

Environment
Municipal Offices, 222 Upper Street, London, N1 1YA

Report of: Cllr Nurullah Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 24 November 2022

Ward(s): All

Islington Active Together Strategy 2022-2030

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This report summarises a new strategy to empower and encourage our communities to be more physically active. The strategy is a high-level document setting out our vision and priorities. It is underpinned by an action plan to translate these into reality.
- 1.2. The strategy has been jointly developed and led by Public Health and Greenspace & Leisure. It has been developed with a wide number of partners across the Council and externally and will be jointly delivered with them.
- 1.3. The strategy is intended to lift physical activity levels across the borough and whole community but brings particular focus on engaging less active and inactive residents and groups in physical activity to reap the considerable health, social, environmental, and additional benefits of being physically active, which in turn contributes to the narrowing of the borough's health inequalities.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To adopt the Islington Active Together strategy and its action plan.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Strategy sets out how being regularly active has profound benefits for our physical health, our mental health and wellbeing, our quality of life, and our ability

to live independently. It can help connect and strengthen our communities, assist with environmental goals (for example through promotion of active travel) and has huge value to our local and national economy.

- 3.2. In children and young people, regular physical activity is associated with improved learning and attainment, better mental health, and cardiovascular fitness, and contributes to being a healthy weight.
- 3.3. Being regularly active can make a clear contribution to people of all ages maintaining or achieving a healthy weight, but with the proviso that “you can’t run off a bad diet.” Even small reductions in weight by those who are overweight can significantly benefit people’s health, for example by reducing risk of diabetes and helping to reduce high blood pressure.
- 3.4. Having an active population benefits the health and care system and brings wider social benefits for individuals and communities too. These include increased productivity in the workplace and reducing congestion and air pollution through active travel instead of driving.
- 3.5. There is already a wide-ranging and diverse physical activity offer in Islington which many residents engage in. Nevertheless, 27.2% of Islington residents aged 16+, an estimated 57,000 people, fall below recommended levels of physical (Adults and older adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity per week or at least 75 minutes of vigorous intensity per week, or a combination of both). Estimates also suggest that 60% of children and young people are not meeting recommended physical activity levels. (Children and young people aged 5-18 should aim for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week).
- 3.6. This strategy has been developed in close consultation with the ProActive Islington partnership¹, and other key stakeholders across the Council, NHS and Voluntary and Community Sector. Prior engagement with residents and frontline services has also been used to inform the priorities and commitments outlined in the strategy.
- 3.7. The draft Strategy has been presented to several service management teams and was also presented to and discussed with the following:
 - Schools Improvement Team

¹ The ProActive Islington partnership is chaired and organised by Public Health and the Leisure Team, and consists of the following members: Greenspace and Leisure, Public Health, Active Travel, Schools Health and Wellbeing, community centres, GLL (leisure centres), Arsenal in the Community, Access to Sports, London Sport, Adventure Playgrounds, and Islington Play Association.

- Strategic Commissioning group (Children's Commissioners and Adult Social Care commissioners)
- Adult Community Learning
- Bright Islington Board
- Homes and Communities
- Play and Youth Services
- Active Travel Team

It has also been discussed with external partners:

- NCL Primary Care Team
- London Sport

3.8 Insight and engagement work with residents and local partners has been used to inform and shape the priorities in the strategy. These include:

- Surveys, focus groups and interviews with **secondary school girls and PE teachers** to understand barriers faced by teenage girls' in being physically active, and engage their views on how to create positive physical activity experiences for girls.
(Islington Healthy Schools Team & Camden and Islington Public Health, September 2020)
- Survey of **GPs and other local health professionals** to understand confidence and current practice on promoting physical activity to patients.
(Camden and Islington Public Health, July 2021)
- Survey of **local sports and physical activity organisations** to understand the impact of Covid-19
(Islington Leisure Team, September 2021)
- Survey of **inactive adults with a long-term health condition**, to explore barriers faced to being active and understand what support individuals need.
(Camden and Islington Public Health, December 2021)
- Resident feedback from the **Let's Talk Islington** engagement work, which included themes on the green spaces, infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, community connectedness, opportunities for young people, and making better use of community resources.
(Islington Council, 2022)

3.9. The strategy sets out how we will work to facilitate, encourage, and empower our communities to be more physically active. It states the outcomes we want to achieve and how it will contribute to building a more equal Islington.

- 3.10. There are five priority areas for action:
- **Active facilities:** maximising the impact of our physical activity venues and facilities, including leisure centres, swimming pools, Multi-Use Games Areas, and school sports centres.
 - **Active communities:** strengthening the role of communities in delivering physical activity, including sports clubs, community groups, schools, early years settings, businesses, and workplaces.
 - **Active environments:** ensuring that our high streets, neighbourhoods, parks, and open spaces are appealing, promote active travel and influence residents to move more.
 - **Active health and social care:** connecting with health and social care systems to embed physical activity as a key pathway for the prevention and management of long-term health conditions and promoting good mental health.
 - **Finding ways to be physically active:** working with partners to improve information and access to where and how residents can be active.
- 3.11. Each priority is guided by an action plan which will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to respond to the needs of resident communities, physical activity delivery partners and other key stakeholders. Refreshing plans will help us to be flexible; maximising on new opportunities and responding to the latest evidence and insight relating to physical activity, as they become available.
- 3.12. We will use the following guiding principles for the delivery of the strategy:
- Focusing our resources on the residents who are least active and empowering them to become more active.
 - Challenging inequalities in access to, and participation in, physical activity. We will focus on the groups who are less physically active, including children and young people, people living with a disability or long-term health condition, Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic communities, women and girls, older adults, and people living in areas of higher deprivation.
 - Recognising the powerful impact that physical activity can have in preventing and managing a range of long-term health conditions, including supporting good mental health.
- 3.13. The strategy also conveys how the council's leisure services contract can generate a significant commercial return (by providing high quality facilities and services) to enable this to then enable strong concession pricing and programmes such as free swimming for over 60s, to enable access to those communities in greatest need. Indeed, the very nature of the services offered needs to further encourage more active and affluent residents to participate to support these valuable programmes, generating the Islington Active Together principle.

- 3.14. This strategy will make an important contribution to the council’s mission of creating a more equal Islington, where everyone who lives in the borough has an equal chance to thrive. The cross-cutting nature of the strategy and its priorities supports several of the corporate priorities:
- Working together to create a cleaner, greener, healthier borough
 - Communities to feel safe, connected, and inclusive
 - Ensuring our children and young people have the best start
 - Investing in local jobs and businesses to ensure a thriving economy.

3.15 The strategy links to and supports the following borough strategies:

- Camden and Islington Parks for Health Strategy
- Islington Transport Strategy
- Giving Children the Best Start in Life: Islington Children and Families Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy
- Islington Housing Strategy
- The upcoming Carers Strategy and Dementia Strategy.

It provides a clear strategic framework for the role of physical activity in supporting positive outcomes for residents.

3.16 There is already a significant level of investment in physical infrastructure (venues, cycling infrastructure, parks improvements) and programmes, which support and encourage people to be more active. Many of the commitments in the strategy are well in train and the strategy is intended to add value to them by setting them out as a coherent whole. The strategy does not therefore have any new resourcing implications for the council or partners but provides a guiding framework for the targeting and direction of those resources. For example, the development of a new digital platform to create a new single point of easy access for residents and professionals to locate and book onto physical activity would be funded by the re-alignment of existing resources.

3.17 The strategy provides a summary of some of the key investments and highlight the range of contributors through the council and wider community partners. The investment is broad as the council’s investment into People Friendly Streets, cycleways, adventure play, investment on estates infrastructure all support the commitments within the strategy.

3.18 **Table 1: Council Investment in Physical Activity**

Investment in Physical Activity	
Islington Leisure Team	175,000
Sport Islington Grant	25,000
London Youth Games	45,000
Free Swimming Programme	55,000
Islington Football Development Partnership	35,000
Commissioned Programmes (Access to Sports, Active Spaces)	145,000

School Sports Team	177,500
Housing Estates Community Team	80,000
Active Travel Team	400,000
Total Investment	1,137,500

There are several partnership programmes that are jointly funded and commissioned across Leisure, Public Health, Homes and Communities, GLL and Arsenal in the Community.

- Islington Football Development Partnership – providing a coaching programme for young people across the borough
- Active Estates Partnership – programme targeting older adults and families and children on estates.
- School Sports Team - The team consists of 3.8 FTEs and support schools and early years settings in their whole school /setting approach to health and wellbeing (both physical and mental health) through the Healthy Schools and Healthy Early Years programmes.

There are 4 key voluntary sector and community partners that provide a significant physical activity offer funded through the Council and grant funding.

- Camden & Islington Youth League – operates from Market Road pitches 220 Community Teams from 55 different sports clubs with 14 players registered per team generating over 3000 players and 220 football coaches and over 10 referees and hundreds of volunteers.
- Anaconda Swimming Club - 180 Squad Members and 450 Learn to swim members generating over £150k per annum employing teachers and operating across our pools predominantly at Cally Pool and Beacon High School.
- Access to Sports - 6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and 40-50 sessional coaches with over 5000 individual participants last year. Over two thirds of this funding is directed to Islington via community estate-based delivery programmes and coach education programmes the other third is spread over Hackney and Haringey including Finsbury Park. They operate coaching courses as well as activity programmes they are an active employer and are often another provider that turns young people into employable sports coaches and leaders.
- Arsenal in the Community – They have a community team that consists of 27 FTE community staff and approximately 50 sessional coaches.

This does not capture all the investment and activity taking place but is intended to provide a sense of the scale of resources that supports and underpins the commitments of the strategy.

3.19 **How we will monitor progress against our outcomes**

The strategy is supported by detailed action plans that set out specific actions for each priority. The action plans will be reviewed on annual basis. This will help us to be flexible; maximising on new opportunities and responding to the latest evidence and insight relating to physical activity.

The annual Sport England Active Lives survey provides a valuable source of information to understand how Islington residents' physical activity behaviours compare with other areas regionally and nationally. As a borough, Islington generally performs well against London and England and is situated within the top 5 most active boroughs in London. Seventeen percent of Islington adults are estimated to be inactive, compared to approximately a quarter of people in London and nationally. Our ambition is to retain Islington's place amongst the top 5 boroughs in London with the lowest levels of inactivity.

Although the Sport England Active Lives survey provides a valuable source of insight into physical activity behaviours, it is important to note that they survey does not highlight the persistent inequalities in activity levels between different population groups in Islington. Our guiding principles will therefore ensure that we focus on our least active residents, address inequalities between activity levels of different groups, and recognise the powerful impact of being active for preventing and managing long-term conditions.

To understand our progress in delivering the Islington Active Together strategy, we will continue to monitor the Active Lives survey results, children's active travel to school habits, demographics of GLL memberships, and physical activity-related referrals from social prescribing.

4. **Implications**

4.1. **Financial Implications**

The strategy does not have any financial implications and will be delivered by existing resources with the Greenspace & Leisure budgets. Investment requirements will be funded by existing resources supplemented by external grant funding where available.

4.2. **Legal Implications**

There are no specific legal implications to this report.

4.3. **Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

The strategy promotes active travel, which can reduce congestion and reduce air pollution as well as reducing carbon emissions.

The investment in the leisure estate will capture opportunities to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

4.4. Equalities Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment was completed on 16th August 2022. The main findings are that no equalities issues were identified with this strategy. One of the key goals of the strategy is for communities that are currently the least active to become active. These communities include children and young people, people living with a disability or long-term health condition, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities, women and girls, older adults, and people living in areas of higher deprivation.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1. The Islington Active Together strategy is central to meeting our commitments to reduce health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing. It is an important feature of our post-Covid-19 recovery and contributes to tackling the cost-of-living crisis.
- 5.2. This report recommends the adoption of the Islington Active Together strategy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Islington Active Together Strategy

Appendix 2 – EQIA Screening Tool

Appendix 3 – Priority Action Plans

Background papers: none.

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



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