



Fit for the Future

Active Essex
Implementation Plan
2021 - 2023

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Introduction

Fit for the Future, the ground-breaking 10-year strategy for physical activity and sport in Essex, Southend and Thurrock was launched in July 2021. The strategy provided a rallying call to action for the thousands of organisations and people across the county who recognise the enormous contribution physical activity and sport can make to the health and wellbeing of everyone across Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

Active Essex was proud to lead on the creation and publication of *Fit for the Future*. We now want to play our role amongst many others in the implementation of the strategy.

This document outlines the work Active Essex will do until the end of March 2023. This *Active Essex Implementation Plan* will be delivered collaboratively with our wide range of partners across multiple systems and sectors, and addresses the headline issues of climate change, the challenges of Covid-19, and supporting Essex's economic growth.

Our first commitment to implementing *Fit for the Future* was to launch our £2 million behaviour change campaign *Find Your Active* in July 2021, amplified by our many partners. *Find Your Active* has already engaged thousands of people and organisations, and will be central to our work over the coming months and years, as an important way to reach our target audiences and communities.

This implementation plan provides the detail of what Active Essex will do to implement the five strategic priorities outlined in *Fit for the Future*:

- Strengthening Communities
- Sport and Physical Activity sector
- Children and Young People
- Active Environments
- Levelling up Health and Wellbeing

A golden thread that runs throughout this implementation plan is our commitment to ensuring that our work is inclusive and tackles head on the impacts of inequalities between different places in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Levelling up physical activity and sport is our top priority to ensure everyone can live healthy, active and productive lifestyles.



Foundations for Success

Active Essex cannot deliver *Fit for the Future* effectively unless we address the core foundations that underpin the strategy. We will prioritise the use of our resources, particularly supporting those most in need. Our *Find Your Active* campaign is a great example of this as it provides universal encouragement and information about physical activity, whilst also providing bespoke support for target audiences to become more active.

The six foundations will reinforce our work by:

Tackling inequalities - It's important to us in the levelling up agenda to support marginalised groups and level up outcomes for families. Physical activity can play a crucial role in improving the life opportunities for people experiencing the impact of inequalities and enable them to drive forward their own prosperity and wellbeing.

System change - We will continue to hardwire physical activity into the wider system settings of health, social care, transport, education, employers, and planning, enhanced by the Local Delivery Pilot.

Place-Based Working - By building upon an already strong place-based working model in our previous strategy, we will continue to understand the culture and needs of a local place.

People Development - Utilising the amazing sport and physical activity workforce we will continue to build the skills and capabilities to ensure it is diverse and inclusive to meet the needs of all audiences and communities.

Economic Growth - Working with a large range of employers to undertake specific interventions, will improve the physical and mental health of the Essex workforce, spread opportunity through supporting people's aspirations and strengthening our economic growth.

Data and Insight - Active Essex will prioritise the collection, analysis and reporting of high-quality data and insight to measure the impact of physical activity and sport. We will openly share our learning of what works well so that we can all make progress together.

The Local Delivery Pilot

Launched in 2017, the *Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot* (LDP) is an exciting initiative, to tackle population levels of physical inactivity in our most deprived and isolated communities. Essex is one of 12 pilots chosen by Sport England to test innovative approaches that are genuinely replicable and sustainable. This is a bold new approach for Sport England, investing over £100 million in a national pilot that will run initially until 2025. Essex was chosen as it has a two-tier system of local government and has different types of deprivation. The three initial test areas are Basildon, Colchester and Tendring.

The learnings and ways of working of the LDP have strongly influenced the 'Fit for the Future' strategy, the Find Your Active behaviour change and the Active Essex implementation plan. It is clearer than ever that a place-based approach and adopting community-orientated systemic change unlocks truly ground-breaking initiatives in tackling physical inactivity.

The Active Essex LDP is changing the way the Essex eco-system is working, such as:

- Creating a shared purpose that moves at the speed of trust
- Moving from transactional to relationship-based investment
- Increasing distributed leadership at every level of the system
- Recognising that system working is complex and challenging
- Understanding the lived experience of people we are trying to reach
- Going where the energy is by working with people and places that are enthusiastic
- Testing initiatives and approaches and sharing our learning.

Great examples of Active Essex LDP system influencing to date are:

- Making physical activity the first public health priority for Basildon and Brentwood
- Levelling up cycling in disadvantaged communities through Essex County Council's sustainable transport policy
- Mainstreaming physical activity with the adult social care team through the *Prevention and Enablement Model*
- Working with the *Essex Criminal Justice System* to demonstrate the role that sport can play in the prevention of youth crime and violence
- The rapid expansion of *Asset Based Community Development* training and implementation by the Essex eco-system.



Our Values



WE ARE COLLABORATIVE

We are committed to working with others to achieve our vision. We cannot do it alone. We can achieve so much more when we work together and support each other. We believe in building strong and lasting partnerships based on honesty, trust, and a shared purpose.



WE ARE INCLUSIVE

We believe profoundly that everyone should have the right to benefit from physical activity and sport regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, or ability. By being more inclusive we'll reduce the inequalities in physical activity and sport.



WE ARE INNOVATIVE

We are adventurous and forward-thinking, committed to continuously learning from our past, our partners and each other. We value a spirit of innovation to inspire the creation of new ideas and new approaches that are shared with our partners.



WE ARE PASSIONATE

We are passionate about transforming lives and communities through physical activity and sport. We have the energy, enthusiasm and commitment to succeed using innovative methods whilst staying focused on our vision.

Equality Statement

It is central to the Active Essex ethos that physical activity and sport should be open and accessible to everybody. We strongly value diversity and strive to ensure that opportunities are available to all but do recognise that there are inequalities in participation opportunities which affect specific sections of our communities. We will commit time and resources to support these communities.

[Read in full here](#)

Race Equality Commitment

Active Essex is committed to being an anti-racist organisation and has been proactively working to tackle the racial inequalities that prevent or discourage people from leading active lives and enjoying the benefits of sport and physical activity, whether as participants, volunteers or by working in the sector.

[Read in full here](#)

Safeguarding Statement

Active Essex believes that everyone has the right to take part in sport and physical activity free from harm and abuse. We recognise that children, young people and some adults are at increased risk and that their protection is of paramount importance.

[Read in full here](#)

Implementation Plan for Strategic Priority: Strengthening Communities

Vision

All communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock use the power of physical activity and sport to build resilience, connection and wellbeing.



The pandemic has shown that communities across the county have enormous capacity and passion for positive action. We will harness this energy to ensure physical activity plays a key role in strengthening local communities. Strong communities are critical for Essex, Southend and Thurrock as they create a sense of belonging and purpose which dramatically improves overall health and wellbeing.

Communities are best placed to understand their own cultures, their own needs and how they can help each other. We must use citizen-led approaches, putting communities at the heart of decision making to tackle the root causes of the inequalities that currently exist.

We will do this through Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), which demonstrates that local assets (people and physical assets) are key to ensure sustainable community development that focuses on what is strong. ABCD is the best way to build stronger communities that are healthier, safer, prosperous and more inclusive.

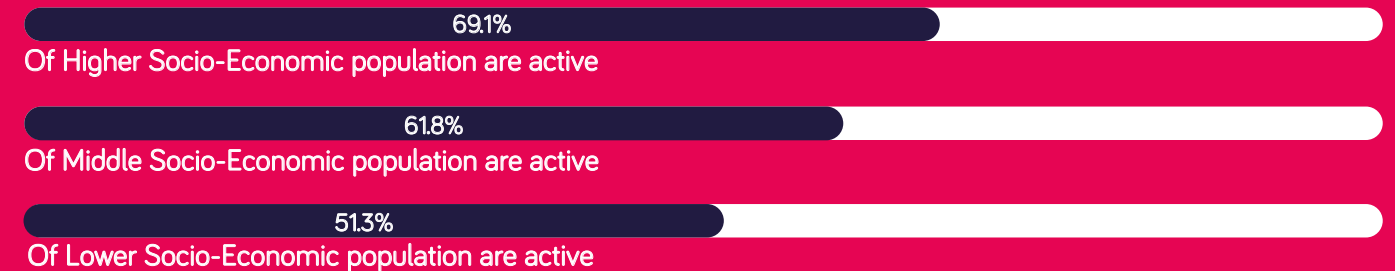
It is important that everyone has the opportunity to be physically active in an accessible place that is familiar to them. By increasing the number of spaces for physical activity in communities, we can reach more people who are less active or challenged by disadvantage or inequality.

There is a huge network of community organisations working hard and using physical activity to improve people's lives and strengthen communities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. With more support and resources, more community organisations can start to use physical activity to improve the outcomes and opportunities for local people.

Active Essex has significantly developed place-based locality working over the past few years through our hub model in support of the levelling up agenda. We have strong networks in local communities enabling us to understand local cultures, strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Our hub teams will continue to play a vital role in supporting the capacity of local community organisations and groups.

Current State of Play

Data from the Essex Active Lives Statistics in 2019-2020 on Socio-Economic classification, showed:



According to the Essex Communities Needs Index, more than 1 in 5 wards (22%) in Essex ranked among the lowest 10% nationally in a measure of the extent to which communities have access to shared spaces and social infrastructure, social and physical connections, a thriving third sector and engaged citizens. Communities Needs Index, Essex County Council Strategy Insight and Engagement



41.9%

Residents living with a disability are active
Essex Active Lives stats 19-20

65.5%

Residents not living with a disability are active
Essex Active Lives stats 19-20



Key Areas of Focus

Tackling inequalities in our communities

We'll work with our most inactive communities to develop physical activity opportunities and deliver behavioural change campaigns to reduce inequalities between places and for the county's most marginalised groups.

Our *Tackling Inequalities Fund* and *Find Your Active Fund* will support organisations targeting the most inactive and physically deconditioned by the pandemic, including ethnically diverse communities, disabled people, people with long-term health conditions and lower socio-economic groups.

We will deliver our *Essex ActivAte* programme targeting children eligible for benefits based free school meals and low income families. We will work with food banks and a network of community organisations tackling poverty to support those most in need.

Our *This Girl Can Essex*, *Essex All Together* and *Find Your Active* campaigns and ambassador programmes will support participation for women, disabled people, over 65s, deconditioned adults and people with long-term health conditions.

Through the *Essex Faith Covenant*, we'll work with faith groups to reach the most inactive communities.

The *Essex Local Delivery Pilot* will continue to focus on the most deprived communities, testing new interventions in our pilot areas and scaling up the most successful approaches across Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

Building resilience and capacity in local community organisations

Ensure that our network of locally trusted organisations receive the support, resources and funding they need to grow and sustain their use of sport and physical activity.

We will develop and sustain place-based physical activity programmes through advocacy, funding and resources including those provided by the *Essex Local Delivery Pilot* and *Active Essex Foundation*.

We'll bring our networks together through our *Share and Learn* events, highlighting best practice and promoting partnership working.

We will help organisations grow and become resilient through bespoke capacity building support through the *Tackling Inequalities Fund*, *Active Essex Foundation* and the *Essex Local Delivery Pilot*.

We will continue to work closely with umbrella organisations such as CVS teams, *Essex Association of Local Councils*, *Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Clubs*, *Active Networks* and *Essex Cultural Diversity Project*, who will support community and voluntary organisations. We'll support the co-design of new projects and securing of grants to improve activity levels.

The Sport England Tackling Inequalities Fund is now called the *Together Fund*.

Sport and youth crime and violence prevention

Ensure that sport and physical activity are recognised and used as an effective intervention to prevent youth crime and violence.

We work closely with partners within the criminal justice system, including the *Essex Violence and Vulnerability board*, *Essex Police*, *Fire and Crime Commissioner*, and *Youth Offending Services*, to ensure sport and physical activity is seen as a key intervention that is meriting investment.

We'll continue to ensure Essex, Southend and Thurrock can influence national practice, through our work with *Street Games* who lead on the sport and youth crime and violence prevention nationally.

Working with *Essex Youth Offending Service*, we'll pilot a sport and life skills project for young people serving youth rehabilitation orders, engaging them in sport opportunities and young leaders training.

We'll work with the *Active Essex Foundation* on a large-scale sport and youth crime and violence reduction project to develop, support, upscale and showcase a network of locally trusted organisations who use sport as a key intervention for this target group.

Hardwiring physical activity into shared community spaces

We will work with a range of partners to unleash the potential of community spaces, to bring people together through physical activity and create a greater reach to our inactive audiences.

Active Essex will work with various community organisations to increase and improve community spaces and places for physical activity. This also includes non-traditional places that community members are familiar with and feel comfortable visiting.

We will work with the Essex County Council Libraries team to ensure that physical activity is a key part of their offer in the '*Library of Things*' project. We will also ensure that physical activity is a key intervention in their '*Shelf help*' project, focusing on supporting mental wellbeing.

We will continue to support community organisations who have developed local community hubs, such as the *Motivated Minds Happy Hub*, *Inclusion Ventures*, *ATF* and *Changing Lives*, who are all using sport to break down barriers, engage and upskill local people.

We will continue to build on our work with faith groups to embed physical activity into faith centres.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

We are committed to using ABCD to underpin our work, using the existing strengths and passions within our local communities to drive up physical activity levels, with citizens in the lead.

We work closely with our expert partner *Nurture Development*, who are recognised as world leaders in ABCD.

We will organise *ABCD training* for citizens, community leaders, practitioners, managers, system leaders and politicians and provide *ABCD Guides*.

We will create *Stewardship Circles* to develop the understanding and use of ABCD by senior system leaders across the county.

Through the use of *Rapid Reviews* we will create a baseline assessment of the current strengths in a community.

We will use *Discovery Conversations* with citizens, practitioners, managers and politicians to start a conversation about the importance of citizen led approaches.

The *Essex Local Delivery Pilot microgrants* will fund the energy and ideas at a hyperlocal level through a very simple application process.



Implementation Plan for Strategic Priority: Sport and Physical Activity Sector

Vision

To support the recovery, development and growth of our sport and physical activity sector, in order to collectively increase opportunities for all.

The Essex sport and physical activity sector is broad and dynamic, yet Covid-19 has and continues to severely test the resilience of our community sports clubs and organisations. As we look to support the recovery of our sector, we need to listen, learn, and better understand our communities. We must take this opportunity to reinvent as a vibrant, relevant, and sustainable network and play a key role in tackling inequalities and reaching a wider audience.

We need to capitalise on the importance that physical activity was given throughout the pandemic in relation to people's physical and mental health and everyone has a role to play in contributing towards this. It is vital that professionals across system settings have the knowledge and confidence to hardwire physical activity into their core business. We must advocate for a coherent whole-system approach to embed physical activity into existing system settings and provide a framework for change.

Sport and physical activity drives a number of positive social outcomes, generating significant social value across the eco-system. As a sector, we must improve measurement of these outcomes to ensure we demonstrate the wider contribution to society, beyond economic value, making it a potentially cost-effective investment for the public sector.

The Essex economy, and consequent skills and employment landscape has been significantly affected by Covid-19, affecting the way we work and learn in an unprecedented manner. The sport and physical activity sector is no different and continues to be negatively impacted, however the sector plays an important role in contributing to the overall Essex economy. We need to work collaboratively to respond to the challenges Covid-19 has brought. Using local knowledge and expertise we will support the sector to recover and adapt to create a sustainable future.

We also recognise that Covid-19 has resulted in sport and physical activity professionals and volunteers finding opportunities outside the sector or experiencing reduced hours within their workplace. The challenge is to rebuild and develop the sport and physical activity workforce to ensure both volunteers and professionals, are recognised, supported, and developed so they can meet the changing needs of their audiences and communities. This is a fantastic opportunity to shape the sector so that it is managed and delivered by a diverse range of people who are inclusive, highly skilled, and able to make a full contribution to the health and social fabric of Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

We must also create an understanding of the importance of 'more people like me' within our places delivering activity. This starts with ensuring our future young leaders have positive experiences of physical activity and the opportunities to develop a career in the sector. The creation of a *Sport and Physical Activity Skills Plan* will help to identify the skills needs, refocus and drive new investment, and bring employers together to implement change. There needs to be a collective commitment to narrow the skills gap, make the sector attractive and remove systemic barriers in order to make it the sector of choice.

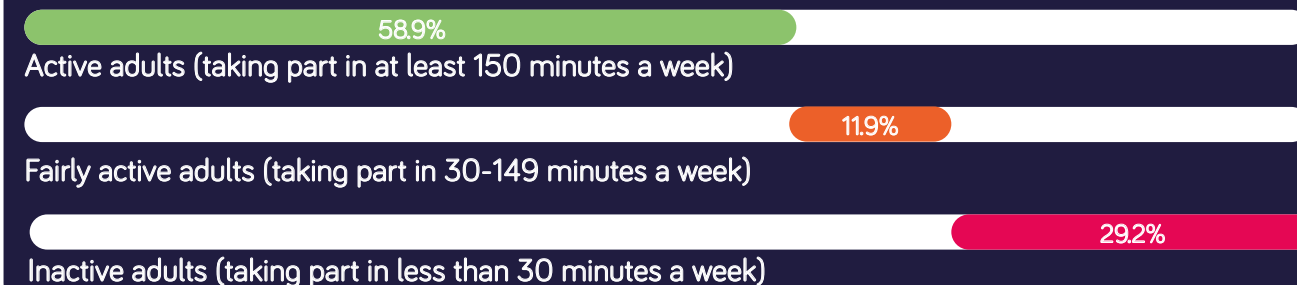


£218.8m

Total Growth Value Added (GVA)
*EMSI

Current State of Play

Daily Sport & Physical Activity Levels for **adults** in Essex, Southend & Thurrock, 2020-21



*Active Lives Data

18,910

people working in Sport and Physical Activity industries in Essex in 2020 (EMSI data)

313,500

people in Essex, Southend and Thurrock state they have volunteered in sport and physical activity at least once, in the year prior to Nov 20



Key Areas of Focus



Skills and employability

To support thousands of people across the county who advocate the importance of an active lifestyle or deliver physical activity such as coaches, instructors and leaders. People are our most important resource.

We will develop and launch a *Skills Strategy* and subsequent *Action Plan* for the sport and physical activity sector. This will be developed and driven by our newly created *Skills Advisory Panel* made up of industry leaders and skills specialists. The panel will use data and insight from local employers to reduce skills gaps, support issues with recruitment and retention and help bridge the gap between education and training with employer needs.

We must support our future workforce with quality training and skills, and develop clearer, supported career pathways working with CIMSPA on industry standards.

We will do this by educating employers and young people about the opportunities and benefits of apprenticeships and other employment schemes. Invest in training and volunteer opportunities for students through our *Leaders in Training* programme and work to provide more meaningful work placements.

Economic growth and recovery

To support businesses growth within our sector and improve the physical and mental health of the Essex, Southend and Thurrock workforce.

We will act as sector advocates, providing insight and a voice for employers, raising the profile of sport and physical activity and increasing engagement with the *South East Local Enterprise Partnership* and *Chamber of Commerce*.

We will identify growth opportunities and provide advice and guidance to the sector, linking opportunities around employment, funding and business support.

We must influence employers to recognise the importance of investing in the physical wellbeing of their workforce and how that contributes to the wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Being physically active contributes to people having good health, and plays an important role in people accessing jobs, sustaining employment, and reducing absenteeism through ill health.

Hardwiring physical activity across the system

Embed physical activity as an integral element within our wider system partners service and workforce.

We will influence partners across system settings so more people can access high quality physical activity opportunities. This will require bespoke physical activity training for the wider workforce, using our *starting the conversation toolkit*.

We will continue to test new ways of working with partners such as the *Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service*, *Leaving and Aftercare teams* and *Adult Social Care*, supporting practitioners to embed physical activity within their services.

We will work with the *Rural Community Council of Essex* and *West Essex Community Action Network* to embed Community Connectors into local places, linking people with opportunities at neighbourhood levels.

Sector support - recovery, growth & sustainability

Our county has a strong and vibrant sport and physical activity sector which must be protected, supported and nurtured through the recovery of Covid-19.

We will create platforms to share best practice, learning and opportunities through *Newsletters*, *Club and NGB forums* and support deliverers to return to play through our *Find Your Active Fund*.

We will help build resilience and sustainability in our sector through providing bespoke capacity building support such as expert advice on legal structures, good governance, creating robust business plans and fundraising strategies.

We will continue to support our *Leisure Operators Forum*. Creating opportunities for local authority leisure providers and their contractors to share successes, challenges and new ways of working.

We will lead on the creation and continuation of *Local Authority Playing Pitching Strategy* implementation groups and continue to play our role in sport facility stock recovery work by supporting investment applications of built facilities.

Creating a more diverse and inclusive sector

We will work collaboratively to tackle inequalities in sport and physical activity, making the sector more representative of Essex, Southend and Thurrock communities.

We will support the sector to better link with the health and social care landscape, providing meaningful CDP and training opportunities using insight from our recent *Training Needs Analysis*. We will expand on our *Essex Health Series*, *Share and Learn events* and *Mental Health training*, whilst continuing to develop the *Cancer Rehab* and *Strength & Balance* pathways and creation of *Mental Health Champions* within club settings.

As early adopters of the *Race Equality Code* we will continue to focus on improving racial diversity, ensuring there is an increase of black, asian and minority ethnic leaders within our sector.

We will continue to support our local *Active Networks* which provide a platform for grassroots organisations and local system partners to learn, collaborate and fund place-based interventions to tackling inactivity.

Implementation Plan for Strategic Priority: Children and Young People

Vision

To ensure every child in Essex, Southend and Thurrock has the best start in life, whereby they are active, healthy and happy

Every child and young person in Essex, Southend and Thurrock should have the best start so they can lead a healthy, active, happy and resilient life. Positive experiences of being active at an early age are much more likely to mean an active adulthood. We are born to be active, but to continue with this lifelong behaviour, we must make sure that experiences are fun, accessible, positive, and safe for all children and young people.

To ensure every child can be active means levelling up the playing field across Essex, Southend and Thurrock – supporting those who are already active and tackling head on the root causes that currently prevent every child and young person in the county from the life changing impact of an active lifestyle. Physically literate children and young people are more likely to be active and happier, therefore we must create the conditions to make movement a part of their everyday routine and empower every child and young person in Essex, Southend and Thurrock to LOVE being active.

Regular physical activity when paired with other healthy habits, can make a massive difference to the overall wellbeing of our children and young people. There is a positive association between levels of engagement in physical activity and sport, and levels of mental wellbeing as well as individual and community development. Young people who engage in physical activity and sport are also less likely to feel lonely, and have meaningful social relationships, which is vital not only for mental and physical health, but also for school and wider community engagement.

We know we cannot achieve this vision alone and are committed to working with partners from across the whole system to get more children and young people physically active on a more regular basis. We will continue to consult and listen to our children and young people, involving them at the heart of our decision making and will deliver what's right for them. We will learn and expand our understanding of why and how outcomes have happened, the role we played and how that helped – or in some cases didn't, through the collection of rich stories which will bring to life the impact of physical activity on our children and young people and families.

As we emerge from Covid-19 and look to build back fairer for our children and young people, we have published this implementation plan of how Active Essex will work to reach the Fit for the Future vision for children and young people. We have summarised this in to eight key areas of focus.

Current State of Play

Daily Sport & Physical Activity Levels for **children** (year 1-11) in Essex, Southend & Thurrock, Academic Year 2019-20:



200,000

free spaces offered to children who's parents/ carers are eligible for benefits based free school meals during school holidays in summer 2021, through the Essex ActivAte programme.

11,746

views on the Find Your Active online YouTube sessions



63%

Primary Schools in Essex, Southend and Thurrock take part in The Daily Mile™ compared to 16% in 2019.

552

Schools in Essex, Southend and Thurrock are engaged in the Essex School Games.

79%

13-25 year olds agreed that their mental health would start to improve, when most Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.

Key Areas of Focus

Creating fun, inclusive & safe opportunities

We will create fun, inclusive, and safe opportunities that positively impact the lives of children and young people in Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

We will do this by distributing resources from Department for Education and Sport England programmes, such as the *Essex ActivAte*, and the *Opening School Facilities*, to help revitalise extracurricular and community activities. We will work with the education system, the *Essex Children's Partnership Board*, grassroots sport, community groups and locally trusted organisations to acquire the resources and commitment needed to get our children and young people active. We will focus our support on children and young people who need it most, such as helping those most affected by Covid-19 or other health inequalities with targeted interventions such as supporting young people particularly challenged by the transition from primary to secondary school.

Developing skills for the future workforce

We will drive development of a highly skilled, dynamic and diverse sports and activity workforce for the future, by supporting children and young people with their personal growth and the learning opportunities they need to succeed and support our county's economic growth.

We will do this by supporting children and young people to build the skills and capabilities they need to enable them to determine and drive forward their own prosperity. We will expand our successful *Leadership in Training Programme* and continue to work with community partners to offer apprenticeships for young people through the *Coach Core Programme*. We will also run targeted programmes such as *'I Can, I Am'* to support marginalised children and young people and aim to offer more leadership opportunities through the Essex Schools Games than ever before.

Helping children and young people to move more

We will use interventions to raise levels of physical activity and sport by promoting healthier choices to support the balanced physical growth and development in children and young people.

We will prioritise children and young people through the Essex-wide *Find Your Active* campaign, which aims to get them moving more. The *Essex School Games* will be accessible to more children than ever before and will offer new opportunities for those who typically don't engage in competition. We will make the most of digital opportunities and new ways for young people to be active, whether that be through digital apps, new technology or projects such as *Street Tag* or *Beat the Street*. We will also continue to push the importance of being active every day by continuing to grow *The Daily Mile* in Essex with exciting challenges, such as *Essex Daily Mile Destinations*. We will monitor and measure activity levels through the *Active Lives Survey* in collaboration with schools throughout Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

Improving physical literacy

We will work to improve children and young people's physical literacy, from early years to adulthood, supporting the drive towards every child reaching their full potential.

We will do this by developing resources and training for partners who support families, children, and young people, but have not typically understood or felt comfortable selling the benefits that an active lifestyle from an early age can make. We will continue to support schools to maximise impact from their *PE and Primary Sport Premium* funding, celebrate those who go above and beyond through our *Key Stage 1 Awards* programme and offer inclusive opportunities for young people through programmes such as *Panathlon Challenge* and *Powerhouse Games*. We will continue to offer training for newly qualified teachers and community providers who play a vital role in building motivation, confidence and physical competence that provides children with the movement foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity.



Key Areas of Focus



Improving mental health and wellbeing

We will support improving the mental wellbeing of children and young people through physical activity, by working with partners who share the same vision.

We will champion the positive link between mental and physical health through all our communication channels and will support interventions that target young people with poor mental health or look to improve the mental wellbeing of children and young people. We will continue to promote mental health first aid training and other development opportunities to deliverers and organisations working with children and young people and help to develop a physical activity unit for the *Trauma Perceptive Practice* programme.



Involving children and young people in decisions

We will put children and young people first by co-designing activities and initiatives that work for them.

We will work with our School Games Organisers and children and young people to create a *Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Legacy Programme*, driven by youth voice, with a strong focus on tackling inequalities. We will continue to engage and listen to young people through forums such as the *Multi-Schools Council* and aim to ensure more young voices inform our work.



Safe environments to be active

We will continue to support the development of existing and future safe and accessible spaces, which will facilitate high-quality activities and encourage everyday movement for children and young people.

We will work with partners to develop best practice and inform local plans through implementation groups and will develop new resources, such as the *Essex Design Guide* for new schools. We will have robust and clear safeguarding procedures in place and will continue to support the sport and physical activity sector to enhance their knowledge and practices by offering training in partnership with *UK Coaching* and the *Child Protection in Sport Unit* of the NSPCC. We will support the climate change agenda by promoting the use of active travel for work, leisure, short journeys and to and from school. We will do this by leading or promoting interventions such as *Essex Pedal Power*, *Bikeability*, *3PR* and the *WOW challenge*.



Supporting parents and carers

We will support parents and carers to access useful advice and information, so they understand the key role and positive impact they play in their children's health and wellbeing.

We will help create stable, secure and resilient families by supporting parents and carers to make healthy choices by working with partners who target the whole family and will develop resources to make this easier. We will expand our *Essex ActivAte* programme and add new content to our *Find Your Active YouTube* channel which will include advice and ideas on how to be active from home with minimal equipment. We will provide and promote safeguarding advice for parents and carers and will work with partners who are supporting families to share healthy messages and equip them with tools to do so. We will work with partners on interventions which are successful in engaging the whole family unit and encouraging behaviour change towards a more physically active lifestyle.



Implementation Plan for Strategic Priority: Active Environments

Vision

To work collectively to develop and provide well connected, accessible places and spaces that encourage people to be active

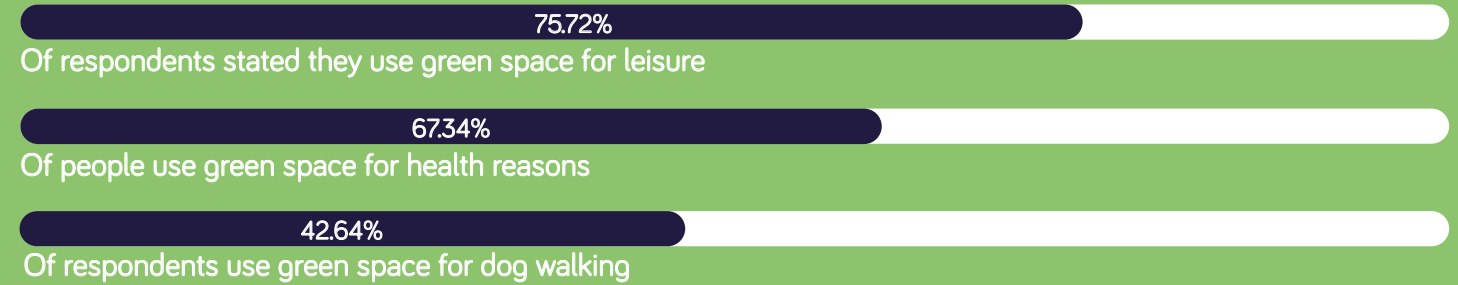
In Essex, Southend and Thurrock we want to make sure that we are creating the spaces and places for people to be more active. We know that creating attractive and accessible spaces and places that allow and encourage people to participate in more informal activities and provides play opportunities, can help attract less active groups to be more active.

We want to help make the choice to be active easier and more appealing to everyone by creating fun and safe opportunities for people to be active outdoors, utilising the natural environment to address inactivity. However, to achieve this it is essential that the active environment provides the right conditions for people to be more active and requires effective design of spaces and the connectivity between them, as people's behaviour is often influenced by how they feel about a place. This is especially important as we know that the Active Environments around us can also make a real difference to our health and wellbeing. Furthermore, active, well-populated spaces are generally more successful, safer, better managed and can add more value to the surrounding environment.



Current State of Play

Data from the Green Essex Strategy, 2020 Consultation, showed:



81%

of respondents to the Essex State of Life survey, reported having been on a walk in the previous week



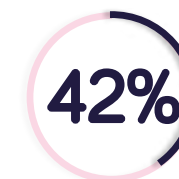
2 hrs

spent in nature each week, has good health and wellbeing benefits, evidence shows
*Scientific Reports 2019

Bike ownership, according to DoT, 2019:



of children under the age of 11 have access to a bike



of adults have access to a bike or own one



of response to the survey cycle once a year or never

Active Environments

There are multiple opportunities to build and develop active environments in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. We want to support the creation of real, useable spaces that enable all types of activities to thrive. We have overarching themes within our active environments work, which are:



Active Travel

Creating attractive spaces and places that allow and encourage people to walk, cycle and run are transformational and have an enormous impact on physical activity levels. We want to encourage walking and cycling for both leisure purposes and as alternative way to travel to and from work or make short distance journeys. This not only encourages people to move more and reach daily activity targets but also helps improve air quality and support the work to reduce climate change and carbon production.

Active travel provides the easiest and most affordable way for residents to get active and lead healthier lives. We also want to focus on encouraging active travel to and from school, providing a great opportunity for children to take part in physical activity and at the same time reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.



Active Outdoors

Green and blue spaces are important parts of the facility stock available to Essex, Southend and Thurrock residents, and as highlighted by Covid-19 are very much needed for physical and mental health and wellbeing. Green infrastructure comprises the parks, open spaces, playing fields and also street trees, allotments and gardens. Blue infrastructure comprises the ponds, lakes, rivers and seas, which all provide a wide range of multifunctional benefits.

In July 2020, 46% of people responding to the *People and Nature Survey by Natural England* said they were spending more time outside during the pandemic than before, a 10% increase than 2 months previously. Therefore we must continue to encourage this engagement with local parks, green spaces and coastal areas to help people lead a more active lifestyle.

We need to maximise outdoor opportunities, by working with partners and local organisations to encourage residents to engage with activities that utilise green space. We must also protect and maintain our current stock of sports and leisure facilities and encourage them to be as inclusive as possible.



Active Design

Working with planning and design colleagues, we want to help shape existing and future developments, by embedding physical activity into planning policy, infrastructure and urban design.

We recognise the impact that good design has on shaping streets and public spaces as places for activity and we will work to apply key active design principles to create overlooked, safe and welcoming spaces that promote and encourage active travel. With 180,000 new homes set to be built across Essex, Southend and Thurrock by 2036, we want to work with system partners to ensure these developments, along with schools, include places and spaces that nurture healthy and active behaviours.

It is important to state that we do not expect to achieve this work on our own. Teams such as Essex County Council; Sustainable Travel, Green Infrastructure, Place Services and local Planning, will be instrumental in this work. The Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) also focuses on active environments and we have already started to see how the LDP has accelerated some of the progress for this area of work. We hope to continue to share valuable learnings from this process within Essex, Southend, Thurrock and further afield.

Key Areas of Focus

Active travel

- Encourage active travel as an alternative mode of transport, especially for short distance journeys. Use active travel to help reach personal daily activity targets by increasing active travel journeys to and from work, school, college and the shops.
- Increase both general population engagement and education setting/ school involvement with active travel.
- Influence, shape and promote environments that encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes to enable people to build informal activity into their everyday lives and daily routines.

We will do this by leading and promoting interventions such as *Essex Pedal Power*, *Street Tag*, *E scooter pilot*, *Go Jauntly Walking App*, *Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival*, *Living Streets Walk to School Challenge*, *Low Traffic Neighbourhoods*, *ECC Safer Greener Healthier Campaign*, *Sustrans Big Pedal*, *School Streets Zones*, *School Active Travel Plans*, *SEAT/Forward Motion* and *Smarter Travel for Essex Network (STEN)*.

Planning and infrastructure

- Promote, advise and influence planning, infrastructure and design policy to embed active design and physical activity into the planning process across Essex, Southend and Thurrock.
- Work with the public and private sectors to influence how neighbourhoods are planned to help make it easier/ more attractive for people to be active.
- Be involved in the design process by reviewing and commenting on planning applications to assess a schemes ability to deliver the active design principles and where necessary, provide suggested improvements and additions that will encourage activity.

We will support the implementation of the *Essex Design Guide*, *National Design Code*, *Livewell Accreditation Scheme*, *Local Design Guides* and creating an *Essex Schools Design Guide*. commenting on new school facilities, feedback with *Sport England* planning applications in Essex, urban design consultation responses and town deals.

Use of green and blue space

- Increase community use of green/ blue space for both informal and formal activities.
- Support activation of green and blue spaces in Essex, Southend and Thurrock by making them accessible and socially inclusive.
- Optimise the 350 miles of beautiful coastline, to encourage more people to be physically active.

We will do this by supporting the delivery of both informal and formal activity opportunities in local green spaces, including *ParkPlay* and *parkrun*. We will continue to grow and promote recreational/ social outdoor activity opportunities, including walking and cycling groups, outdoor gyms, walks in *Essex Country Parks* and green social prescribing. We will also focus on encouraging ethnic diverse communities to engage with green spaces. Finally, we will work with the *Active Thames Partnership* to activate local blue spaces.

Sharing and accessing facility stock

- Increase accessibility of schools facilities for community use and also of local sport club sites, where schools require access.
- Increase use of alternative community spaces (not typically used or designed for physical activity) as additional venues/ facilities e.g. parish councils, village halls, community and faith centres.

We will do this by continuing our *Open Schools Facilities* work and working with school sites to make sure there are community use agreements in place. We will focus on working to support the activation of community spaces and using these facilities to help attract inactive residents.



Implementation Plan for Strategic Priority: Levelling Up Health and Wellbeing

Vision

To change behaviours, enabling and empowering people to do things for themselves and their local communities. Physical activity is the highest priority for good health.

The Public Health challenges facing the people of Essex, Southend and Thurrock have never been greater. Covid-19 has exacerbated a range of underlying issues that make a partnership approach to improving public health more important than ever. People have become more isolated and suffered poor mental health. Many people have increased their food and alcohol intake due to lockdowns negatively effecting their health. Similarly many people have been less active due to shielding and fear of being infected by Covid-19. In terms of wider determinates, many have suffered financial hardship with much of this falling on those whose health was already poor due to material deprivation. Additionally, many children and young people have missed out on optimal education, a key prerequisite to future wealth and health.

We will seek to level the playing field and reduce health inequalities, so everyone has the opportunity, capability, and motivation to enjoy being active and reap the many rewards. Working collaboratively to continuously improve sport and physical activity messaging, experiences and opportunities, so they are inclusive, irrespective of whether you live with a health condition, your age or ability. We will experiment with different approaches to tackle inequalities in health or participation in communities and share learnings. We will use data and insight to inform behaviour change campaigns, like *Find Your Active*. We will continue to use digital technologies to build and sustain relationships with partners and provide a better customer experience. The county's sport and physical activity workforce will be supported to gain confidence and skills to give people a personalised experience, supporting beginners and people with common conditions.

Physical activity will be the foundation to recondition people who have been affected by Covid-19, especially the most at risk groups. People living in our most disadvantaged communities face the worst health inequalities, and typically have two or more health conditions a decade earlier in their life than those in the least deprived.

This is just one example of the stark health inequalities among both children and adults and an active lifestyle significantly increases the likelihood of better health. We must increase our understanding of why people are sedentary, often associated with a person's capability, motivation, and opportunities to be active.

We will prioritise physical activity in social prescribing programmes across Essex, Southend and Thurrock and the prescribing needs to be simple and personalised, with ongoing support if needed. There needs to be a frictionless experience to becoming active and ensuring people's emotional wellbeing is considered at every stage. We will continue to build on LDP engagement and influencing the health system through education of all health and social care professionals about the benefits of physical activity for health. We will ensure that physical activity is in all primary and secondary care pathways including pre-and post- operative care, mental health and all long-term conditions. Our local networks ensure a place-based approach to how we respond to local need and tackle health inequalities by helping to bridge the gap between sport and physical activity, health and community systems in localised areas.

A healthy population is a productive one. Today, the mental and physical health of our Essex, Southend and Thurrock workforce has never been more important to contribute to the wellbeing of all employees and the development and prosperity of the Essex economy. Being in good quality work supports health and wellbeing as it's an important source of social status and offers an income to participate in society and to live a healthy life. With many businesses and organisations not returning to the office we must continue to adapt the way we engage and influence policy change.

These changes will impact greatly on physical activity levels, improved health and wellbeing and play a role in tackling inequalities and mitigating the impact of Covid-19.



80,000+
were asked to shield during Covid-19

Current State of Play



of working age adults predicted by 2030 to be living with a long-term health condition, compared to 33% currently.



of Essex Social Prescriber Link Workers reported they would like further education and training on overcoming barriers to being more active.



The annual cost of physical inactivity to UK businesses is £6.6 billion

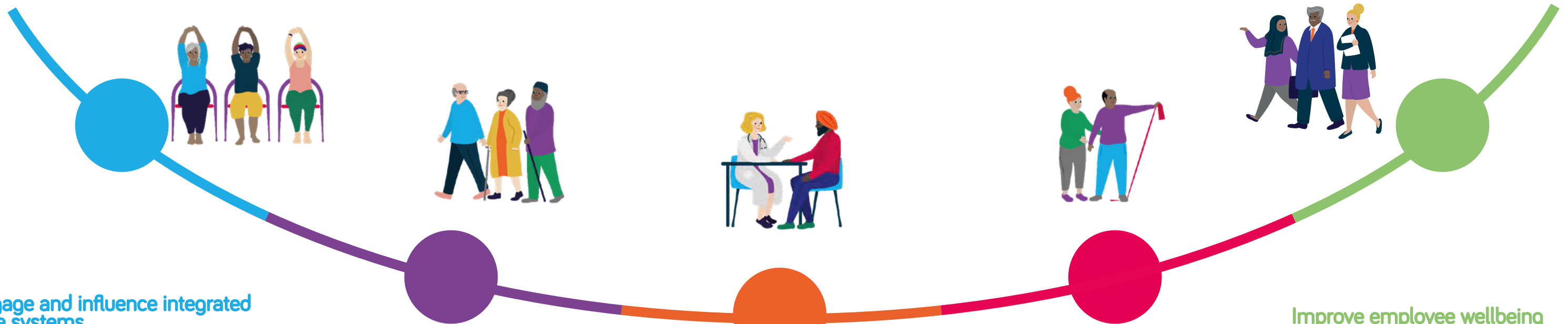


Physical inactivity costs the UK around £7.4 billion each year



UK Government report suggests, for every £1 spent there is £14 of benefit

Key Areas of Focus



Engage and influence integrated care systems

Build capacity and capabilities within health and social care systems to embed physical activity and movement.

We will engage and influence the health and social care systems to hardwire physical activity and movement as a preventative tool. This will help to reduce the demand on services and influence system budgets to be realigned, focussing on prevention. We will work with system partners to build and increase capacity within the health and social care workforce, support local leaders who can spot and respond to local need, and evidence how physical activity and movement supports other wellbeing outcomes. The *Prevention and Enablement Model* is a test and learn, whole system change social care initiative, aiming to improve the lives of people living with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions. We will continue to work in partnership with the Adult Social Care sector across the county to deliver this.

Moving Healthcare Professionals Programme provides training within *Primary Care Networks* to upskill staff to be confident in having conversations with patients about physical activity and map local physical activity provision.

Support the reconditioning of Essex residents

Provide support to local communities through targeted physical activity interventions, to those who have become deconditioned due to Covid-19.

This will be achieved by working in collaboration with health and community partners to develop and build fully integrated care pathways for falls prevention, increasing the provision of *strength, balance and movement interventions*, which in turn will help reduce NHS and community elective waiting lists and enable and empower people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. We will utilise digital technologies like *Find Your Active YouTube channel* and Apps to reach out to those who need home-based support.

We will work in partnership with the new providers of the *Essex Community Wellbeing Service*, ensuring frontline staff and volunteers are confident and competent to have a conversation about moving more and are aware of the opportunities to signpost residents to. As well as utilise the *Community Connectors* who will help residents find the activity that is right for them.

Hardwiring physical activity in social prescribing

Support the inclusion of high-quality sport and physical activity within social prescribing schemes and services, ensuring that physical activity opportunities are accessible, inclusive, and supportive for all.

This takes the form of training, education and building confidence across the whole social prescribing network to start conversations and build interventions to support inactive individuals to find their active.

Active Essex is the host agency for the *Regional Physical Activity Social Prescribing Advisor*, with the remit to gather and share learnings with partners nationally, regionally and locally. Examples of hardwiring sport and physical activity interventions in social prescribing include *Dance on Prescription* in Basildon, *Let's Get Connected* across West Essex and *Finding Your Feet Walks* in Braintree.

Physical activity within personalised care

Champion and influence physical activity to be a fundamental part of residents care plan, whether it's for prevention, upon diagnosis or management of long-term health condition(s).

We will collaborate and work in partnership with health charities and health services to offer our guidance and experience of embedding physical activity interventions as part of the treatment and management of long-term health conditions.

We will upskill our sport and physical activity workforce to understand long term health conditions through *Essex Health Series*; strength our networks with partners with a focus on supporting mental health and localising the 'We Are Undeatable' campaign to give Essex, Southend and Thurrock residents confidence to include activity and movement into their everyday lifestyle. Examples of long term health condition projects include *Active for Life Cancer* programme in South West Essex and *Active Parkinson's Group* in Uttlesford.

Improve employee wellbeing

Empower Essex, Southend and Thurrock organisations and businesses to create active workplaces that will support employees physical and mental wellbeing.

We will lead by example and champion physical activity, sport and movement to be an integral part of organisations and businesses employee wellbeing. Through our networks we will engage with large anchor organisations, like *Essex Police* and Local Authorities, to demonstrate how physical activity can support employee wellbeing. We will regularly consult with employers and adapt the offer of support required, showcasing how digital interventions can be implemented, for example *Street Tag*, *Active10*.

We will continue to work in partnership with the *Essex Working Well* scheme to provide support and capacity through offering training opportunities to employers, free digital resources and connecting the sport and physical activity sector to Essex, Southend and Thurrock employers. This will raise awareness of the employee health and work benefits that physical activity and movement opportunities can provide through data, insight and best practice.



For more information and to read the full Fit for the Future Strategy, visit:
www.activeessex.org or use the QR code below

