



Report to the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee

Title:	Active Bucks
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Purpose of Agenda Item

The purpose of this item is to provide information about the progress of the Active Bucks project which is due to complete delivery in September 2017.

Background – Why Promote Physical Activity

Being physically active is one of the keys to a long, happy and successful life. In our early years it plays a key role in brain and physical development, helps us develop social skills and make friends and promotes educational attainment and success. During our adult lives it helps give us the energy and health to enjoy life to the full and be productive at work. As we grow older being physically active slows the ageing process, keeping us fit, healthy and independent for longer.

Places with active communities tend to have better social connectedness, be safer, greener and wealthier as this report shows. Active communities are good for business and the taxpayer alike, increasing business productivity and reducing demands on health and social care services.

Despite all these benefits many of us are not active enough to benefit our health. Approximately half of all women and a third of men are not active enough for good health. Being inactive directly contributes to 1 in 6 deaths in the UK – equivalent to the harms from smoking - and around one fifth of adults in Buckinghamshire are currently inactive. The low levels of activity of our children are also concerning.

Physical Activity is a priority for the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Active Bucks project is a vital part of the prevention programme for the Care Act to support Buckinghamshire residents to live well through all stages of adulthood.

There is compelling evidence linking an active lifestyle to a range of health and wellbeing benefits.

Societal Benefits

- **Physical benefit** Direct benefits to physical health and has a positive influence on healthy behaviours, such as stopping smoking and drug use.
- **Emotional benefits** Benefits to psychological wellbeing and mental health.
- **Individual benefits** Character enriching traits gained through participation in physical activity, organised or informal e.g. life skills, social skills, team and individual values.
- **Social benefits** Playing sport or joining in an active game/mass participation event can support greater connectedness and social cohesion in communities.
- **Intellectual benefits** There is increasing evidence that physically active children have better educational attainment. For example, studies have shown that the GCSE results of active young people are 10-20% higher than those of inactive young people
- **Economic benefit** Being active can increase employment prospects and performance at work, not just through reduced costs from sickness and absenteeism. Physically active employees take 27% less sick days.
- **Environmental benefit** Benefits derived from more active forms of transport such as walking, cycling and reduced car use

Health Benefits - evidence shows that physical inactivity is a significant, independent risk factor for a range of long-term health conditions. For example, being physically active reduces your chance of type 2 diabetes by 40%, cardiovascular disease by 35%, and falls, depression and dementia by 30%. An active lifestyle provides clear benefits in the treatment, management or prevention of all of these conditions.

A NICE evidence review has reported that there is consistent evidence from good quality studies that Physical Activity in mid-life is related to:

- healthy and successful ageing outcomes,
- more positive outcomes in terms of disability and frailty in later life
- less risk of dementia in later life
- lower mortality in later life

The Blackfriars Consensus Statement, signed by fifty-nine organisations and experts from across the dementia and public health community, highlighted the need for a new national focus on the reduction of dementia risk. Increased physical activity will contribute to that reduction.

There are significant challenges to encouraging people to make lifestyle changes with barriers such as lack of time, financial costs, personal attitudes and behaviours, transport issues, and restrictions in the physical environment. Key approaches to increasing physical activity include:

- Building activity into everyday life
- Making being physically active the social norm
- Facilitating community engagement in physical activity
- Inspiring those who are inactive to engage in physical activity

The Active Bucks Project

The Active Bucks project was implemented in May 2015 and aims to:

- Support Bucks residents to increase their physical activity levels
- Increase the number of Bucks residents participating in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week
- Reduce the number of Bucks residents undertaking less than 30 minutes moderate intensity physical activity each week

The project seeks to deliver this by delivering large scale promotion and adoption of physical activity through:

- Utilising the role of members as community leaders
- Engaging communities to identify what physical activity communities want to participate in
- Providing evidence based and best practice physical activity interventions which deliver the Bucks Physical Activity Strategy
- Develop activities that are sustained past the end of the project

The project started with a community engagement phase between May and September 2015. The outcomes of the community engagement were reported at a countywide level and also at a local level to inform decisions about the physical activity programmes commissioned across the whole county and at a local level.

Physical activity is included in all Local Area Forum (LAF) Public Health profiles and has also been identified as a key preventative priority to address health inequalities. LAF's have played an active role in engaging residents, reviewing recommendations and deciding which activities to commission for their communities. Each LAF has been offered a physical activity package over 2 years to promote physical activity in their area, stimulating ideas and action from within the community. The physical activity programmes have been commissioned in 2 phases using learning from the first phase to inform the second phase which will have activities commencing between January and March 2017.

The countywide physical activity commissioned is being delivered in green spaces across the county and includes some activities which are not traditionally physical activity specifically aimed at beginners and those who are currently inactive.

All activity programmes have been developed with sustainability as a core component, to enable the activities to be sustained following the end of the funded period.

Some of the activity programmes that have already been delivered include: Rounders, Walk/Jog/Run groups, Family Cycling, Buggy Fit, Orienteering/Scavenger Hunt, Tai Chi/Pilates, Dads and Toddlers, Parent Fit, Strength and Balance, Flag Football. Walking Football, Social Ballroom, Multisport Activities, Yoga/Pilates, Bootcamp, Running Group, Nordic Walking, Simply Walks, Walking Netball, Dance. Bushcraft, Conservation, Environmental art, Mystery trail,

There are still some exciting activity programmes to come in 2017, including: Live Action Role Play (LARP), Quidditch, Scooter Skills, Parkrun/Junior Parkrun, Parkour, Flag Football. Walking Football, Social Ballroom, Yoga/Pilates, Bootcamp, Running Group, Nordic Walking, Simply Walks, Dance, Conservation, Photography lessons, Woodland/NERF games, Girl's Rugby, Cage Cricket, Playball, Futnet, Dog Agility, Art, Badminton, Handball, Table Tennis, Fire Fitness, Junior Tennis, and Gardening.

A small charge (£2) is made to attend some Active Bucks activities in order to support individual projects becoming self-sustaining, with many activities that do not require continued funding to be sustained being free.

A countywide Active Bucks promotional campaign was launched in June 16. www.activebucks.co.uk helps residents to find an activity of their choice that they will enjoy, within 20 minutes of their home or work, on a day and time that suits them, from a database of thousands of activities that charge a variety of prices, as well as the Active Bucks activities. The campaign offers a free first activity session from over 2500 different activities across Bucks, through registering for a voucher.

Key outcomes so far

An interim report on the first year of the project is expected in February 2016. The following interim outcomes for the first 6 months can be reported at this stage. All outcomes reported at this stage are for the activities funded by Active Bucks, and do not include outcomes from the additional activities listed on the Active Bucks website.

Community engagement

- Over 3500 residents have been engaged to understand what physical activity residents want to engage with, 70% of those engaged were not achieving the recommended activity levels.

- Mapping physical activity assets across the county to ensure no duplication of existing provision and to ensure key assets were used to support promotion, development and sustainability.

Physical activity delivery (first 7 months (May – Nov 16) of the 17 month project)

- 49 six month programmes of weekly activity completed
- 35 of these programmes (71%) have been sustained past the end of the funded period
- Over 1700 unique participants
- Nearly 10,000 attendances
- The programme has been success in attracting the target audience with 79% of participants were not achieving the recommended activity levels at registration, with 39% being classified as inactive.
- Wide age range engaged with 30% under 16 and 9.3% 65+ years
- 66% female, 34% male
- 8% have declared a long term condition or disability
- 83% are white, 4.8% mixed, 4.6% Asian or Asian British, 0.8% Black or Black/British

Community development

- 20 active community champions (volunteers) supporting promotion, delivery and sustainability of activities

Active Bucks Website

- Over 2500 activities across Bucks offering a first session free voucher
- Over 15,000 unique users
- Over 800 first session free voucher downloads

Participant feedback

- ‘Using Nordic walking poles has been very beneficial for me. When I first used them, my shoulders were very stiff and tight. After only a few sessions I felt much freer in using my upper body and am now using my shoulders to swing with the poles. It has increased my upper-body strength, my core muscles, my posture....it’s true, Nordic Walking turns a walk into a workout’
- Two ladies realised they were neighbours and created a friendship
- “I can’t think of anything whilst trying to breathe and run so I forget about the worries”
- “Rather be outside than inside on computer games”
- “Just had to tell you again how good yesterday's walk was. I felt so relaxed when I got home and was swinging my arms naturally and could even feel my feet walking properly. I was breathing easily too. For the first time in years didn't grit my teeth when asleep.”

- “For once I got up the hill easily - I did take my walking pole and kept myself upright and got up without being breathless. Yippee!”
- Following the sessions participants described feeling ‘buzzing’, energised, happy, tired, relaxed, in a good mood for the rest of the day, invigorated, less stressed, perspective

Sustainability

Funding is available for Active Bucks until September 2017. Sustainability is a key part of the Active Bucks model. Each activity has been commissioned with sustainability as an integral part of the delivery approach.

Public Health are exploring the opportunity of bidding for Sport England funding to be able to continue the project with a focus on residents over 55.

Next steps

Some physical activity delivery is currently in progress, the next main phase of physical activity delivery will commence between January and March 2017. All activity delivery will be complete by the end of September 2017. A full evaluation report is expected in February 2018.

We invite members of the select committee to continue to support the project to ensure all residents are aware of the opportunities available to them.