

From: Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health

To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee

10 May 2019

Subject: **Green Spaces and Physical Exercise**

Classification: Unrestricted

Previous Pathway: This is the first committee to consider this report

Future Pathway: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: Being physically active is important for physical health, mental health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity can safeguard against some of the diseases that are currently on the increase and which are affecting people at an earlier age, for example cancer, diabetes, obesity, hypertension and depression.

Getting everybody active every day requires spaces – indoors and outdoors – that make daily physical activity the easy, efficient and cost-effective choice for all regardless of age, disability and other personal characteristics.

There is evidence that the use of green spaces for activity has additional benefits in terms of feelings of wellbeing and there is much work across Kent County Council to encourage activity and the use of green spaces for physical activity.

Recommendation: The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **Comment on and Endorse** the contents of the report

1. **Background.**

- 1.1 Being physically active is important for physical health, mental health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity can safeguard against some of the diseases that are currently on the increase and which are affecting people at an earlier age, for example cancer, diabetes, obesity, hypertension and depression.

Persuading inactive people (less than 30 minutes exercise per week) to become more active could prevent one in ten cases of stroke and heart disease in the UK.

2.0 **Introduction**

- 2.1 Our population is around 20% less active than it was in the 1960s and if this trend continues, we will be 35% less active by 2030. Physical inactivity is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease and other causes of mortality and ill-health such as Type 2 Diabetes. Inactivity is estimated to be responsible for one in six deaths in the UK and to cost the NHS £0.9 billion and the UK economy £7.4 billion.

Data on physical activity in Kent can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

- 2.2 A review of evidence, including a return-on-investment analysis demonstrated the economic benefits of investing in physical activity. This has demonstrated that there are not only economic benefits in terms of health (both physical and mental), but also wider social benefits such as social care, regeneration, travel and transport, business and economic productivity, crime and education.
- 2.3 New evidence is emerging around the dangers of sedentary behaviour (sitting down for long periods time). An Expert Working Group set up for the Chief Medical Officer to assess the evidence found that there is strong evidence of a significant relationship between the greater time spent in sedentary behaviour and all-cause and cardiovascular mortality rates and cardiovascular incidents (e.g. stroke). A dose-response curve was seen - this means the more the sedentary behaviour, the higher the risk.
- 2.4 There was also strong evidence of a significant relationship between sedentary behaviour and a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, although there was not as clear a dose-response curve.
- 2.5 The evidence review found moderate evidence of a link between sedentary behaviour and some cancers, but limited evidence of a link between sedentary behaviour and overweight.

3.0 Physical Activity and Green Spaces

- 3.1 Green spaces include natural or semi-natural areas in, or near, urban areas that are at least partially covered by vegetation. These include parks, woodland, allotments and recreation spaces. 82% of the UK population now lives in urban areas and only half of the people in England live within 300M of a green space and this is under threat from the expansion of urban infrastructure.
- 3.2 There are no clear physical health benefits to outdoor activity compared to indoor activity, but a link has been found between people's physical environment and their activity, i.e. we know that levels of physical activity are higher in areas with more green space and that those living closer to a green space are more likely to use it and will use it more frequently.

This needs to be interpreted cautiously though: Often those areas closer to green spaces are more sought after and attract higher-income families. Those people using the green space may have actually chosen to live closer precisely so that they can use the space.

- 3.3 Low-income areas are associated with poorer health outcomes, but also lower quality housing and education, poor diet, and less access to good quality green space. A recent study suggested that in the most deprived groups mortality was halved in areas with the greenest space.
- 3.4 The mechanisms for the benefits from green infrastructure are not fully understood. We know that there are some physical benefits, such as improved air quality, lower noise pollution and reduced risk of flooding, but there is emerging evidence that the use of green space in promoting social cohesion (people from different social backgrounds interacting) has benefits for the individual such as reducing stress and depression.
- 3.5 Research has demonstrated that people who exercise outdoors report higher feelings of wellbeing and lower feelings of stress or anxiety that those doing the same activity

indoors.

- 3.6 The way land is used in communities has an immense impact on the public's health. Although it is the quality and not just the quantity of public parks and spaces that encourages people to be active, evidence shows just having ease of access to open space makes a crucial difference. Building more physical activity into daily routines – the commute, walking the dog, the journey to the shops, school or workplace – involves creating the kinds of environments that support active living

4.0 Current Programmes

- 4.1 Kent County Council currently promotes a range of services, programmes and campaigns that aim to encourage people to be more active. One You Kent and Explore Kent are just some examples of local authority led campaigns that aim to support people to find an activity that they want to do and encourage them to make it a regular part of their lives.
- 4.2 Kent County Council has a Sport and Physical Activity Services, which is a small service aiming to promote involvement in a wide range of physical activity opportunities, including sport. The service has combined its limited resources with those from Sport England and acts as the County Sports Partnership for Kent (Kent Sport). The current focus is on encouraging the least active and under-represented groups to become more active.
- 4.3 Explore Kent works alongside Kent Sport and other countryside operators and organisations to promote outdoor activities. These include projects such as physical activity sessions for people living with early onset dementia; Active at Work, a workplace health programme helping people build activity into their day using e.g. fitness trackers, and the Kent School Games.
- 4.4 Another project is Walk to Win, which used Mosaic to target people living in areas of deprivation in Thanet with a multimedia campaign of radio adverts, print and bus posters. People were encouraged to take regular health exercise accessing the coast and countryside around them and 2,500 people collected free pedometers and 600 people took up the Walk to Win challenge.
- 4.5 Social media channels are increasingly being used by sector partners to reach their target audience and promote physical activity and their own services. Kent County Council promotes national campaigns such as One You, Change 4 Life and Couch to 5k in addition to their own local campaigns.

5.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

- 5.1 Getting everybody active every day requires spaces – indoors and outdoors – that makes daily physical activity the easy, efficient and cost-effective choice for all regardless of age, disability and other personal characteristics.
- 5.2 There is much work to be done to encourage the residents of Kent to use the green spaces available to them in the County for physical activity. Doing so will reduce health inequalities and prevent long-term conditions in the County.
- 5.3 The promotion of physical activity needs to be targeted to those that stand to gain the most from moving more. Public Health England data suggest that 20% of Kent residents are sedentary and it is these individuals, who do less than 30 minutes of activity per week, that should be the primary target audience of new promotions.

5.4 Kent Public Health team is working with the NHS Healthy New Towns Programme to embed learning from the programme on community development and working with planners to make new developments, such as Chilmington Green and Otterpool healthier places to live.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **Comment on and Endorse** the contents of the report.

7.0 Background Documents

7.1 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0538/POST-PN-0538.pdf>

7.2 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374914/Framework_13.pdf

8.0 Contact Details

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Appendix 1 – Physical Activity Indicators South East England

* a note is attached to the value, hover over to see more details

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Not compared

Quintiles: Best Worst Not applicable

Indicator	Period	England	South East region	Brecknell Forest	Brighton and Hove	Buckinghamshire	East Sussex	Hampshire	Isle of Wight	Kent	Medway	Milton Keynes	Oxfordshire	Portsmouth	Reading	Slough	Southampton	Surrey	West Berkshire	West Sussex	Windsor and Maidenhead	Wokingham
Percentage of physically active adults - current method	2016/17	66.0	68.9	72.2	78.0	69.6	66.8	69.9	68.1	67.8	65.8	64.1	70.1	66.6	68.7	54.7	65.2	70.3	73.6	68.3	70.7	71.2
Percentage of physically inactive adults - current method	2016/17	22.2	19.3	14.9	12.4	17.5	21.5	17.9	21.7	20.0	22.5	21.6	18.6	22.5	17.2	33.3	24.2	18.6	16.3	19.3	16.7	17.3
Percentage of adults walking for travel at least three days per week	2016/17	22.9	22.1	17.2	36.7	19.6	19.3	20.2	18.3	22.3	20.4	20.0	24.6	29.1	27.5	18.2	29.1	22.2	17.0	21.2	18.7	21.9
Percentage of adults cycling for travel at least three days per week	2016/17	3.3	3.5	2.4	5.1	1.8	2.1	3.8	3.7	2.4	1.4	2.1	8.3	5.6	5.4	2.0	7.1	3.2	1.8	2.4	3.2	3.2
Percentage of 15 year olds physically active for at least one hour per day seven days a week	2014/15	13.9	14.8	14.8	15.8	14.1	15.3	14.8	15.8	13.7	13.4	16.2	15.9	14.1	15.6	13.5	12.5	15.3	15.2	15.1	18.3	15.5
Percentage of 15 year olds with a mean daily sedentary time in the last week over 7 hours per day	2014/15	70.1	67.8	68.6	67.9	60.8	69.0	68.6	73.1	69.7	76.3	70.7	63.5	73.3	71.0	68.5	74.1	62.8	66.1	70.3	58.7	62.9
Percentage of physically active adults - historical method	2015	57.0	60.2	63.8	68.4	62.8	58.7	60.9	55.9	59.0	53.3	56.3	60.9	60.5	59.3	49.8	54.2	62.0	62.6	60.2	61.3	63.9
Percentage of physically inactive adults - historical method	2015	28.7	25.1	20.3	19.2	22.0	26.6	24.7	28.3	26.7	29.4	27.3	23.4	25.7	29.7	31.1	33.2	22.9	24.4	25.6	22.3	21.0
Percentage of adults doing 30-149 minutes physical activity per week -historical method	2015	14.3	14.7	16.0	12.3	15.2	14.7	14.4	15.9	14.3	17.3	16.5	15.7	13.8	11.1	19.0	12.6	15.1	13.1	14.2	16.4	15.1
Percentage of adults who do any walking, at least five times per week	2014/15	50.6	49.9	43.6	51.7	49.1	51.7	48.7	52.6	49.9	46.3	47.7	51.6	54.8	53.6	48.0	53.1	49.8	49.7	49.8	46.1	46.5
Percentage of adults who do any walking, at least once per week	2014/15	80.6	81.7	82.9	83.3	83.1	82.1	81.5	82.4	81.1	77.6	79.4	84.3	83.6	80.3	75.8	79.0	82.5	82.5	81.0	86.1	82.2
Percentage of adults who do any cycling, at least three times per week	2014/15	4.4	4.9	6.2	5.7	3.1	2.5	5.5	3.5	3.0	2.8	4.2	8.9	10.9	6.2	5.0	4.8	4.8	5.3	5.2	3.7	7.9
Percentage of adults who do any cycling, at least once per month	2014/15	14.7	16.8	19.4	14.5	14.5	13.5	19.0	14.1	13.5	9.8	15.4	26.1	20.4	16.3	12.5	12.4	17.5	19.0	17.5	14.6	23.3
Access to woodland	2015	16.8	-	47.0	12.3	25.0	20.9	23.5	15.6	12.0	35.5	18.3	6.8	3.5	25.8	7.6	61.9	25.3	13.3	16.7	12.7	19.3
Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons	Mar 2015 - Feb 2016	17.9	18.2	*	18.3	17.4	15.7	16.8	19.4	18.7	17.2	13.5	24.4	16.2	14.8*	16.8	16.2*	20.5	17.4	20.3	5.1*	*

Physical Activity Indicators - CIPFA Nearest neighbours

* a note is attached to the value, hover over to see more details

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Not compared

Quintiles: Best Worst Not applicable

Indicator	Period	England	Kent	1 - Essex	2 - Lancashire	3 - Hampshire	4 - Northamptonshire	5 - Gloucestershire	6 - Worcestershire	7 - Warwickshire	8 - West Sussex	9 - East Sussex	10 - Suffolk	11 - Nottinghamshire	12 - Staffordshire	13 - Devon	14 - Hertfordshire	15 - Norfolk
Percentage of physically active adults - current method	2016/17	66.0	67.8	66.0	65.3	69.9	63.6	69.2	67.2	65.9	68.3	66.8	67.2	66.4	64.9	73.9	68.5	66.5
Percentage of physically inactive adults - current method	2016/17	22.2	20.0	22.6	22.9	17.9	23.6	18.5	21.1	22.3	19.3	21.5	20.8	23.2	23.2	16.8	20.3	22.3
Percentage of adults walking for travel at least three days per week	2016/17	22.9	22.3	21.3	19.0	20.2	14.5	18.4	17.5	18.0	21.2	19.3	18.5	20.2	14.8	21.2	24.0	18.6
Percentage of adults cycling for travel at least three days per week	2016/17	3.3	2.4	2.7	2.0	3.8	2.0	4.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.1	3.2	2.1	1.6	4.2	2.4	5.0
Percentage of 15 year olds physically active for at least one hour per day seven days a week	2014/15	13.9	13.7	14.5	15.0	14.8	15.1	15.9	15.7	14.4	15.1	15.3	13.0	14.2	13.2	17.5	11.7	14.3
Percentage of 15 year olds with a mean daily sedentary time in the last week over 7 hours per day	2014/15	70.1	69.7	72.3	67.7	68.6	70.7	66.8	71.3	67.5	70.3	69.0	70.3	70.8	72.0	63.2	67.9	73.0
Percentage of physically active adults - historical method	2015	57.0	59.0	57.5	52.5	60.9	56.8	61.5	58.3	61.2	60.2	58.7	57.8	59.5	57.6	60.7	58.7	56.5
Percentage of physically inactive adults - historical method	2015	28.7	26.7	28.0	31.7	24.7	27.6	23.8	26.4	24.4	25.6	26.6	28.3	26.1	28.3	25.4	25.9	29.0
Percentage of adults doing 30-149 minutes physical activity per week -historical method	2015	14.3	14.3	14.4	15.8	14.4	15.6	14.7	15.4	14.4	14.2	14.7	13.9	14.5	14.0	13.9	15.4	14.5
Percentage of adults who do any walking, at least five times per week	2014/15	50.6	49.9	48.4	48.9	48.7	47.6	49.8	49.5	52.6	49.8	51.7	49.1	49.3	44.6	53.1	50.5	50.5
Percentage of adults who do any walking, at least once per week	2014/15	80.6	81.1	78.9	78.3	81.5	77.5	82.6	80.4	81.3	81.0	82.1	80.8	81.6	76.7	84.0	82.5	78.9
Percentage of adults who do any cycling, at least three times per week	2014/15	4.4	3.0	3.5	3.5	5.5	2.4	5.1	4.6	3.7	5.2	2.5	5.0	4.4	3.3	4.6	4.2	6.7
Percentage of adults who do any cycling, at least once per month	2014/15	14.7	13.5	13.9	14.4	19.0	13.3	18.0	14.7	14.7	17.5	13.5	16.2	15.8	13.5	18.1	15.6	18.2
Access to woodland	2015	16.8	12.0	15.7	19.9	23.5	7.9	13.0	14.7	7.9	16.7	20.9	8.5	13.0	14.3	8.7	22.1	10.7
Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons	Mar 2015 - Feb 2016	17.9	18.7	19.2	18.0	16.8	21.1	15.3	14.2	20.6	20.3	15.7	18.6	16.7	17.8	19.7	18.3	18.8

Appendix 2 – Local data on Physical activity and physical inactivity

Physically inactive adults (%)

The number of respondents aged 19 and over, with valid responses to questions on physical activity, doing less than 30 moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) minutes physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more in the previous 28 days expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents aged 19 and over.



