Active Communities Strategy – interim engagement report

Introduction

The Active Communities Strategy was launched in 2019 and aims to support Stockport residents to become more active and to enjoy the health, social and environmental benefits of being more active. We are currently refreshing the strategy to make sure it still works for the people of Stockport.

Evidence that physical activity and movement are good for us is undisputed. However, the factors that currently result in a less active lifestyle are complex.

As a result, on average people in the United Kingdom today are 24% less active than in 1961 across all age groups.

Being active has huge benefits to a person's physical health and mental wellbeing. We want to make it easier for children and young people, adults of working age, and older people to be more active. The council are particularly keen to help those people who are not active at all to get a bit more physically active and gain the benefits.

This strategy focuses on many ways to support people to be more active:

- improving opportunities to walk and cycle
- improving some of our facilities
- building on some of the amazing assets of local communities. For example, sports clubs
- It requires all sectors to accept the need for change, think long term and build on what the evidence demonstrates to both work and be cost effective.

The engagement seeks residents' thoughts and opinions on the strategy to inform our future direction. At its heart, the strategy aims to create the conditions for people in Stockport to move more and build being physically active into their daily lives, ensuring Stockport is an even healthier and happier place to live, work and play.

This phase of engagement has been ongoing since December 2021 with the online consultation running from 29.11.2021 to 31.01.2022. There is ongoing engagement with Boards and Forums and this engagement report is a working document which will be updated with the findings.

Summary of findings

Across the online survey and engagement sessions, the majority of respondents (69.15% in the case of the online questionnaire) indicated that they agreed with the whole systems approach, with the proposed principles (67.03% in the online questionnaire) and with the identified priority groups (70.22% in the online questionnaire).

There were 94 responses to the online survey. The key themes emerging were that there needs to be a cross systems and sector approach and that inclusivity and accessibility has upmost importance. However, some respondents felt that the language contained within the Strategy was complex and that there are some missing priority groups which has been explained below.

Within the engagement sessions, the key themes emerged as follows:

- It is important that the priorities are co-produced
- It is important that the strategy is people-centred and that
- The workplace can encourage physical activity through leading by example
- Good communication is vital when promoting the ambition.

Methodology

A number of engagement activities have taken place across a range of stakeholders including partners and our communities to gather their thoughts and feedback in relation to the Active Communities Strategy. A Communication and Engagement Strategy was designed with the Communications lead officer at the start of the engagement.

The engagement activities have been designed to be as collaborative as possible and be undertaken in a range of ways, as described below. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the amount of face-to-face engagement has been limited and some Boards and Forums did not meet within the period. All activities have been completed in Covid secure ways. The activities include:

- Online survey running from 29.11.21 – 31.01.22
- Strategic Boards
- Forums and Community Groups
- Newsletter inserts
- Council owned communications such as social media content and Stockport Review Extra
- Internal communications such as Pam's all colleague/ Member briefing and an Intranet piece

Online survey results

An online survey was developed and shared via the Council's Have Your Say page. The questionnaire was made up of 6 questions as follows:

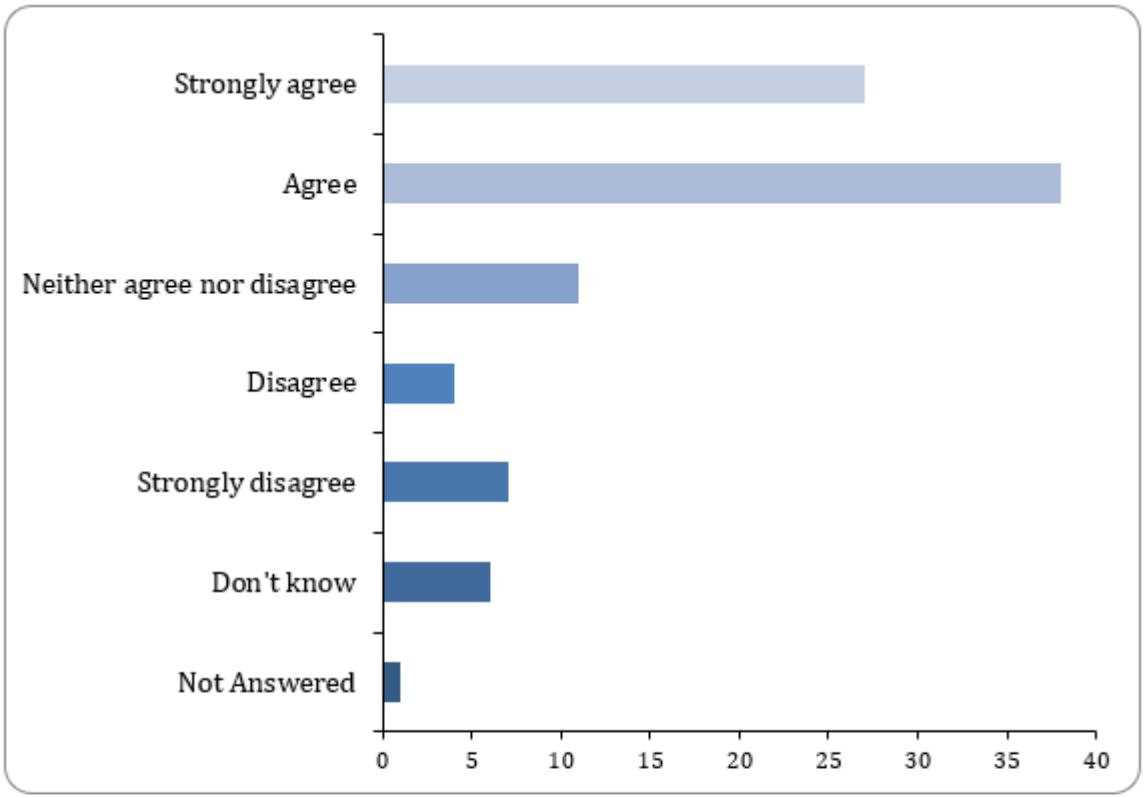
- How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed whole systems approach?
- How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed principles and approach?
- How far do you agree or disagree with the identified priority groups?
- Please list any priority groups that we may have missed
- Are there any action priorities missing?
- Do you have any other feedback?

The survey was communicated through the council's Citizen Space portal, advertised via social media channels and shared with Boards, Forums and Community Groups. Paper copies were available through libraries.

A total of 94 people responded to the online survey.

Of those 94 respondents, 97.89% answered the question **How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed whole systems approach?** Of those 94 respondents 69.15% (65 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed with the principles, 11.70% (11 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed, 11.71% (11 respondents) said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 6.38% (6 respondents) said they don't know whether they agree or disagree with the proposed whole systems approach.

Table 1 shows answer to the following question 'How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed whole systems approach?'



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	27	28.72%
Agree	38	40.43%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	11.70%
Disagree	4	4.26%
Strongly disagree	7	7.45%
Don't know	6	6.38%
Not Answered	1	1.06%

Of those who said they agreed or strongly agreed 24 left a comment. 37.50% (9 respondents) felt that the whole journey needs to be considered, 25% (6 respondents) felt that there needs to be safe active travel routes, 16.67% (4 respondents) said that the language utilised was complex, and 12.5% (3 respondents) said that inclusivity is important.

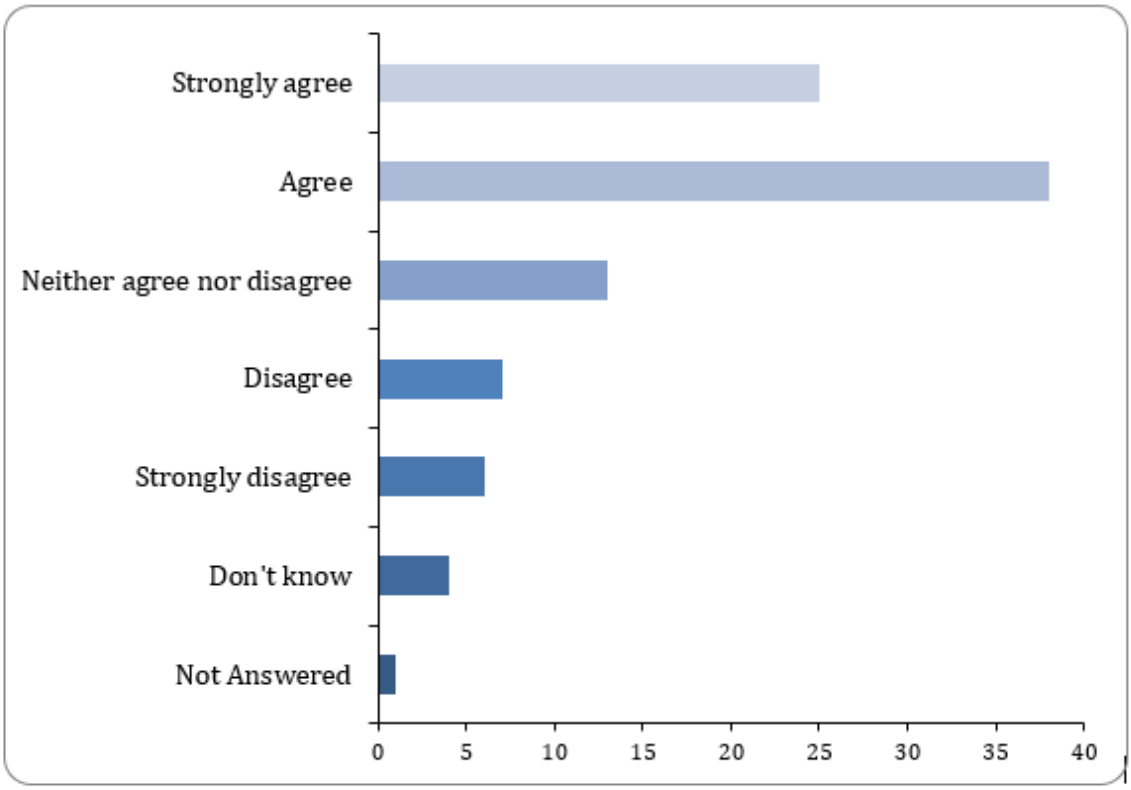
Of those who said they disagreed or strongly disagreed 6 left a comment. 33.33% (2 respondents) said that some people are unable to undertake exercise such as riding a bike and 33.33% (2 respondents) felt that there are environmental impacts preventing people from exercising.

Of those who considered themselves to have a disability, impairment or long-term health condition, 70% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed whole systems approach. 10 respondents left a comment. 20% (2 responses) felt that the whole systems approach would enable inclusion.

There were 93 (97.89%) responses to the question **How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed principles and approach?** 67.03% (63 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed,

13.83% (13 respondents) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, 13.83% (13 respondents) neither agreed or disagreed and 4.26% (4 respondents) didn't know whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposed principles and approach.

Table 2 shows answer to the question How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed principles and approach?



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	25	26.60%
Agree	38	40.43%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	13.83%
Disagree	7	7.45%
Strongly disagree	6	6.38%
Don't know	4	4.26%
Not Answered	1	1.06%

Of those who said they agreed or strongly agreed 13 left a comment. 23.08% (3 respondents) said that it is important to create an environment that is accessible for all, 23.08% (3 respondents) said that there needs to be a cross systems and sector approach and 15.38% (2 respondents) felt that strong leadership is needed to create an active community.

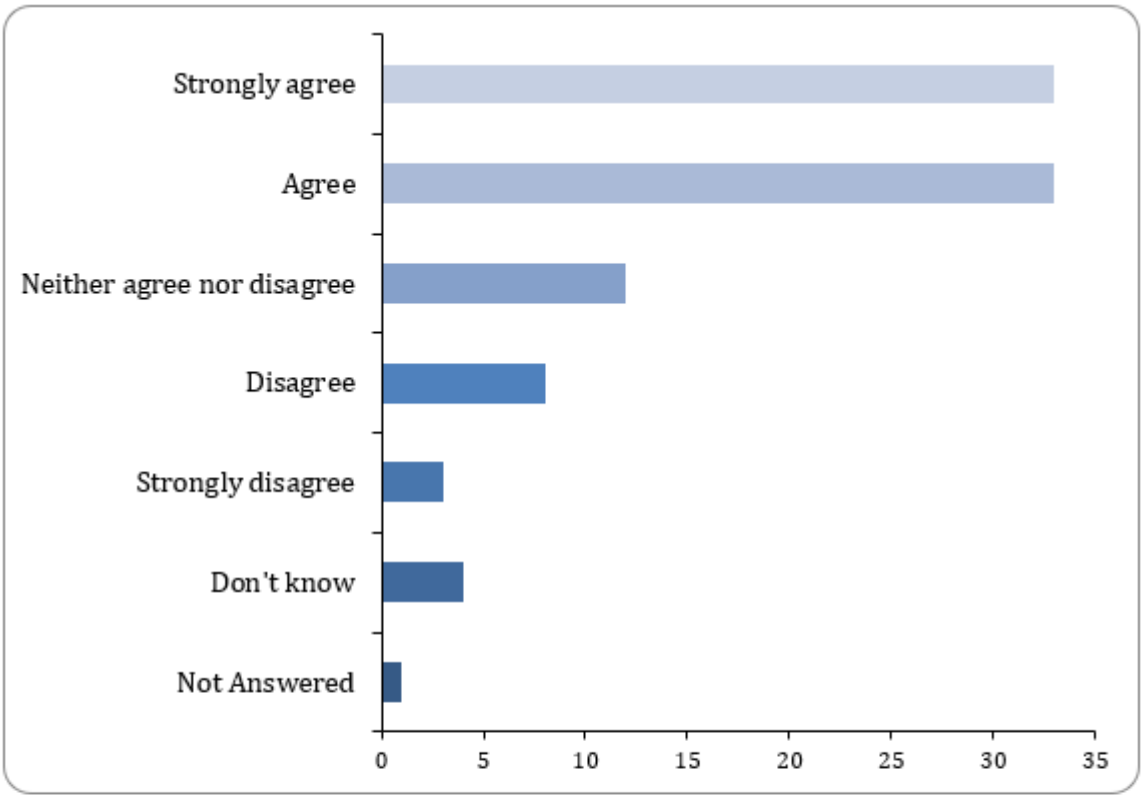
Of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed 7 left a comment. 28.57% (2 respondents) felt that the language is complex and 28.57 (2 respondents) felt that the principles were fine, but it is the putting it into action that is important.

Of those who considered themselves to have a disability, impairment or long-term health condition, 60% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed principles and approach. 9 respondents left a

comment. Of those 33.33% (3 respondents) felt that there needs to be a cross systems and sector approach and 22.22% (2 respondents) felt that the language was complex.

There were 93 (97.89%) responses to the question **How far do you agree or disagree with the identified priority groups?** 70.22% (66 respondents) said they either agreed or strongly agreed, 12.77% (12 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed, 11.7% (11 respondents) either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 4.26% (4 respondents) didn't know whether they agreed or disagreed with the identified priority groups.

Table 3 shows answers to the question How far do you agree or disagree with the identified priority groups?



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	33	35.11%
Agree	33	35.11%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	12.77%
Disagree	8	8.51%
Strongly disagree	3	3.19%
Don't know	4	4.26%
Not Answered	1	1.06%

Of those who said they agreed or strongly agreed 21 left a comment. 23.81% (5 respondents) felt that there needs to be targeted engagement to understand why there is a barrier to participation for these groups and 19.05% (4 respondents) felt that physical activities need to be accessible for all.

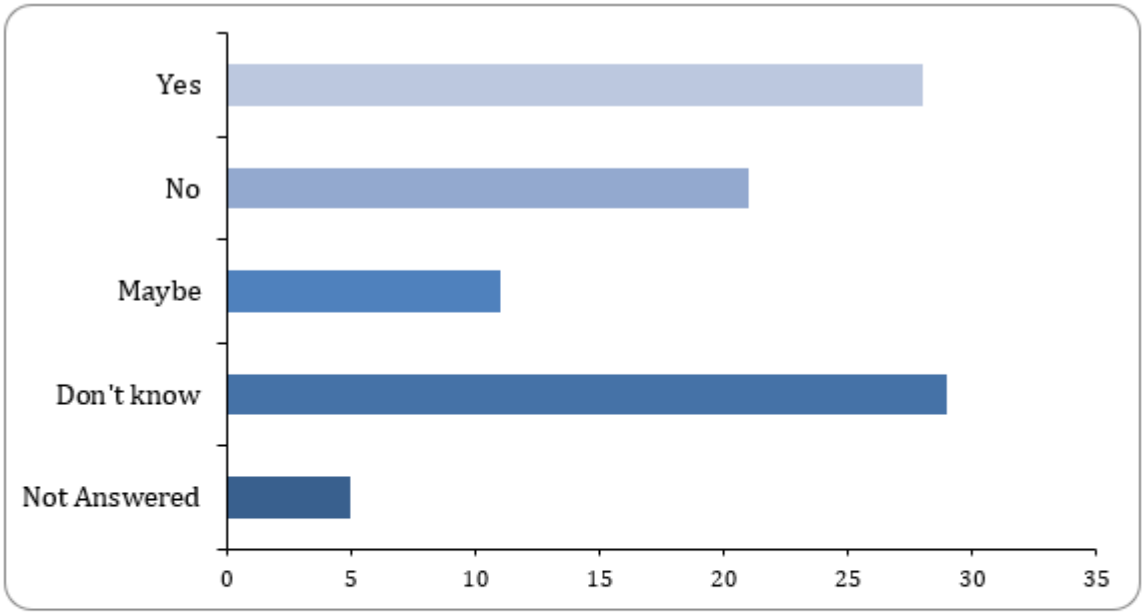
Of those who said they disagreed or strongly disagreed (11 respondents) 6 left a comment of which 66.67% (4 respondents) felt that the aim should be to increase physical activity across all groups.

Of those who considered themselves to have a disability, impairment, or long-term health condition, 70% agreed or strongly agreed with the identified priority groups. 10 respondents left a comment. 33.33% (3 respondents) felt that there needs to be a tailored approach to break down barriers.

There were 29 responses to the question **Please list any priority groups that we may have missed**. 20.69% (6 respondents) said people with mental health issues, 30% (3 respondents) said carers, 10.34% (3 respondents) said ethnic minority groups, 10.34% (3 respondents) said the LGBTQ+ community, 10.34% (3 respondents) said obese people and 10.34% (3 respondents) said men and boys all needed to be taken in to account as well.

There were 89 responses to the question **Are there any action priorities missing?** 29.79% (28 respondents) said yes, 22.34% (21 respondents) said no, 11.70% (11 respondents) said maybe and 30.85% (29 respondents) said that they don't know whether any action priorities are missing.

Table 4 shows answers to the question Are there any action priorities missing?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	28	29.79%
No	21	22.34%
Maybe	11	11.70%
Don't know	29	30.85%
Not Answered	5	5.32%

Of those who answered yes all 28 left a comment. 28.57% (8 respondents) felt that active travel needs to be promoted and normalised, 10.71% (3 respondents) felt that there needs to be co-production of the priorities, 10.71% (3 respondents) said that streets and places of physical activity need to be safe and 7.14% (2 respondents) said there needs to be transport links to places of activity.

Of those who answered no (21) 3 left a comment. 66.67% (2 respondents) said that the key aspect will be the detail in setting up the opportunities.

Of those who considered themselves to have a disability, impairment or long-term health condition, 60% said there are action priorities missing. 10 respondents left a comment. 20% (2 respondents) said that accessibility is important and 20% (2 respondents) said that partner organisations need to be involved.

Demographic data:

- There were no responses to the Active Communities Strategy survey from those who were under the age of 25. The age group most represented on the survey was those aged 55-64 covering 22.34% of the responses.
- 26.60% of respondents considered themselves to have an impairment, disability or long-term health condition.
- 47.87% were female, 39.36 male, 8.51% prefer to self-describe and 1.06% non-binary.
- The majority of respondents were white – English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British (73.4%).
- The majority of respondents had no religion (37.23%) or were Christian (37.23%).
- The majority of respondents defined their sexuality as heterosexual (72.34%).
- The majority of respondents were employed full-time (47.87%) or retired (19.15%).
- The majority of respondents did not have children under the age of 18 in their household (62.77%).

Strategic Boards overview

A Strategic Board is a decision- making body within the council. In this context, Strategic Boards also include Senior Management Team Meetings within the council. Due to current pressures and scheduling issues, information was shared with the Boards listed below rather than a presentation. The information contained the Strategy, a link to the online survey and the Active Communities inbox where people could send feedback to. The Boards were:

- SEND Board
- Stockport Housing Partnership Strategy Group
- Economic Alliance
- Care Homes Forum
- Home Care Providers Forum
- Totally Stockport

Active Communities Board

A presentation and short workshop session on the Active Communities Strategy Refresh was delivered at the Active Communities Board on the 21st December 2021. Attendees were asked the following questions and to respond via a jam board:

Looking at a whole systems approach and the Principles, is there anything missing?

The key themes emerging were that there need to be strong communications, acknowledgement that the plan will be based on learnings and to be outcomes focused.

Are the identified priority groups correct? Are any missing?

Attendees felt that the following priority groups are missing: LGBTQ+ community, babies and children under 5, care leavers. Attendees also felt that some individuals fall into more than one priority groups.

Are there any action priorities missing?

Attendees felt that the following action priorities are missing: housing, transport, employment and skills providers, green spaces and crime and fear of anti-social behaviour.

Are there any wider outcomes that can be impacted by increased levels of physical activity across a population?

The key themes were that there will be a positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing, active travel will have a positive impact on the environment and there will be increased employment levels and reduced long-term unemployment.

How can you/ your organisation/ teams support the ambition?

The key themes were that the ambition can be supported through walking and cycling initiatives, through making sure planning policies support the ambition and to ensure that employment and skills partners are supported to promote the ambition.

Adult's SMT

The Adult's SMT is scheduled for 28.02.2022.

Age Friendly Board

The Age Friendly Board is scheduled for 14.03.2022.

Children's SMT

A presentation on the Active Communities Strategy Refresh was delivered at the CSS SMT on the 24th January 2022. Attendees were asked to provide feedback.

The attendees were very supportive of the whole systems approach and ensuring that individuals are at the centre of the development of the Strategy. No priority groups were identified as missing, and no action priorities were noted as missing.

Attendees also commented that services and buildings need to be accessible for all and that there should be briefings for the workforce in relation to being active.

The following groups were highlighted as ones which should be engaged with: Integrated Leadership meeting, SENCO network and a Head Teachers meeting. It was also suggested that the lead officer should have a conversation with the strategic lead for Autism.

Attendees of the Children's SMT also asked the following questions, which have been answered by the lead officer as below:

How is activity measured for CYP?

CYP activity levels are measured through Sport England's CYP Active Lives Survey[1] Schools and year groups are randomly selected across all local authorities on an annual basis. NB: as a result of the

[1] https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives?section=information_for_schools

Covid-19 pandemic, sample sizes at borough level were much smaller than usual for academic year 20/21.

Have we got that broken down into the localities? as in does it differ?

That level of data is not possible at borough level as sample sizes are not large enough for the data to be statistically valid. We do know that inequality has a close correlation to levels of activity in CYP so a level of extrapolation is possible to inform locality priorities. We are in discussion with GM data & insight teams to consider options for a data 'deep dive' for Stockport in future years to further improve our understanding.

Is there a plan to look at building accessibility in relation to this strategy?

Yes, very supportive of the whole systems approach and making sure that the individuals are at the centre of the development of the strategy.

CSS SMT

A presentation on the Active Communities Strategy Refresh was delivered at the CSS SMT on the 5th January 2022. Attendees were asked the following questions and to respond via a jam board:

Looking at a whole systems approach and the Principles, is there anything missing?

The key themes emerging from this question were that some areas are unsafe to exercise in especially at night, mental health and wellbeing is a priority and that being active needs to be developed as a lifelong habit.

Are the identified priority groups correct? Are any missing?

The attendees largely felt that the priority groups were correct. However, the following were identified as missing priority groups: ethnically diverse communities, LGBTQ+ communities, people with mental health illnesses, those who can't leave the home unaccompanied.

How can you/ your organisation/ teams support the ambition?

The key themes emerging from this question were that this ambition can be supported through the workplace by encouraging people to be more active and communications can be used to promote the ambition.

Another comment raised was that there should be a stronger golden thread between the Borough Plan and key partnership delivery strategies.

Attendees of the CSS SMT also asked the following questions, which have been answered by the lead officer as below:

Is this supported by a budget? What are the costs involved?

There is no specific funding for strategy development – certain work programmes are grant funded. Public Health fund a Specialist Physical Activity Programme (sometimes called a GP referral programme) with Life Leisure.

Will the plan be flexible in its role out to recognise our areas of deprivation?

Yes – the action plan will be a 'live' document under ongoing review & modification to meet changing need.

Is there consideration of how to communicate with elderly who have slowed down and find keeping active difficult but need to - not able to use IT etc?

This will form part of the wider Active Communities Strategy marketing & comms plan that will run alongside the action plan. The comms plan development has started & will be finalised following the launch of the AC strategy. We already work very closely with AgeUK Stockport.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is scheduled for 02.03.2022.

Place SMT

On the 5th January 2022, a presentation on the Active Communities Strategy was delivered at the Place SMT. Attendees were asked to provide feedback.

The attendees felt that there should be a universal offer and that there is a health and economic benefit in making someone inactive to active. Attendees also felt that there could be joint planning with Life Leisure.

Safer Stockport Partnership Board

On the 26th January 2022, a presentation was on the Active Communities Strategy was delivered to the Safer Stockport Partnership Board. Attendees were asked to provide feedback.

Attendees said that the Strategy ties in with the One Stockport Borough Plan and how we develop borough and neighbourhood approaches to having a more healthy and happy population.

Stockport Family Partnership Board

A presentation and engagement on the Active Communities Strategy Refresh was delivered at the Stockport Family Partnership Board on the 19th January 2022. Attendees were asked to provide feedback.

The key themes were that there is an important link with mental health and wellbeing and that VCFSE groups should be included.

The following question was asked at the Stockport Family Partnership Board which was answered by the lead officer as below:

Are there any specific plans in place about how we're going to go about this in terms of beyond the school gates?

This is very much around engaging families as a whole and doing targeted engagement with key groups. Stockport has a strong community sports setting and lots of green spaces which are an asset but not accessible for everyone. We need to look at reasons as to why certain people and groups are not engaging.

Forums and Groups

Due to current pressures and scheduling issues, information was shared with the Forums and Groups listed below rather than a presentation. The information contained the Strategy, a link to the online survey and the Active Communities inbox where people could send feedback to. The Forums and Groups were:

- Disability Access Forum
- Greenspace Forum
- Parents and Carers group
- Inter-faith group
- PURE Innovations
- Race Equality Partnership
- Stockport Pride/ Forward
- Stockport Pride Trust Youth Group

Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Forum

A presentation and engagement on the Active Communities Strategy Refresh was delivered at the VCFSE Forum on the 27th January 2022. Attendees were asked to provide feedback.

An observation was that there are no shortage of offers providing physical activity within the VCFSE Forum. As the Strategy develops, it is important to collate all the information to see what's being delivered to avoid duplication.

The following question was asked at the VCFSE Forum which was answered by the lead officer as below:

Does that mean thinking of developing forest type schools for all?

Active schools already exist where pupils experience learning in a less sedentary way – Forest Schools, Active Maths, standing desks in classrooms etc. We are working with schools and colleges across Stockport to further develop this.

Is perinatal in the list?

This is being looked in to.

Are there resources to help us address the barriers to helping our communities to get more active?

Resources can be found here;

- https://www.keepgmmoving.co.uk/
- https://toolkit.greatersport.co.uk/
- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/

Stockport Youth Council

The Youth Council is scheduled for 23.02.2022.

Feedback received directly to the Active Communities Strategy inbox

The Active Communities Strategy team received feedback directly to the Active Communities Strategy inbox from Walk Ride Stockport, a representative from NHSFT, Trans Pennine Trail and a Stockport resident. There were a number of key themes that emerged from this feedback, including: the outcomes need to be achievable, there needs to be an emphasis that the improvements are for all abilities including those who are already active, the strategy includes some jargon and inaccessible language, and that physical activity should be addressed within all NHS and primary care lifestyle intervention and support programmes.

Conclusion

The Active Communities Strategy engagement has resulted in engagement and information sharing with residents and stakeholders through presentations, facilitated discussions, information sharing and the online survey.

This engagement has contributed to our aims by:

- Creating opportunities for stakeholders and residents to input into the Active Communities Strategy and provide their views.
- Encouraging a broad range of stakeholders and communities with different experiences to input into the engagement period.
- Ensuring that all engagement activities are accessible for all and are relevant and proportionate to different groups.

Overall, the majority of people agree with the Active Communities Strategy. They also feel that everyone needs to be included and that accessibility and inclusivity is of upmost importance. It is also about getting everyone involved through good communications and leading by example. This engagement report is a working draft and will be updated with findings from Strategic Boards as the meetings progress.