

From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 11 September 2025

Subject: Active Kent and Medway update on Place Partnership Programme

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: Principally Westcourt and North Northfleet divisions in Gravesham but with wider reach, and Thanet district in its entirety. Expected to cover Swale district in due course.

Summary: Active Kent and Medway is the hosted service that provides strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county. Active Kent and Medway has been hosted by Kent County Council continuously since March 2006 and promotes the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with being active.

Active Kent & Medway is externally funded and received a grant for the 2022 – 2027 period from Sport England of £3,452,950 to support the delivery of [Move Together - ActiveKent](#) – the countywide strategy for sport and physical activity.

In November 2023, Sport England announced its intention to invest £250 million of National Lottery and exchequer funding over the next five years into place- based work, with £190 million ringfenced for targeted work in up to 80 places in England identified as highest need.

Active Kent and Medway is delighted to confirm that it has secured initial investment for two areas of Kent (Gravesham and Thanet), with two further applications for Medway and Swale currently under consideration.

It should also be noted that there are capital investment opportunities associated with this funding programme for these places.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee is asked to note this report for information.

1. Background

- 1.1. Active Kent and Medway (AKM) is one of 43 Active Partnerships in England. The principal funders are Sport England and Kent County Council (KCC) via a Public Health Grant, whose strategies and priority outcomes set the direction of its work and activity.
- 1.2. Formally the partnership was known as Kent Sport, and served as the Sports Development Unit for KCC. It is now a hosted service of KCC, with an independent Board, accountable for providing strategic leadership, direction, performance oversight and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county.
- 1.3. AKM's vision is 'more people, more active, more often', with a mission to 'change and improve lives through sport and physical activity'.
- 1.4. In order to achieve this, AKM aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity with a focus on encouraging the least active of Kent and Medway's 1.9 million residents to become more active. This is achieved through the promotion of the associated personal and public health benefits and targeting resources where data demonstrates need is greatest, especially at those from under-represented groups including women, older people, people living with a disability or long-term health condition, ethnically diverse communities and people from lower socio-economic groups.
- 1.5. AKM engages with partners and networks across the county including those in health, adult social care, community safety, housing, and transport as well as governing bodies of sport, clubs, school sports networks, charities, leisure providers and local authorities, to provide opportunities for everyone to get involved in sport and physical activity for enjoyment as well as wider health and social outcomes.
- 1.6. Move Together (Kent's Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity) focuses on taking a place-based approach to:

Connecting Communities – bringing people together and harnessing sport and physical activity's unique ability to make places better to live

Health and Wellbeing - working in partnership and enabling everyone to benefit physically and mentally from an active lifestyle

Providing Positive Experiences for Children and Young People – helping children and young people to enjoy being active and creating the right foundations for a long, active and healthy life

Supporting Sport - helping local organisations to better understand their community and to deliver activities appropriate to people's needs and motivations

Active Environments – creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

2. The Place Partnership Programme

- 2.1. In November 2023, Sport England announced it would be investing £250 million of lottery and exchequer funding into place-based work. This investment is focused on areas identified as having high levels of inactivity, social need, and health inequalities. The approach is part of a broader strategy to address the disparities in physical activity levels and promote healthier lifestyles among communities which need it most.
- 2.2. The £250 million investment aims to support local communities by creating opportunities for physical activity and sport. £190 million has been ringfenced for work in the 80 places across England identified as having the highest need. Each selected area is in the top 10% of the country for inactivity and deprivation, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions. This funding will be distributed through the Place Partnerships programme, which builds on previous local delivery pilots.
- 2.3. Sport England's approach is place-based, meaning it focuses on the needs and assets of each individual community. By partnering with local organisations, leaders, and Active Partnerships like Active Kent and Medway, the programme aims to address the barriers to physical activity and create tailored solutions. This includes leveraging local resources such as parks, community centres, and sports clubs to foster active lifestyles, as well as working with communities themselves to create sustainable solutions.
- 2.4. The Place Partnership Programme aims to offer significant benefit across a wide range of policy areas from health and education to community safety and employment. Engaging a wide range of partners at a local level will be critical to its success and this is a current area of focus for Active Kent and Medway as it builds local place partnerships.
- 2.5. AKM is delighted to share that two places in Kent have successfully secured initial investment in the first phase of this programme. The two places are Gravesham (the wards of Westcourt and North Northfleet) and Thanet in its entirety. Initial “development awards” for the first 12 months of work in each place have been secured and these are for £232k and £366k respectively.
- 2.6. The initial development awards are a pre-cursor to a full award and designed to facilitate the setting up of the local place partnership boards and some early test and learn projects in each place. Including the development award, indicatively there will be up to £1.6 million of investment available to each place between now and March 2028. There will also be an opportunity to bid for capital funding and there is up to £80 million available across the 80 planned place partnerships.
- 2.7. Work to establish the local Place Partnership Boards in Gravesham and Thanet is underway, with representatives from the district councils, local voluntary sector infrastructure organisations, public health, the NHS, education and leisure sectors all engaged. There will also be opportunities from the autumn onwards for local Members to engage with the Place Partnership Programme through consultation events, providing insights into the challenges facing their

locality and representing the interests of KCC and the communities local Members represent.

- 2.8. Test and learn projects have been initiated, including a “drop in” park based summer activity programme for young people in Thanet, which has seen regular attendance of over 40 participants per session.
- 2.9. Conversations are underway in Gravesham and Thanet regarding support for local capital projects including Cascades Leisure Centre and the redevelopment of Jackey Bakers recreation space respectively.
- 2.10. Work has also commenced on the refresh of playing pitch and indoor facilities strategies – supported by place partnership funding – to help inform data-led local plans moving forwards.
- 2.11. It should also be noted that investment into a further 27 Place Partnerships will be confirmed later in 2025. AKM has submitted solicited applications for two places – Medway and Swale - and is awaiting the outcome of these.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. Current revenue budget is nil.
- 3.2. AKM is hosted by KCC and in addition to this support, currently receives £734.5k per annum (£3,452,950 over five years) of external funding from Sport England to support the delivery of Move Together – the localised iteration of Uniting the Movement, the national strategy for Sport and Physical Activity. Alongside this Active Kent and Medway also receives £300k per annum in funding via a KCC Public Health Grant. Funding which covers all direct costs to KCC relating to the hosting of AKM.
- 3.3. There are no match funding requirements for these grants, however, KCC does provide hosting to AKM to which there is a cost in terms of the corporate overheads that are charged/allocated to all services.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 AKM is an unincorporated body and not a legal entity in its own right – hence any grants relating to this programme will need to be accepted by KCC on behalf of the partnership and reviewed by the S151 Officer or Chief Internal Audit Officer.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been submitted. The evidence reviewed in undertaking the EQIA suggests that there is no potential for discrimination and all appropriate measures have been taken to advance equality and foster good relations between the protected groups.

6. Data Protection Impact Assessment

- 6.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) Has been undertaken. Minimal risk has been identified, and mitigations are in place.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee is asked to note this report for information.

8 Background Documents

- 8.1 Sport England - Uniting the Movement
8.2 Active Kent and Medway - Move Together - ActiveKent

9 Contact details

Report Author:
Liz Davidson
Partnership Director
Active Kent and Medway
03000 423044
liz.davidson@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:
Stephanie Holt- Castle
Director Growth and Communities
03000 412064
stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk