



Sport and Physical Activity Strategic Delivery Plan for Luton (Summary)

“Our vision is to create a system and environment that increases physical activity and reduces inactivity levels across the borough of Luton.”

2024 to 2040

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Luton

Introduction

The council's vision for Luton 2040 is to ensure everyone in the town has the chance to thrive and that no-one has to live in poverty. To assist the council in achieving this vision, a Sport and Physical Activity Strategic Delivery Plan has been developed. The plan aims to help people be more physically active, make it easier for everyone to engage in physical activity, and help to reduce obesity, while promoting the wider health benefits of physical activity.

Local picture:

Being physically active helps keep people healthy and can lower the risk of developing long-term health conditions and can prevent many diseases. It also makes people feel better mentally and physically as well reduces the reliance on the NHS and support services.

Many people in Luton, especially adults, are not active enough. Only 57% of adults do enough exercise in line with the Chief Medical Officer's activity guidelines (over 150 minutes of physical activity per week) compared to 67% in the rest of England. Obesity is a big problem too, with 42.5% of year 6 children overweight, as well as 63.4% of adults identifying as overweight or obese.

Being active can help maintain a healthy weight and reduce obesity. But it also offers many other benefits, like improving mood, reducing the risk of long-term health conditions, and lessening the need for health and social care services. Physical activity can also promote social interaction, provide enjoyment, and enhance quality of life. It helps build community spirit, develop skills and confidence, reduce crime, and boost the economy.

Leading a physically active and healthy lifestyle is influenced by a number of factors which is evidenced by a diverse range of social, economic and environmental factors which impact people's overall health. They determine the extent to which different individuals have the physical, social and personal resources to identify and achieve goals, meet their needs and deal with changes to their circumstances. Also, the environment in which we live, work and study influences our health so the importance of an environment which promotes movement, and active and sustainable transport is paramount.

Understanding and implementing behaviour change will be a key element of delivering on this plan, ensuring capability, opportunity and motivation are embedded to enable behaviour change.



National Picture:

In 2019, the [Chief Medical Officers](#) released guidelines on how much and what kind of physical activity people should do to stay healthy. The guidelines suggest that:

Under-5s

Infants (less than 1 year):

- Infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activity, e.g. crawling

Toddlers (1-2 years):

- Toddlers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including active and outdoor play, spread throughout the day; more is better.

Pre-schoolers (3-4 years):

- Pre-schoolers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play.

Children and young people 5-18yrs

- Children and young people aged 5-18 should aim for an average of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day throughout the week.

Adults 19-64yrs

- Adults aged 19-64 should aim for 150 minutes of physical activity per week and should try to spend less time sitting to maintain good physical and mental health.

Older Adults (65 years and over)

- Each week older adults should aim to accumulate 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate intensity aerobic activity, building up gradually from current levels.

The report emphasises that doing any amount of activity is better than none, and more activity brings even greater benefits. Under the [‘Sporting Future’ strategy](#), Sport England launched a ten-year plan called [‘Uniting the Movement’](#) in January 2021, which focuses on three main objectives:



In response to this strategy, the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), and the DCMS developed the ‘School Sport and Activity Action Plan.’ This plan aims to give students more opportunities to engage in 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Overall, there is a national recognition of the important role that physical activity plays in creating a healthier nation, improving health and wellbeing, building stronger communities, and reducing inactivity.

Key measures of success

The Sport and Physical Activity Strategic Delivery Plan has a number of priorities and strategic aims and objectives, these have been agreed with partners, stakeholders and local residents following consultations.

Detailed action plans have been created with partners to help put the plan into action and to check how well it's working. These action plans have been split into three priority areas: creating active people, creating active environments and creating active societies. These action plans point out what's most important, including which groups of people to focus on, and what specific things should be done. Working together with many different people and groups is very important for this plan to succeed. This includes residents, partners, and other interested parties. A strategic partnership board has been created and meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the progress of the objectives whilst reporting progress to the Health Equity Town Partnership Board. The overall aim is to get more people active and improve the lives of people and communities in Luton.

By 2040 progress will be made on the following key performances measures:

- reduce the number of inactive adults from 32.1% to pre Covid-19 levels (30.3%) over a five-year period
- reduce physical inactivity by 0.5% per year of the strategic plan's delivery
- increase positive experiences and enjoyment for children and young people in sport and physical activity within schools and community settings from 42.8% to 45% over the course of the plan
- establish a working group to embed sport and physical activity within the health and social care system during the first two years of the plan
- to deliver promotional campaigns e.g. #HealthyLuton, raising awareness of the importance of physical activity and reducing inactive behaviour, as well as delivering 20 taster sessions and engaging 200 participants over 24 months
- support the local delivery of outcomes in the 'Delivery Plan for Prevention in Primary Care Settings across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK),' supporting care professionals to (re)introduce physical activity in service users' day-to-day lives and increasing awareness, knowledge and confidence of using physical activity as prevention and as a intervention which is primarily based on mediation
- target resources on priority audiences as identified within the plan, focussing on each priority audience (inactive children and young people, inactive adults including older adults, with a particular focus on aging well and reducing long terms health conditions and frailty, SEND, culturally diverse, low-socioeconomic backgrounds and the workforce) for the minimum of 12 months
- increase and enhance the number of opportunities to be active over the course of the plan (2024-2040), including access to greenspaces, cycle and walking routes as identified in [Luton's Local Cycling and Walking Plan](#)
- support in the development of a Strategic Delivery Plan for Healthy Weight
- deliver an annual community feedback survey/ engagement event to inform the review ensuring residents have a voice which is heard and matters
- refresh Luton's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (IBFS) to protect, maintain, enhance and develop Luton's sporting infrastructure by 2025
- leverage in £1million of funding during the first 24 months of the plan to support local facilities, sports clubs, community groups and the priorities identified in the PPS and IFS

The plan and its objectives will be reviewed annually to monitor the progress towards the overall vision and an impact report produced annually. Half-way through the plan's implementation, a reassessment will be completed to reevaluate the local need and demand whilst maintaining an insight and evidence led approach.

To measure the success and the impact locally of the Sport and Physical Activity Delivery Plan, the council proposes the following methods:

- **annual impact report**
- **annual stakeholder and partner engagement forum**
- **community engagement workshops and surveys**
- **case studies on projects/ work areas**
- **tracking impact against national data, such as Sport England's Active Lives Survey and**
- **local data, such as the council's perceptions and SHEU Surveys – incorporating questions around physical activity and wider health outcomes annually**



Our strategic aims and objectives

Our vision is to create a system and environment that increases physical activity and reduces inactivity levels across Luton. A needs assessment was undertaken alongside partner, stakeholder and community consultations to support the direction and identification of needs locally. Consultations and workshops were undertaken within the community to allow residents to have a voice in the plan and its direction and priorities. Considering the needs assessment and following the public consultations, the sport and physical activity strategic delivery plan will adopt a whole systems approach focussing on the following priority themes:

- **Create active people** – develop opportunities to help individuals get more active with a particular focus on our priority audiences
- **Create active environments** – identify how people travel around Luton and how the built environment can encourage and influence physical activity
- **Create active societies** – help people to understand why it is important to be active and where opportunities are available locally



Theme 1: Creating active people



To create active people, we must create, develop and promote access to safe, enjoyable opportunities and programmes to allow individuals and communities of all ages and backgrounds to regularly be physically active.

To ensure everyone in Luton has the chance to be physically active and enjoy its benefits, the council will focus on reducing inequalities by directing resources to areas and groups with the greatest need. While we aim to provide opportunities for everyone, we will pay special attention to those who face health inequalities and are less likely to participate in sports and physical activities. The cost of living crisis may make it harder for families, especially in deprived areas, to afford sports activities. The council understands the financial challenges of joining sports clubs and accessing local sessions, so we will work with clubs, community groups, and the Health and Wellbeing Trust to educate people on how to stay active for free and offer discounted options to ensure cost isn't a barrier.

Our approach to creating active people will focus on ensuring people have the capability, opportunity, and motivation to make lasting changes.

While this plan focuses on community-level sports and physical activity, the council will also support residents who wish to reach elite levels in sports through Luton's Sport and Physical Activity Network, which provides grants for talented athletes.

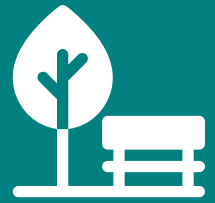
To support the implementation of theme 1, a sub-group has been formed, including partners, stakeholders, and professionals who will help drive and evaluate the progress of this initiative.

Targeted Outcomes:

- **reduce the number of inactive adults from 32.1% to pre-COVID-19 levels (30.3%) over the next five years**
- **focus resources on priority groups identified in the plan, such as inactive children, older adults, those with disabilities, culturally diverse communities, and low-income families, for at least 12 months**
- **increase the number of children and young people cycling to school or other places from 8.7% to 10% within the first two years of the strategy, supporting the goal of active and sustainable transport**
- **contribute to improving and equalising healthy life expectancy for all residents across Luton**



Theme 2: Creating active environments



To create an active environment, we will collaborate across planning, housing, policy, transport and other infrastructures and partners to access factors that influence when and how people chose to be active; including the importance of healthy streets and using the newly developed healthy place framework.

The sport and physical activity strategy will support Luton's goal to become a carbon-neutral town by 2040. We will promote active travel, such as walking and cycling, by working with sustainable transport teams to offer incentives like recycled bikes and cycle training. We will also improve access to green spaces, safe routes for walking and cycling whilst encouraging residents to choose active travel. This will not only improve health and wellbeing but also reduce carbon emissions, traffic flow and improve air quality.

The places where we live, work, study, and socialise have a big impact on how active we are. It's important that everyone has access to welcoming and inclusive environments where they can participate in activities that suit them.

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns had a major impact on our town and its people, with the long-term effects still uncertain. We understand the importance of empowering local communities, especially underrepresented groups, to move more by providing affordable, accessible, and safe spaces for physical activity.

To support the creation of theme 2, we have formed a sub-group of partners, stakeholders, and professionals to help implement and evaluate this work. We will produce an annual report to track progress and adjust our actions as needed. The Luton's Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Facilities Strategy will guide us in maintaining and improving existing spaces for sports and physical activities, as well as exploring new development opportunities.

Targeted Outcomes:

- **update Luton's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (IBFS) to protect, maintain, and improve Luton's sports infrastructure by 2025**
- **increase and enhance opportunities for physical activity between 2024 and 2040, including better access to green spaces and safe walking and cycling routes, as outlined in Luton's Local Cycling and Walking Plan**
- **secure £1 million in funding within the first two years of the plan to support local facilities, sports clubs, community groups, and priorities identified in the PPS and IBFS**



Theme 3: Create active societies



To create new values in all our communities by enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the multiple benefits of regular physical activity and reduction in inactive behaviour, whilst ensuring there is a competent workforce and volunteer network for sport and physical activity.

The council understands how important it is to lead active lives from a young age. Being active helps young people develop resilience, confidence, and social skills, giving them the best start in life and supporting them as they grow into adulthood. By promoting active lifestyles, we aim to help more people in Luton meet the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO's) physical activity guidelines for their age group.

To provide sports and physical activity opportunities in Luton that will have an impact, we need an inclusive, skilled, and experienced workforce that can deliver activities that meet the needs of our diverse population.

This includes supporting the professional development of workers, volunteers, and community members who want to contribute to the sports and leisure sector.

The council will work to build and maintain strong relationships within the community, ensuring people's voices are heard. It's important to understand how different cultures influence beliefs and attitudes toward physical activity. We will run promotional campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of being active, highlight opportunities within the town and recruit ambassadors to share these messages within their communities.

A sub-group has been formed to lead this effort, with a plan for action, monitoring, and evaluation.

Targeted Outcomes:

- **conduct an annual community feedback survey/engagement session to ensure residents' voices are heard and used to inform the plan**
- **launch the #HealthyLuton campaign to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and reducing inactive behaviour, delivering 20 taster sessions/workshops and engaging 200 participants over 24 months**
- **strengthen partnerships that link physical activity with mental health, supporting the delivery of Luton's Mental Health Strategy**
- **recruit 10 ambassadors within the first 24 months to support promotional campaigns, helping to build strong community relationships and better understand local needs.**



Based on our research and consultations with partners, stakeholders, and the local community, we've identified priority groups and themes, including inactive children, older adults, those with disabilities, culturally diverse communities, and people from low-income backgrounds. The plan will address inequalities affecting activity levels and support the Council's 2040 vision.



Delivery of the Plan

To effectively increase physical activity, this plan will take a “whole system” approach. This means we will integrate sports and physical activities into various areas of life, making them accessible to everyone in the community. A whole system approach involves creating a shared vision where different sectors and stakeholders work together to make positive changes. We plan to achieve this through key actions by focusing on three key themes.

Key aspects of this approach include:

- **understanding how different services can connect to create meaningful change**
- **building strong partnerships at both the national and local levels, involving public, private, social, voluntary and community organisations**
- **emphasising collaboration and locally-driven solutions**
- **strengthening local communities by developing strong leadership to support the creation and implementation of local initiatives**

To target inactivity in our community, we need to understand the needs of our local population and explore how adjusting the system can better support active lifestyles. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, but best practice shows a coordinated and collective effort across different areas is essential for promoting an active future.



Implementing the whole systems approach

To promote physical activity, we must involve various systems and recognise that everyone has a role in making our town more active.

We will start by mapping out the systems in place, focusing on our priority groups: inactive children and young people, inactive adults (especially older adults with long-term health conditions), culturally diverse communities, those from low-income backgrounds, the workforce, and individuals with disabilities and additional needs. This mapping will help Luton Council and its partners understand how each part of the system can contribute to our goals, find new partnership opportunities, and ensure that physical activity is integrated into multiple areas of life. It will also clarify each organisation's role, making them accountable for achieving shared goals that improve the health and wellbeing of Luton residents.





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