also known as ‘community activators’ or community leaders. These are local people who, with suitable support, can enable other individuals to become active initially and then more active through training, mentoring and associated development. Sport England encouraged the Council and partners to continue to work with community groups to identify and assist individuals who can be community champions through sport.

3.2 Moving from inactivity to *some* activity generates the greatest health benefits

3.2.1 We heard a range of evidence that stressed that people moving from being inactive to being active in some way generates the greatest health improvements and benefits. That said we also heard from both academic and clinical experts that it is important not to confuse increasing physical activity with a cure for obesity.

3.2.2 While it is possible to be both fit and fat, being fit does not eliminate the challenges associated with obesity and meeting current national physical activity guidelines is unlikely, in itself, to support weight loss or prevent weight regain. Evidence indicates that activity is needed above and beyond national guidelT6 Twc(a.–ivic2-6.7(e)1.).4p5(mo5(n)-5.fs2.015 ks52(r)-.7(e 7t)-4.5(e.i(ors102'n




visible fat but is more detrimental to health. Being fit reduces the risk of premature mortality by half¹³. Contracting muscles through physical activity releases powerful anti-inflammatory chemicals which by reducing low-grade, long-term inflammation related to chronic stress can also reduce depression, anxiety, arthritis and many other conditions as well as those diseases already mentioned.

- 3.2.3 We heard that there is much that can be done at policy level to create activity friendly environments with potential for community wide action linked to educational campaigns. One successful example of this, which Dr William Bird presented to committee,

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make both happen *during the working day* rather than around working hours as essential. So this might include actively encouraging staff to get up from their desks or during meetings a couple of times an hour to stretch, use stairs rather than lifts in their workplace and shorten meeting times as well as to ensure to ta 10n ..5(o)1a.9(a)-5.2(n)01.7D-.00m11388.0375 [8(e activor56 a)-5.5rathome f)



motivational online tool referenced that the Council and partners could be promoting and using to supplement existing work.

3.4



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and physical activity

Case Study - Bob

We heard the composite case study of 'Bob' who was a fictional character based on several real life

Case Study - Saheli

Saheli is a charity which incorporates Saheli Hub. The latter is a social enterprise part-funded by Sport England based around an independent gym in Balsall Heath and established in 2006 as an organisation run by women for women targeting (although not working exclusively with) women of Black and Minority Ethnic origin to be more active. It now works in 4 postcode areas in some of the most deprived parts of Birmingham supporting women new to exercise to use both local leisure centres and to take part in outdoor pursuits. Partners include local GPs and the City Council's Health and Wellbeing and Be Active teams. A fundamental part of Saheli's approach is to recruit and train women from local communities to work with and motivate peers in turn to be more active. Once women are confident in exercising, Saheli then tapers its support with the aim of enabling women to be active independently.

It has delivered a range of activities through the pilot Active Parks programme as well as developed a door step club funded through Street Games. The latter offers non-mainstream and culturally sensitive opportunities for young women



Bike North Birmingham has informed the city's new Cycle Revolution programme²² which seeks to promote sustainable travel options by increasing the attractiveness of cycling to people of all backgrounds. It includes offering 5000 free-to-use bikes to Birmingham residents through the Big Birmingham bikes programme²³, bikes on short and long term loan to individuals and to community groups along with the development of around 20 bike hubs in targeted areas. The target is for cycling to make up 5% of all journeys by 2023 and for a 27% increase in cycling in the Cycle City Ambition grant area (a 20 minute cycle commute to/from the city centre).

3.7 Continuing to improve Birmingham's evidence base

3.7.1 We noted Sport England's endorsement for the range of city projects we heard about during our evidence gathering from a national perspective as creative and effective good practice. We also heard that the city has established an important evidence base for these and other projects particularly in terms of social return on investment as part of the range of work it has undertaken to address challenges of physical inactivity. Data capture undertaken for the Be Active and Active Parks programmes was cited as vital work in understanding who is taking part or not and relevant behaviours.

3.7.2 Dr William Bird identified six main attributes to a successful physical activity scheme for us to consider in collecting evidence:

Is it targeting the inactive population? (Baseline measures of who comprises this are needed)

Is it getting those people more active? (<12 weeks)

Is it keeping those people active? (>12 weeks)

Is success measurable? (what metrics are to be used and over what period of time)

Is it sustainable? (in terms of people, skills and funding)

Is it scalable?

3.7.3 Continuing to develop this evidence base across all projects is seen as essential for both targeting existing and increasingly limited resources most effectively. It is especially important in attracting future resources at a time of unprecedented financial challenge across the public sector when investing in sport for its intrinsic value is likely to be assessed as less important among competing priorities than delivering on wider outcomes such as health, community cohesion and educational attainment. Ethnically diverse groups are under-represented in health research despite increased

²² See <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bcr>

²³ See <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bbb>



- 3.9.2 Schools were also highlighted as an important component of developing partnerships. While many schools in Birmingham are delivering a varied sport and physical activity offer not all are. Currently most primary schools receive circa £9k a year directly of additional monies via the PE Premium²⁶ to support the quality and breadth of sports provision in schools. Sport Birmingham is one of the organisations that can advise on how these limited funds can be maximised to embed sport within the curriculum rather than a bolt-on activity. Partners need to work together to ensure a whole-school approach as set out in evidence from Bike North Birmingham. One area for development identified was how secondary schools using recognised good practice can support primary school clusters.

²⁶ See <https://www.gov.uk/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools>



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the benefits to individual health and wellbeing as well as to communities already outlined as well as the risks inherent in reducing Council support.

- 4.2.2 As a result we welcome Sport Birmingham's suggestion that the Council and partners adopt a new target to make Birmingham the most improved City/Region, in terms of physical activity levels, in the country (by 2017) to recognise the importance of work in this area and focus collective efforts. We are mindful of the view from witnesses that how this work will be measured and monitored requires careful planning and collaboration with relevant University partners. We also see a role for District Committees in seeking local views on ways to meet the target and in reviewing progress given the relevance of local provision and need to reaching the shared goal.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R02	Ensure that a target is set and signed up to across all relevant agencies to aim to make Birmingham the most improved City/City Region, in terms of physical activity levels, in the country (by 2017) to recognise the importance of work in this area.	Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing in partnership with Sport Birmingham and University of Birmingham School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences	September 2015

4.3 Exploring the potential to incorporate the 'unusual suspects' and their approaches such as 'buddying' into programmes

- 4.3.1 Given some of the difficulties we heard associated

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R03	Ensure that the City Council and partners explore how to incorporate innovation and the 'unusual suspects' such as Saheli and others into delivery, so that the inactive are catered for within the sport and physical activity pathway. Examples could include 'buddying' into current and future sports and physical activity projects to encourage sustainable physical activity.	Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	September 2015

4.4 Continuing to develop the research base

4.4.1 It was recognised that the full mix of populations is not always reflected in research and that in a city of Birmingham's diversity it is essential that groups are not excluded from the evidence base that determines resource allocation and provision. This takes time to enable communities to inform the work of the Council and partners from the outset. Nevertheless it is essential that developing insight continues to guide the City's programming and approach.

4.4.2 We see that further work is needed to understand barriers for women and notably women of Black and Minority Ethnic origin participating fully in sport and physical activity and the potential of additional Overview and Scrutiny investigation to support this work in the new municipal year.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R04	<p>a) Ensure that the City Council continues work to develop an evidence base for future work with national and local partners to evaluate lessons learned on ensuring the diversity of the city's population in increasing participation in sport and physical activity.</p> <p>b) This should include further specific work identifying the barriers for women and specifically for women from BME groups in engagement in sport and physical activity.</p> <p>c) Explore the feasibility of a further Overview and Scrutiny committee investigation in the new municipal year to report back on b).</p>	Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	September 2015

4.5 The potential of workforce initiatives including student placements in supporting projects

- 4.5.1 Birmingham’s universities offer many courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that require students to undertake placements of varying lengths and associated course work around them as important parts of course learning. A number of these courses are relevant to increasing participation in sport and physical activity. In addition the city’s universities coordinate a variety of non-course based volunteering opportunities to students.
- 4.5.2 We welcome the offer from the University of Birmingham’s School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences to explore the potential with the Council and partners for students from their department and potentially others to support new and existing projects which aim to increase levels of sporting and other physical activity in the city. This could involve, as part of wider workforce initiatives, using student and other volunteer research knowledge and skills in developing project monitoring and evaluation as well as offering exercise advice and sports coaching as community activators. We would like to see a focus for new community activators with schools, particularly primary schools. We see such opportunities as distinct to unpaid internships after a student’s course post-graduation. The emphasis here is on students gaining appropriate and valuable experience as much as benefit to projects in line with good practice for student placements such as that from ASET²⁷. We hope that other city University departments will see value in this through the Council’s emerging Public Services Academy along with third sector organisations.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R05	That the potential for workforce initiatives that include student placements/volunteers to support an improved evidence base and increased range of ‘community activators’ for physical activity projects (for example those undertaken with third sector partners) be explored with University partners and other third sector providers. Work with schools, particularly primary schools, is key and this should be integrated into any initiative.	Deputy Leader in partnership (for iird secto(s. W8()TJo)-4(f-.00irminTJ2he)3.4	



4.9 Breaking up sedentary time

- 4.9.1 Witnesses stressed during evidence gathering that increasing participation in sport and physical activity is not necessarily the same as either decreasing physical inactivity or sedentary behaviour. While research on sedentary time is in its infancy, there are potentially promising findings on the effect of low-cost interventions for the Council and partners to keep an eye on. This is especially important given early views that breaking up sedentary time is possibly more important for health than reducing total sedentary time although ideally we would aim to do both.
- 4.9.2 We welcome the offer from the University of Birmingham's School for Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences (and potentially from other local universities for example University College Birmingham) to support the Council both in its own work and with partners on developing strategies to counter any reluctance to support corporate health promotion. An additional offer was to share lessons learned and good practice from recent stair climbing campaigns on which they have worked.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R09	That the City Council develops further existing policies to increase activity at work and campaigns both internally to its staff and Councillors and with partners to encourage the breaking up of sedentary time during the working day alongside increasing physical activity using lessons learned from local evidence-based campaigns.	Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing In partnership with University of Birmingham School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences	

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environment can be designed that encourages physical activity, active travel and healthy lifestyle choices.”

We would add to this recommendation by advising a new focus on current and upcoming major developments in the city. It seems that significant opportunities have already been missed in making it easier for people to make healthier choices throughout the redevelopment of New Street station project. As a result, it is vital that we make the most of the limited potential within financial limitations for people to move in our urban environment in a healthier way by reviewing major developments for how they contribute or not to active lifestyle goals across Directorates in their design. One way of doing this is through the new Cabinet Report Public Health Test for Cabinet reports.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R10	Ensure all future major developments including transport are 'active lifestyle-proofed' to avoid inadvertently reducing opportunities for physical activity and active lifestyles through the use of the Cabinet Report Public Health Test for reports,		

Appendix A – Witnesses

We are grateful to the following for their verbal and written contributions to the inquiry:

Naseem Akhtar	Project Manager, Saheli
Dr William Bird	GP and Intelligent Health
Mike Chamberlain	Chief Executive, Sport Birmingham