



**ACTIVE
TOGETHER**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
AND SPORT'S
CONTRIBUTION TO
WELLBEING, HEALTH,
ECONOMIC RECOVERY
AND GROWTH**

Focus on Leicester, Leicestershire
and Rutland

Date of publication: September 2021

INTRODUCTION

This short report commissioned by Active Together, formerly Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport, highlights the impact of physical activity & sport on health & wellbeing and, in turn, on the economy. It demonstrates how physical activity & sport can help to mitigate the impact of the COVID pandemic on the Leicester & Leicestershire economy and support the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's [LLEP] short-term Economic Recovery Plan and longer-term Economic Growth Strategy.

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT'S CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING, HEALTH, ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND GROWTH

PRODUCTIVE

GVA, productivity and balanced growth

Taking part in physical activity & sport has major positive effects on people's physical and mental health & wellbeing, which in turn drives economic growth by reducing days lost to sickness, boosting workplace productivity and reduces economic disparities by increasing labour market participation.

£1bn
SOCIAL
VALUE

We estimate that physical activity & sport provides **£1.4bn in social value to Leicester and Leicestershire each year** due to its impact on health & wellbeing, productivity, educational attainment, crime reduction and communities.



Physical activity & sport can help to **shape the image of a city or region**, and to differentiate one location from another as a place to live, work, visit and invest in.



If the **labour market participation rate of Leicester City** residents could be raised in line with the national average, this would **generate an additional £370m GVA per year** to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy: raising it to the LLEP average would add £580m GVA to the economy.



A reduction in the number of working days lost per year in Leicester & Leicestershire to two days per worker could add a **further £160m GVA per year to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy** due to productivity benefits.

INNOVATIVE

Innovation and adoption of new technologies

Physical activity & sport providers are increasingly **developing new innovative ways of participating** in groups and classes.

The huge interest in physical activity & sport provides a strong platform for business in the sector to play a **leading role in tackling the environmental, economic and social challenges presented by climate change**, and inspire and engage both businesses in other sectors to do the same.



leading role in tackling the **environmental, economic and social challenges** by **climate change**

Engage



Inspire



INCLUSIVE

Workforce resilience and reduction in deprivation and inequalities

30%
REDUCTION

Regular participation in physical activity & sport is associated with 30% reduction in **depression** and **poor mental health**, and reduced **rates of obesity**, which helps prevention of many other **chronic diseases** and is **associated with 30% reduction in all-cause mortality**.

REDUCE
700
PREVENTABLE
EARLY DEATHS
PER YEAR

Improving rates of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to **reduce the estimated 700 preventable early deaths** that take place each year in Leicester & Leicestershire.

REDUCE
YEARS
POOR
HEALTH
33%
OF PEOPLE'S
LIVES

Improving rates of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to **reduce the amount of years people living in these areas spend in poor health, which currently stands at 33% of their lives**.

SUSTAINABLE

Environmental sustainability, shift to low carbon/net zero

Interventions that promote active travel (eg. encouraging walking, development of cycle/routes etc.), can help increase health and wellbeing, **drive investment in low carbon innovations and accelerate the shift to a low carbon economy**.

A return to pre-World War II levels of cycling could help **reduce carbon dioxide emissions** in Leicester & Leicestershire **by around 115,000 tonnes**.



WITHOUT ACTION
COST OF
£200m
PER YEAR
BY 2050, OR
WIDER SOCIETY
£950m

Given current and projected obesity rates, **without action**, some 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children could be overweight or obese by 2050, at a **cost of around £200m per year to the NHS in Leicester & Leicestershire, and wider costs to society of £950m**.



Improving rates of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to **tackle the eight-year life expectancy gap between the LLEP area's least and most affluent areas**.



As the economy and society emerges from the pandemic, there is a need to make sure that more people can access and participate in online physical activity & sport, in what is rapidly becoming a **"digital by default"** world.



DRIVE INVESTMENT
IN LOW CARBON INNOVATIONS
AND THE SHIFT TO A
LOW CARBON
ECONOMY

Cycling and walking also fit into daily routines better than many other forms of exercise, because they can **double up as transport** to work, school, shops etc. which means that most people can readily incorporate them into their daily lives.

Moreover, if **physical activity becomes a routine** part of an individual's **day-to-day life**, it is easier for this to be maintained as a regular habit.



The Economic and Social Cost of inaction on rates of participation in Physical Activity & Sport are clear.

Doing Nothing is not an Option!

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRODUCTIVE

GVA, productivity and balanced growth

1. Active Together should work with the LLEP, local authorities and partners in the Integrated Care System to influence:

1.1. Businesses across the economy to provide opportunities for physical activity & sport in paid work time to generate productivity benefits and reduce absenteeism. Depending on business size, this may require liaison with key people (typically Human Resources Managers), strategic managers (with an overview of the larger workplace agenda and priorities) and team leaders (those with a responsibility for groups of employees) in order to design programmes that reflect the structure and nature of the working day, workplace culture and norms, and organisational concerns. Partners could prioritise lower wage sectors/employers.

1.2. Organisations helping people to find work (including people who are more susceptible to mental health issues) to include physical activity & sport as part of the package of measures to help people into employment. This will help to increase labour market participation and in turn economic growth

2. Active Together should work with the LLEP and partners with a remit for boosting tourism and investment to:

2.1. Ensure that physical activity & sport is recognised as an important driver of the image of Leicester & Leicestershire; and is embedded in campaigns that seek to increase number of tourists and inward investment.

2.2. Carry out a nuanced market segmentation analysis to generate a more detailed evidence.



INNOVATIVE

Innovation and adoption of new technologies

3. Active Together should work with the LLEP and sports organisations to encourage take up of innovative technologies that are increasingly being utilised to promote physical activity & sport (eg. mobile device applications, health wearable devices, and active video games)

3.1. Active Together should work with the LLEP and Sport England to ensure that financial support is provided to sport freelancers and businesses to transform their business model and adopt digital solutions as part of how they deliver their services on a day-to-day basis.

3.2. Active Together should work with the LLEP and major professional sports club, who could act as “Low Carbon Ambassadors”, demonstrating what steps they are taking to tackling the challenges presented by climate change, and acting as exemplars for businesses in other sectors.

INCLUSIVE

Workforce resilience and reduction in deprivation and inequalities

4. Active Together, should work with the LLEP and partners with a social inclusion remit to ensure:

4.1. Digital inclusion/poverty strategies/plans/programmes include sports & physical activity and is co-produced with those who have lived experience of digital exclusion. Strategies must incorporate tailored approaches for meeting the needs of different groups. These approaches should build on the good practice already established by organisations working with these groups, and be delivered in collaboration with these organisations wherever possible and appropriate.

4.2. Digital inclusion/poverty strategies/plans/programmes align with wider anti-poverty measures, including through physical activity & sport, demonstrating how this will contribute to anti-poverty targets.

4.3. Ownership of digital inclusion is shared among partners.

5. Active Together should work with the LLEP and partners in the Integrated Care System to ensure:

5.1 Strategies and initiatives to reduce health inequalities and incidence of poor physical and mental health should include physical activity & sport.



SUSTAINABLE

Environmental sustainability, shift to low carbon/net zero

6. Active Together, should work with the LLEP and partners in the Integrated Care System to ensure:

6.1. Public health and transport/planning policies, strategies and guidance for Leicester & Leicestershire is mutually supportive in promoting and facilitating cycling and walking as active travel, and as a healthy and convenient means of transport and recreation that could easily be incorporated into the ordinary day-to-day activity of adults and children. This will help to increase rates of physical inactivity and decrease inactivity and the health problems associated with it.

6.2. Directors of Public Health are able to leverage their position in local authorities to engage transport, town and spatial planning and other council departments [eg. leisure and tourism] more closely in promoting cycling as active travel and for recreation.

6.3. The NHS and its providers actively promote cycling and walking to their own employees, to the people in their care, and to the general public; and they should invest in measures to support it [eg. patient referral schemes, cycling facilities at sites as part of travel plans etc.].

6.4. Transport and planning decisions are 'health checked' to maximise the potential for positive impacts on active travel and minimise negative impacts. Tackling hostile road conditions is a priority because they put existing cyclists at risk and deter many others including children and young people.

6.5. Local partners continue to lobby central government so that local authorities should be given additional resources to improve the physical environment in neighbourhoods and leisure areas, creating safe spaces for outdoor activities, to enable people to fulfil government guidance on exercise.



COLLABORATIVE

Supporting local partners

7. Active Together, and the LLEP should work with key partners to ensure that:

7.1. With the creation of Integrated Care Systems within the NHS and the wider partnerships being created through Health & Wellbeing groups across the entire system, physical activity & sport should be embedded as a key part of the solution both in economic recovery and also for its impact on the reduction of Health Inequalities. Joint action will ensure maximum impact on health, employability and therefore economic recovery.

7.2. The value of physical activity and sport is recognised by partners to people in work, out of work, as part of prevention and treatment of diseases, the profile of place and the productivity and economic recovery and growth of the LLEP area.

INTRODUCTION - FULL REPORT

Purpose of Report

This short report commissioned by Active Together (formerly Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport) highlights the impact of physical activity & sport on health & wellbeing and, in turn, on the economy. It demonstrates how physical activity & sport can help to mitigate the impact of the COVID pandemic on the Leicester & Leicestershire economy and support the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) short-term Economic Recovery Plan and longer-term Economic Growth Strategy. Specifically, this includes a focus on:

Inclusive growth and wellbeing' [including the potential impact on physical & mental health, obesity and connected public health outcomes and it's role in health inequalities from an economic perspective; and tackling digital poverty]	Potential for innovation in relation to low carbon and ' green recovery ' [eg. leading carbon reduction through promotion of sustainable transport, encouraging greener modes of transport]'Place' [in relation to economic recovery, including the visitor economy]
Place' [in relation to economic recovery, including the visitor economy]	Recommendations under the four Growth Strategy pillars: productive; innovative; inclusive and sustainable.

Previous economic studies commissioned by LRS¹ have provided estimates of the scale and composition of the Physical Activity & Sport sector. The Physical Activity & Sport Sector Growth Plan (2016-21) demonstrated the important direct contribution the sector makes to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy in terms of GVA, employment and business base. These sectoral economic indicators are currently being updated by Cambridge Econometrics, which is developing an economic evidence base across all LLEP priority sectors to inform the LLEP's Economic Growth Strategy.

However, the economic benefits of physical activity & sport go well beyond this direct economic output. This report, therefore, is intended to demonstrate how physical activity & sport participation and investment can facilitate economic growth and recovery more widely throughout Leicester & Leicestershire through its impact on physical & mental health & wellbeing, tourism and inward investment, which in turn generates further jobs and GVA across the economy.

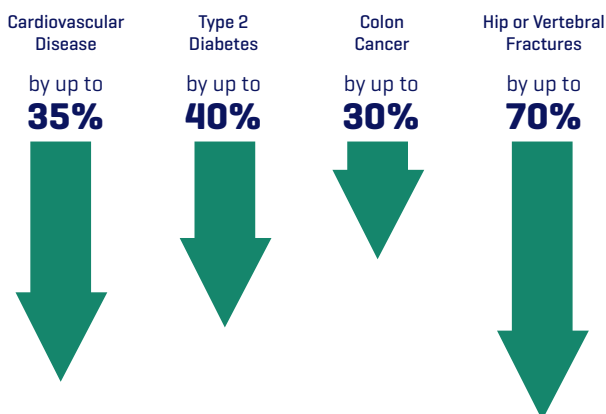
LINKS BETWEEN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORT, WELLBEING AND ECONOMY

Impact of Physical Activity & Sport on Health & Wellbeing

There is an overwhelming amount of scientific evidence on the positive effects participation in physical activity & sport has on health & wellbeing (as part of a healthy lifestyle) and on the costs of inactivity. The LLEP has recognised the importance of sport, along with health and natural assets, as a way of promoting healthy living. It has also prioritised development of the physical activity & sport economy, including sports science related to Loughborough University (SportPark)².

The positive, direct effects of engaging in regular physical activity are most apparent in reducing rates of obesity, which in turn helps prevention of many chronic diseases. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), physical activity & sport is associated with reductions in cardiovascular disease (by up to 35%), type 2 diabetes (by up to 40%), colon cancer (by up to 30%), breast cancer, hypertension, osteoporosis (hip or vertebral fractures, by up to 70%), coronary heart disease, dementia (by up to 30%)³, strokes, and other life-threatening conditions (reducing all-cause mortality by up to 30%). The WHO also found that the social and inter-personal benefits of physical activity & sport also produce positive mental health effects: physical activity & sport is associated with up to 30% reduction in depression.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT IS ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCTIONS IN:



The health implications of inactivity are equally striking. People who are insufficiently active have up to a 30% increased risk of early death compared to people who are sufficiently active. **It is estimated that physical inactivity directly contributes to one in six deaths in the UK each year, the same number as smoking, costing the UK £7.4 billion every year⁴.**

physical inactivity directly contributes to **1 in 6 deaths** in the UK every year the same number as **smoking**, costing the UK **7.4 billion** every year



There are strong links between deprivation and health & wellbeing. For example, Leicester City local authority area is ranked the 32nd most deprived local authority area in England, and is home to many thousands of residents who live in disadvantaged circumstances and have a wide range of health issues which impact on life expectancy and economic activity⁵. Whilst the percentage of the Leicester City population who are overweight or obese (55%) is below the England average (62%)⁶, some groups are more likely to be obese, and therefore at increased risk of the chronic diseases listed above. These are people aged 44-64 years, those with low educational attainment, people with poor mental health and those with limiting long-term illness or disability.

AT INCREASED RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASES PEOPLE AGED

44-64

with low educational attainment, people with **poor mental health** and those with **limiting long-term illness or disability**

People from some ethnically diverse communities also have a higher risk of chronic health conditions at lower Body Mass Index (BMI) than the average for the whole population and so are more prone to the negative health effects of a lack of physical activity. This at least in part explains why Leicester City, which has a large ethnically diverse population, is estimated to have a significantly higher prevalence of diabetes than England as a whole in spite of its lower than average obesity rates.

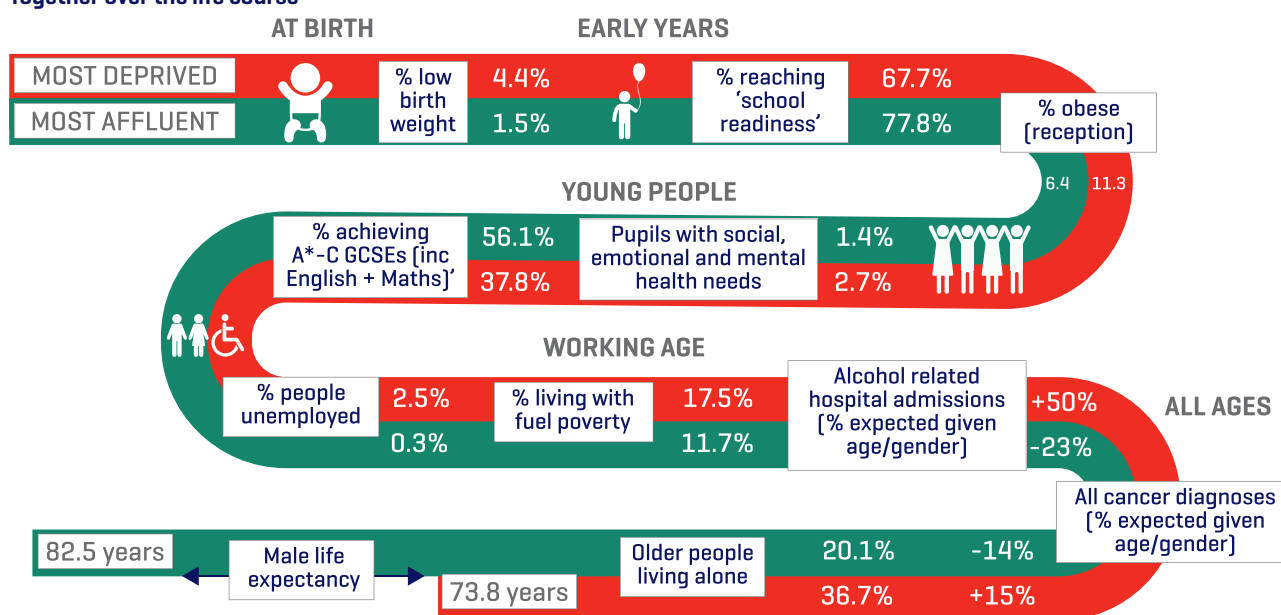
In addition, whilst the proportion of physically active adults in Leicester City is in line with the England average (and with a slightly higher prevalence of residents who walk and cycle), this masks some wide variations. Women, older people (especially those who are retired), people from deprived areas, people with disabilities, and South Asian or Black ethnicities are more likely to be inactive (ie. less than 30 mins exercise per week) than younger residents and white males⁷.

There are some large disparities in health outcomes and life expectancy within Leicester & Leicestershire, as shown in Figure 1 below. In the most deprived areas (eg. Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields), adult cancer diagnoses are around 15 percentage points higher than the national average (average for all adult ages), compared to the most affluent areas (eg. Market Harborough) where adult cancer diagnoses are 14 percentage points below the England average⁸. Overall male life expectancy in affluent areas is 82.5 years, compared to 73.8 years in the most deprived areas, an eight and half year disparity. In addition, in 2015–17, people in the least deprived areas could expect to live roughly 19 more years in good health than those in the most deprived areas. People in the most deprived areas spend around a third of their lives in poor health, twice the proportion spent by those in the least deprived areas.

**REDUCE THE TIME
PEOPLE IN
DEPRIVED AREAS
SPEND IN POOR HEALTH
THIS CURRENTLY STANDS AT**

33%
OF THEIR LIVES

Figure 1: Difference in Health Indicators between Most and Least Affluent Areas of Active Together over the life course

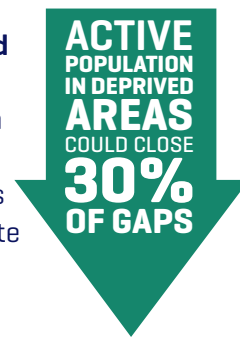


Source: Public Health England. (LLR System Health Inequalities Framework)

All of this is consistent with the findings of the Marmot Review 10 Years On⁹, which found that people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health than was the case ten years ago [when the original Marmot Review of Health Inequality¹⁰ was published]. **It also reported that improvements to life expectancy have stalled, and have declined for the poorest 10% of women and that the health gap has grown between wealthy and deprived areas.**

Clearly not all of the disparities in life expectancy and years in good health can be attributed to

differences in rates of participation in physical activity & sport. However, based on the evidence on the role of physical activity & sport in reducing poor health outcomes, we estimate that **a more active population in deprived areas could help to close up to 30% of the gaps caused by differences in health** [based on the WHO analysis]. A more detailed quantitative analysis would be required in order to generate more precise estimates, which is beyond the scope of this report.



Links between Health & Wellbeing and Economic Growth

Health & Wellbeing is one of the fundamental determinants of economic growth and poverty reduction. From a business perspective, greater health & wellbeing among the workforce is associated with greater productivity due to fewer worker illnesses [ie. days lost due to sickness and illness] and lower absenteeism [and presenteeism] and reduced costs. For the wider economy, health & wellbeing can increase production capacity through greater economic activity rates [ie. more people are able to work]. It is **estimated that some 2 million workdays are lost per year in Leicester & Leicestershire due to illness, sickness and injury**¹¹.

Improved health & wellbeing also has Exchequer benefits, as greater economic activity will generate additional tax revenues and public funding that might normally be used to treat ill health can be spent elsewhere. Better health & wellbeing also fosters lower absenteeism rates and improved learning among school children.

A 2018 Health for Wealth report¹² found that: regional inequalities in health is a key reason for the productivity differences between the best and worst-performing regions in England and that reducing the number of working aged people with limiting long-term health conditions by 10% would decrease rates of economic inactivity by 3 percentage points. In addition, as Figure 1 shows, the unemployment rate in deprived areas [2.5%] is more than seven times that of affluent areas [0.3%]. Better health and wellbeing can help to reduce this gap and in turn reduce deprivation.

The message is clear: taking part in physical activity & sport not only helps people meet recommended physical activity guidelines, it also improves their physical & mental health and wellbeing and reduces the risk of premature death and ill-health. However, some groups are missing out on these benefits, with resulting negative impacts on both health and their economic prospects and participation.



In short, physical activity & sport are vital components of good physical & mental health & wellbeing and economic performance.

⁹ <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on> (2020).

¹⁰ <https://www.local.gov.uk/marmot-review-report-fair-society-healthy-lives> (2010).

¹¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/dayslost.htm#:~:text=Stress%2C%20depression%20or%20anxiety%20and,around%2017.6%20days%20off%20work.&text=20.0%20days%20for%2011%20health,for%20Stress%2C%20depression%20or%20anxiety> (2020).

¹² <https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/11/NHSA-REPORT-FINAL.pdf> (2018).

Importance of Physical Activity & Sport in Facilitating Economic Growth

Physical activity & sport has a critical role to play in supporting the economy, through the production of goods and services, and as described above, more widely due to the knock on effects better health & wellbeing has on the economy. Physical activity & sport interventions targeted on specific communities, demographics and locations can also help to reduce both health and economic disparities.

As well as direct support for the physical activity & sport sector to stimulate greater participation [eg. through local clubs], there are a range of broader enablers to foster growth of physical activity & sport levels to maximise wellbeing and facilitate economic growth. These include a continuation of the trend towards more flexible working patterns that was already underway pre-COVID, and which has been accelerated as employers responded to the COVID pandemic. This includes the requirement for more people to work from home due to workplaces closures, and on-site staff capacity reductions at those places of work that were permitted to remain open during the pandemic.

At present there is little robust evidence on the link between flexible work arrangements and healthy behaviours (such as taking part in physical activity & sport). In principle, flexible workplaces could potentially reduce sedentary behaviour [eg. employees sitting down for long periods], as employees working at home could combine work tasks time with other tasks. Working at home also provides opportunities to complete work in short bursts throughout the day, rather than in one set work block. However, the limited studies that have been undertaken to date have not been able to establish a clear relationship between flexible working and physical activity, and more research is required.

In addition, there are several constraints that policymakers would need to address to maximise the time that people are able to spend taking part in physical activity & sport. For example, people who have caring responsibilities for elderly relatives

may struggle to find time for physical activity, as may other people who are “time poor” [eg. due to long and/or unsocial work hours]. In addition, groups with low take up of digital technologies have been unable to take advantage of online activities [see section below]. Providing physical activity & sport opportunities that are easily accessible will be important for people and groups currently with a low propensity to take part.

Strategies to improve health will have a greater impact if an understanding of the underlying health inequities within the population informs and shapes them. Interventions could be tailored to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups by recognising and addressing the additional health barriers in different communities. In many cases, this would require multisectoral approaches involving not only healthcare services but also, for example, physical activity & sport providers, housing, education, social services and employment agencies. **Addressing the underlying social factors driving poor health could play an important role in narrowing health inequalities and, in turn, economic inequalities.**



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORT

Placemaking and Stimulating Visitor Spending and Inward Investment

Physical activity & sport has the potential to shape the image of a city or region, and to differentiate one location from another as a place to **live, work, visit** and **invest** in. Physical activity & sport is often a key part of “placemaking” by tourism bodies and inward investment agencies, and is often seen in a positive light by residents, sporting organisations, tourists and businesses.

Many locations around the world have used sport as a lever to attract tourists and investment. This includes through the hosting of major sporting events [eg. multi-sport events such as the Olympic Games, which attract many thousands of spectators and are also often used as a vehicle to stimulate local regeneration], the presence of high-profile professional sports teams, regular events [both professional and amateur] and presence of key assets that attract participants.

The market for physical activity & sport tourists is very diverse and the motivations of tourists in relation to physical activity & sport vary widely [eg. whether people travel to spectate or participate, and the extent to which physical activity & sport is a key determinant in people’s decision on when and where to travel and how long to stay]. There are two broad factors to consider: sport-related motivation and one for travel motivation. Market segmentation is necessary in order to reach certain target groups adequately. **Segmentation** makes it easier to understand and target specific groups that have similar characteristics and behaviours.



Tackling Digital Exclusion/Poverty

Broadly speaking, digital exclusion (sometime referred to as digital poverty) is where a section of the population have continuing unequal access and capacity to use the information & communications technologies (ICTs) that are essential to participate fully in modern society.

One pre-COVID trend, which has been exacerbated since the pandemic began, is of a growing **‘technological divide’** in which digital poverty/exclusion prevents some individuals from more deprived backgrounds or from specific groups accessing new innovative ways of taking part in society, including in physical activity & sport, and the tools to develop pathways in participation.

Whilst many physical activity & sport providers have shifted to online delivery of classes and activities, access to and cultural acceptability of internet based technologies is far from universal, which means that some people [especially children] who would ordinarily take part in physical activities [eg. at school] have missed out. As the



economy and society emerges from the pandemic and face-to-face activities become permissible again, there is also a need to make sure that more people are still able to access and participate in online physical activity & sport, in what is rapidly becoming a “digital by default” world. Electronic modes of delivery can also benefit people who are not able to travel to take part in activities [eg. for health or other reasons]. This will enable more people to access technology that supports them to lead an active and healthy life. Online provision also needs to increase the social opportunities for participants given the difficulties in replicating some of the social benefits of face-to-face classes [eg. peer motivation and meeting people] online.

In addition, working with internet service providers and mobile phone network operators to develop a data voucher scheme could help give those with limited access to the internet due to financial constraints the ability to access online physical activity content.

Supporting the Shift to a Low Carbon Economy

The impact of physical activity & sport on the climate is complex and can be difficult to measure depending on the size of the organisation and/or event. However, it may be considerable when associated travel, energy use, construction, catering and supply chains etc are taken into account.

However, the global interest for billions of fans, and the media coverage generated in response, provide a strong platform for professional sports clubs to play a leading role in tackling the environmental, economic and social challenges presented by climate change, and inspire and engage both businesses in other sectors to do the same. This could be, for example, through the development of new low carbon ways of producing goods & services and/or adopting sustainability principles.

In addition, transport interventions, especially those that promote active travel [eg. encouraging walking, development of cycle lanes/routes/networks], can help increase physical activity alongside helping to drive investment in low carbon innovations and accelerate the shift to a low carbon economy.

Cycling has a carbon footprint of about 21 grammes of carbon dioxide per kilometre¹³ [including emissions from bicycle and parts manufacture and disposal, and also the extra food required to “fuel” cycling]. This is actually less than walking or getting the bus and less than one-tenth of the emissions of driving. If cycling’s popularity in the UK increased six-fold [equivalent to returning to 1940s levels], this could make a net reduction of 7.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, equivalent to 6% of the UK’s transport emissions¹⁴. This would equate to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in Leicester & Leicestershire of around 115,000 tonnes.

Cycling and walking also fit into daily routines better than many other forms of exercise, because they can double up as transport to work, school, shops etc, which means that most people can readily incorporate them into their daily lives. In addition, they are inexpensive, especially compared to the cost of joining gyms and leisure centres. Moreover, if physical activity becomes a routine part of an individual’s day-to-day life, it is easier for this to be maintained as a regular habit.

1940's
LEVEL OF CYCLING
(x6 INCREASE)
could make net
reduction of **7.7m**
TONNES OF
CO2/YEAR OR
6% UK TRANSPORT
EMISSIONS



CYCLING & WALKING

Double up as transport

leading role in tackling the **environmental, economic and social challenges** by climate change

Engage

Inspire

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORT ECONOMIC POLICY AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Government's "Build Back Better" Plan for Growth recognises that differences in education, skills, health are an important driver of economic inequalities between (and within) regions in regional outcomes and that people's experience with health and education determine wellbeing and life-chances. The Government's Strategic Funds designed to deliver on "Build Back Better" objectives - the Community Renewal Fund, Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund - were launched in March 2021.

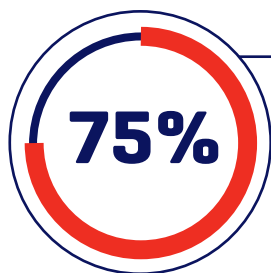
The Community Renewal Fund will provide £220 million additional funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (the domestic "successor fund" to replace European Structural & Investment Funds now that the UK has left the European Union). It has a submission deadline of June 18, 2021 and an expenditure deadline of March 31, 2022. The fund supports the preservation or enhancement of cultural and sporting facilities, and improvement of green spaces, which could potential be used to promote physical activity.

The Levelling up Fund will make £4.8 billion available to invest in high value local infrastructure that supports the health and wellbeing of local people. This includes sports or athletics facilities as well as green spaces linked to community hubs. The submission deadline is 18th June 2021, with an expenditure deadline of 31st March 2024 (and into 2024-25 for larger schemes)

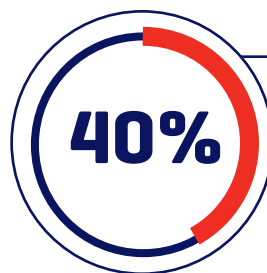
The Community Ownership Fund, worth £150m, will help community groups buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost. From summer 2021 community groups will be able to bid for up to £250,000 matched-funding to help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses. This could include community-owned sports clubs, sport and leisure facilities. In exceptional cases, up to £1 million matched-funding will be available to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports grounds at risk of being lost without community intervention. The Community Ownership Fund therefore provide an opportunity to ensure that sports & physical activity can continue to play a central role in local communities and help to foster economic recovery and regeneration.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity has acknowledged that "we could **prevent up to 75% of new cases of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, 40% of cancer incidence and reduce dementia risks if we cut smoking, unhealthy diet, harmful consumption of alcohol and insufficient physical activity**"¹⁵. This highlights the need for partners to utilise the funds above to include investment in facilities that promote physical activity & sport as part of the package of measures put forward.

we could prevent



of new cases of **heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes**



of **cancer incidence and reduce dementia risks** if we cut **smoking, unhealthy diet, harmful consumption of alcohol and insufficient physical activity**

CONTRIBUTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORT TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The outbreak of COVID resulted in closure of gyms, stadiums, pools, dance and fitness studios, physiotherapy centres, parks and playgrounds for a large part of the period since March 2020. Many individuals have therefore not been able to actively participate in their regular individual or group sporting or physical activities outside of their homes as often as they would do normally. Under such conditions, many people have tended to be less physically active, have longer screen time, irregular sleep patterns as well as worse diets, resulting in weight gain and loss of physical fitness¹⁶. Low-income families have been especially vulnerable to negative effects of the “stay at home” rules as they tend to have sub-standard accommodation, more confined spaces and a lack of greenspace at home, making it difficult to engage in physical exercise.

Undoubtedly, the COVID pandemic has shaped existing and future community and individual physical activity & sport provision and participation in England. The true scale is hard to quantify, with some estimates suggesting a loss of 700 million sport and leisure visits to the recreation facility industry at a cost of £2.1bn¹⁷.

As already noted, being physically active is very important for physical and mental health, and this has been particularly so during the COVID pandemic in which people have spent a much greater proportion of their time (both work and leisure) at home. **On a population-wide basis, the negative mental health effects of the pandemic are likely to last much longer than its physical health impacts.**

The pandemic has had a large impact on children’s physical activity levels. Sport England’s Active Lives Survey showed that the majority of young people failed to meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily exercise in the 2019/20 academic year. That was a decrease of almost 2% compared with the previous 12 months. **Almost a third of children (2.3 million) were classed as ‘inactive’ as a result of lock down restrictions, which meant that they were doing under 30 minutes per day of physical activity¹⁹.**

The report highlighted a drop in activity among boys due to the stopping of team sports, while girls retained roughly their same activity levels, as they were more likely to take part in alternative activities such as fitness and walking. Although more recent figures have yet to be published, the national lock down measures in the first part of 2021 will have further impact the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people, with the cold weather and darker evenings making physical activity targets even harder to achieve than before.

Given the disparities in children’s health between the most and least affluent areas (eg. the % of children who are obese at different Key Stage ages), the pandemic may have widened these gaps, particularly among children in deprived communities who have less access to green space at home (ie. more likely to live in homes without gardens) or who may utilise existing green space (ie. parks etc) less frequently than their counterparts from more affluent areas.



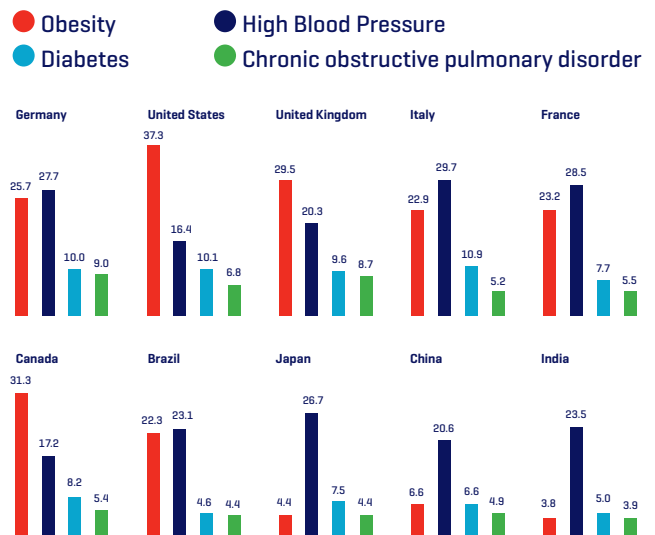
The effects of physical/social distancing, social isolation, lock down on individual mental wellbeing, as well as the loss of a loved one, as well as the economic consequences of the pandemic and the Government’s “lock down” policy which forced many businesses to close, have increased the mental health challenges for the UK population²⁰.

The pandemic has also affected people’s mental health differently depending on their socioeconomic status. Some socioeconomic groups, such as single parents, unemployed people, young adults, people with long-term disabilities and health conditions, and people with pre-existing mental health conditions, have been more likely to report mental distress than the population as a whole since the pandemic began²¹. Given that employment rates in these groups tend to be below the average, the pandemic could potentially widen existing gaps in prosperity [between different group and between the most and least affluent areas] if it further constrains people’s ability to participate in the economy. Tackling the mental health effects of the pandemic is therefore vital if the Government is to achieve its “Build back Better” objectives and to reduce health inequalities²².

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit people with underlying health conditions hardest. For example, diabetes, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, and obesity, which are common both in the UK and across most of the world’s leading economies, have been associated with higher risk of adverse COVID-19 outcomes, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: COVID Health Associated with Pre-Existing Conditions



Source: World Health Organisation

In spite of the higher incidence of Covid-19 in Leicester City, the rate of recorded deaths in the LLEP area [1,400 Covid-related deaths, a rate of 13.1 per 10,000 people] is just below the national average [13.6]. Just over two-thirds of these deaths were recorded within Leicester City. In December 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a draft resolution titled **“Sport as an enabler of sustainable development”**, which recognised the important role that sport and physical activity will have in post-pandemic recovery plans. Recovery from COVID-19 means making communities stronger, healthier, and more resilient. **Part of this plan could include increasing segregated bike lanes throughout cities. Making cycling safe for citizens makes it accessible. In many places, a lot of spending will have to occur to build “active transport” infrastructure.**

QUANTIFYING ECONOMIC & SOCIAL IMPACTS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORT

Economic Impacts

Productivity rates in Leicester and Leicestershire, (measured in GVA per hour worked) are some 9% below the UK average²³. Given that the LLEP area economic activity rate [80.6%] and employment rate [77.2%] are above the Great Britain averages [79.1% and 75.4% respectively],²⁴ this productivity gap is likely to be more of a reflection of the sectoral mix (ie. higher proportion of economic activity in lower value-added sectors with low productivity) than poor health across the population. For example, some **24.2% of jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire were paying less than a Living Wage pre-Covid, higher than the UK average of 20.1%**. This figure was highest in **Melton [32.3%]** and lowest in **Blaby [16.2%]**, which was the only district in which the percentage of jobs paying below Living Wage was below the national average.

The overall employment picture masks local variations across the LLEP area and between different demographic and ethnic groups. For example, Leicester City Council unitary authority area, which accounts for around **one-third of the LLEP area population**, has a lower economic activity rate [76.8%] and lower employment rate [72.2%] than the averages for both the LLEP area and Great Britain. This could be due in part to the demographic structure: Leicester has a much higher proportion of residents aged between 20 and 24 years compared to the England average [6% vs 3%], who are more likely to be out of work than workers in older age bands. **LLEP area economic activity rates are highest in Charnwood [86.4%], Harborough [86.3%], Blaby [83.0%], Hinckley & Bosworth [82.9%] and are lowest in North West Leicestershire [76.3%].**



If the employment rate of Leicester City residents were the same as the Great Britain average, some 7,700 additional people would be in work. Based on an average GVA per worker per year of £48,700 across the LLEP area, reducing this health gap would equate to an **increase of some £370m GVA per year**. If the **employment rate of Leicester City residents matched that of the LLEP area, this would equate to a further 12,100 people in employment and additional £580m GVA per year**²⁵.

We estimate that around **2.25 million working days in Leicester & Leicestershire were lost due to poor health, illness and injury in 2020**²⁶. This is equivalent to 3.6 days per worker per year. A reduction in the number of working days lost per year to poor health, sickness and injury in Leicester & Leicestershire to two days per worker could result in a 0.6% increase in productivity [GVA per worker], **equivalent to a further £160m GVA per year to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy**²⁷.

²³ LLEP, Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Recovery Strategy: Evidence Review (2021); data for 2019.

²⁴ NOMIS; data for the period January 2020 to December 2020; NOMI excludes data for Northern Ireland.

²⁵ Assuming all residents work in the LLEP area.

²⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2020#main-points> (2020); national figures apportioned to the LLEP area based on LLEP population data.

²⁷ Productivity uplift based on LLEP area GVA worker per year of £48,700; assumes an average 256 working days per worker per year.

Social Impacts

A report from Sport England shows that **every £1 spent on community physical activity & sport generates £3.91 for the economy and society**. The social value of physical activity & sport (including physical and mental health, wellbeing, individual and community development) is worth around **£72bn for England** as whole. This is based on a Social Return on Investment (SRoI) model. Applying this approach locally suggest that community physical activity & sport provides the following social benefits to Leicester & Leicestershire:

- £1.4bn in overall social value (provided by a healthier population, consumer expenditure, greater work productivity, improved education attainment, reduced crime and stronger communities)
- £785m worth of value created from improved life satisfaction for participants and volunteers through involvement in sport and activity
- £180m savings from preventing serious physical and mental health conditions (£135m in healthcare savings and £45m in social care savings)
- £68m worth of savings generated by the prevention of 17,000 cases of diabetes
- £66m of value generated in avoided dementia cases and related care
- £8m saved by preventing 10,000 additional GP visits
- £376m in value from stronger and safer communities due to 200 fewer crime incidents; replacement value of work done by sports volunteers (£107m); improved levels of social trust, belonging and community engagement (£269m)

In England, **physical INACTIVITY causes around 37,000 preventable premature deaths per year among people aged 40-79**. This could equate to around 700 early deaths per year among this age group in Leicester & Leicestershire. In addition, without action, it is **estimated that some 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children could be overweight or obese by 2050 in the UK, at a cost of £10 billion per year to the NHS. This equates to a cost of around £200m per year in Leicester & Leicestershire**.

Physical activity & sport must be part of any policy solution to address this issue.

For example, **cycling to work is linked with a 45% lower risk of developing cancer, and a 46% lower risk of CVD**, compared to commuting by car or public transport. Provision of extensive, safe and easy-to-access cycle infrastructure, increasing GP and health referrals for ill health to include physical activity as both prevention and treatment, and greater availability and take up of workplace health schemes would also foster greater participation in physical activity & sport, with resulting economic benefits.



CONCLUDING FINDINGS

Taking part in **physical activity & sport has major positive effects on people's physical and mental health & wellbeing**, which in turn drives **economic growth** by reducing days lost to sickness, boosting workplace productivity and reduces economic disparities by increasing labour market participation.

Physical activity & sport provides **£1.4bn in social value** to Leicester & Leicestershire each year due to its impact on health & wellbeing, productivity, educational attainment, crime reduction and communities.

If the labour market participation rate of Leicester City residents could be raised in line with the national average, this would **generate an additional £370m GVA per year** to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy; raising it to the LLEP average would add **£580m GVA to the economy**.

Increasing participation in physical activity & sport could help to **reduce the number of working days lost per year to illness**. A reduction in the number of working days lost per year to poor health, sickness and injury in Leicester & Leicestershire to **two days per worker** could result in a 0.6% increase in productivity (GVA per worker), equivalent to a further **£160m GVA per year** to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy.

Regular participation in physical activity & sport is **associated with a 30% reduction in depression and poor mental health, and reduced rates of obesity**, which in turn helps prevention of many other chronic diseases and is **associated with a 30% reduction in all-cause mortality**. Improving rates of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to reduce the 700 preventable early deaths that take place each year in Leicester & Leicestershire. Improving rate of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could **help to reduce the amount of years people living in these areas spend in poor health, which currently stands at 33% of their lives**.

Given current and projected obesity rates, **without action, some 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children could be overweight or obese by 2050**, at a **cost of around £200m per year to the NHS** in Leicester & Leicestershire. Improving rate of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could **help to tackle the eight-year life expectancy gap** between the LLEP area's least and most affluent areas.



The economic cost of inaction is clear. Doing nothing is not an option!



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APPENDIX

Impact of Physical Activity & Sport on Wellbeing and Economic Growth & Recovery Productive - GVA, productivity and balanced growth

- Taking part in physical activity & sport has major positive effects on people's physical and mental health & wellbeing, which in turn drives economic growth by reducing days lost to sickness, boosting workplace productivity and reduces economic disparities by increasing labour market participation.
- We estimate that physical activity & sport provides £1.4bn in social value to Leicester & Leicestershire each year due to its impact on health & wellbeing, productivity, educational attainment, crime reduction and communities³².
- If the labour market participation rate of Leicester City residents could be raised in line with the national average, this would generate an additional £370m GVA per year to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy; raising it to the LLEP average would add £580m GVA to the economy³³.
- A reduction in the number of working days lost per year in Leicester & Leicestershire to two days per worker per year could add a further £160m GVA per year to the Leicester & Leicestershire economy due to productivity benefits³⁴.
- Physical activity & sport can help to shape the image of a city or region, and to differentiate one location from another as a place to live, work, visit and invest in.

Innovative - innovation and adoption of new technologies

- Physical activity & sport providers are increasingly developing new innovative ways of participating in groups and classes.
- The huge interest in physical activity & sport provides a strong platform for businesses in the sector to play a leading role in tackling the environmental, economic and social challenges presented by climate change, and inspire and engage both businesses in other sectors to do the same.

³² Based on national data contained in Sport England Measuring the Social and Economic Impact of Sport in England (2020), apportioned to LLEP area based on LLEP area population.

³³ Assuming GVA per worker of £48,700, as contained in the LLEP Economic Recovery Strategy Evidence Review (2021); local area labour market participation data from NOMIS.

³⁴ Based on national Labour Force Survey data (3.6 days working days lost per worker per year), apportioned to the LLEP area based on LLEP population data; productivity uplift based on GVA worker as in point 2 above; assumes 256 day working year.

Inclusive - workforce resilience and reduction in deprivation and inequalities

- Regular participation in physical activity & sport is associated with 30% reduction in depression and poor mental health, and reduced rates of obesity, which helps prevention of many other chronic diseases and is associated with a 30% reduction in all-cause mortality.
- We estimate that physical activity & sport provides £1.4bn in social value to Leicester & Leicestershire each year due to its impact on health & wellbeing, productivity, educational attainment, crime reduction and communities³².
- Improving rates of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to reduce the estimated 700 preventable early deaths that take place each year in Leicester & Leicestershire.
- Improving rate of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to reduce the amount of years people living in these areas spend in poor health, which currently stands at 33% of their lives.
- Given current and projected obesity rates, without action, some 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children could be overweight or obese by 2050, at a cost of around £200m per year to the NHS in Leicester & Leicestershire, and wider costs to society of £950m.
- Improving rates of participation in physical activity & sport among residents in deprived areas could help to tackle the eight-year life expectancy gap between the LLEP area's least and most affluent areas.

Sustainable - environmental sustainability, shift to low carbon/net zero

- Interventions that promote active travel (eg. encouraging walking, development of cycle lanes/routes etc.), can help increase health & wellbeing, drive investment in low carbon innovations and accelerate the shift to a low carbon economy

³⁵ World Health Organisation.

³⁶ Based on national data on avoidable mortality in the UK in 2019 (the most recent year for which data are available), apportioned to LLEP area based on LLEP area population.

³⁷ Public Health England data.

³⁸ Government Office for Science; NHS cost estimate calculated by apportioning estimated national cost to the NHS (£9.7bn) and wider costs to society (£49.7bn) to LLEP area based on LLEP area population.

³⁹ Cycling UK; based on net reduction of 7.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year in the UK, apportioned to LLEP area based on LLEP area population.