



# **Active Fife: A Strategy for Physical Activity and Sport**

**2021 to 2024**

*‘An Active Fife where everyone has opportunities  
to be more active, with better physical and mental  
health & wellbeing’*

## **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Physical Activity & Public Health
- 3.0 Sport for Life
- 4.0 Plan for Fife
- 5.0 Our Assets & People
- 6.0 Our Vision & Ambitions
- 7.0 Our Priorities & Actions
- 8.0 Our Outcomes
- 9.0 Measuring Our Progress
- 10.0 Our Stakeholders
- 11.0 Investment
- 12.0 Leadership & Accountability

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Welcome to Fife's Physical Activity & Sport Strategy, developed in conjunction with the Fife Partnership, including Fife Council, Fife Sports & Leisure Trust, NHS Fife and sportScotland.

Being physically active is one of the very best things we can do for our physical and mental health. People who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing many long-term and chronic conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Indeed, the following quote from Dr Nick Cavill, a leading health expert and consultant, summarises: *"If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented"*.

The Plan for Fife ambitions is for Fife to be a place where all residents live good lives, make informed choices and have a sense of control so that they can reach their full potential, and where all children are safe, happy and healthy. We also want Fife to be a place where we make best use of our assets and facilities, while sustaining them for future generations.

- 1.2 Physical activity and sport can have a transformative effect on communities, by providing opportunities for people to connect with their neighbourhoods and come together in shared activities which inspire and motivate. Sport and physical activity are a powerful means of addressing isolation, building community cohesion, and developing confidence.

In a national context, physical inactivity is estimated to kill around 2,500 Scots each year and cause direct costs to the NHS of around £91m per year (source; *Scottish Government Health Survey 2019*).

In a global context, the World Health Organisation, in its Global Action Plan on Physical Activity, *'More Active People for a Healthier World'*, published in June 2018, sets out a target of achieving a 15% relative reduction in the global prevalence of physical inactivity in adults and in adolescents by 2030.

- 1.3 COVID-19 has resulted in unprecedented disruption to the delivery of physical activity, sport and leisure provision across Fife, and life in general. All of our communities have been affected as individuals, teams and communities have had to adapt to meet these new challenges. Many services have been necessarily paused, stepped down or have undergone significant reconfiguration during the pandemic. While safe and incremental resumption of many of these services began over the summer period last year, the resurgence in cases over the autumn alongside the concurrent risks associated with winter, meant that these were then paused again. At time of writing, the majority of Fife Council facilities are closed (except those providing essential provision such as childcare and food support), and all Fife Sport & Leisure Trust facilities are closed. The effects of the COVID-19

pandemic are likely to be felt for some time, not only in relation to physical health but also mental and emotional wellbeing, as well as existing health inequalities. Those most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities are impacted further, and so we must ensure that cost and affordability is not a barrier to participation.

## 2.0 Physical Activity & Public Health

- 2.1 **Physical Activity** - The definition of physical activity by the World Health Organisation and UK Chief Medical Officers, is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. It thus includes activities such as everyday walking or cycling to get from A to B, active play, work related activity, active recreation such as working out in a gym, dancing, gardening or playing active games, as well as organised and competitive sport, and many other activities.

How much physical activity is enough? The four UK Chief Medical Officers jointly issued revised physical activity guidelines in September 2019. The guidelines recommend that, for good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. Any activity is better than none, and more is better still. Each week, adults should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity; or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity; or even shorter durations of very vigorous intensity activity; or a combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous intensity activity. The guidelines also recommend that muscle strengthening activities are undertaken on at least two days a week, but that any strengthening activity is better than none.

- 2.2 **Public Health Priority 6: ‘A Fife where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active’** - The Scottish Government recognises physical activity as one of the six public health priorities for Scotland. The government notes that physical activity levels are influenced by the transport and planning systems, the availability of accessible and affordable facilities and clubs, as well as by stigma, social expectations and other factors. This priority recognises the significant continuing inequalities in diet, weight and physical activity across Fife, as detailed in the 2018 Director of Public Health report.
- 2.3 There are large inequalities in levels of physical activity in the UK, and this is an important determinant of health inequalities. Knowing how much physical activity we should be doing, and actually participating in the sufficient and recommended amount, are very separate entities, which presents a real challenge. Therefore, it is imperative the guidelines are followed up with innovative and sustainable actions, through increasing knowledge and raising awareness of the physical activity guidelines.

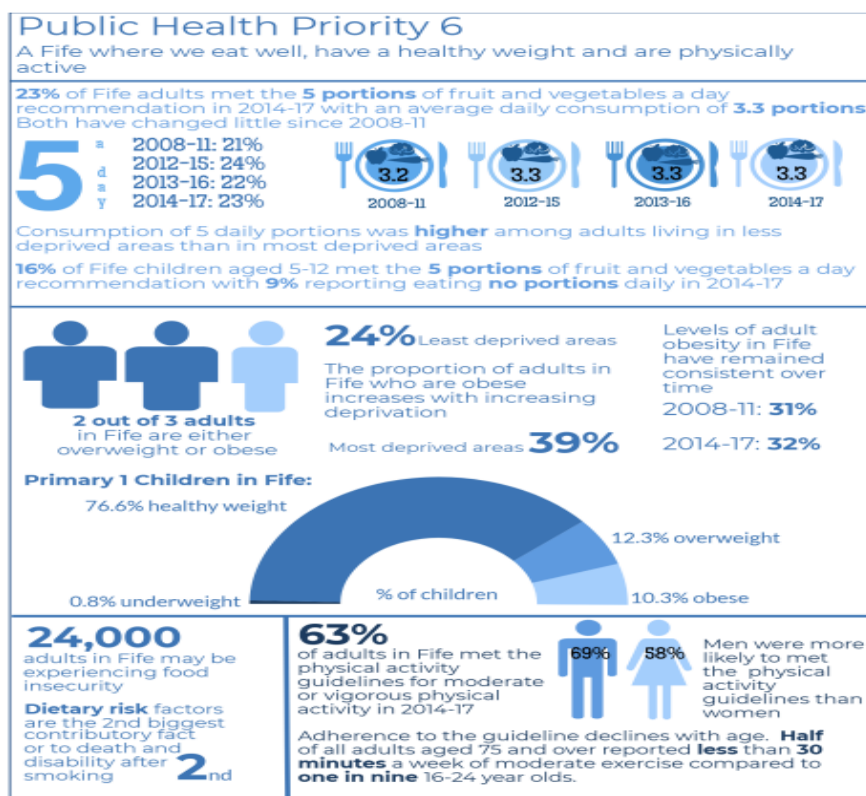


Diagram: Director of Public Health Report 2018

### 3.0 Sport for Life

3.1 SportScotland's vision for sport includes some fundamentally important reasons and benefits for getting into sport. Even if people don't take part in sport, they can still enjoy the benefits, both in their communities and across the country as a whole;

- Supports Health
- Improves Activity
- Develops Skills
- Strengthens Communities
- Helps the Economy

3.2 It is guided by six key principles;



sportScotland 'Sport for Life':

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/media/4714/sport-for-life-summary.pdf>

## 4.0 Plan for Fife

4.1 The Plan for Fife sets out the ambition that every community in Fife should have access to high quality outdoor, cultural and leisure opportunities. It also includes a partnership commitment to invest in sport, leisure, culture and learning activities and to integrate community services and provision. The Plan identifies four 'expected changes' in relation to physical activity, sport and leisure:

- **Better access** to high quality, affordable accessible facilities and provision;
- **More financially sustainable** community facilities;
- **Better use** of open space and parks; and
- **Greater participation levels** in sport and improved health.

This strategy provides a framework for delivering these changes – building on our strengths and placing physical activity at the heart of our approach for everyone.

## 5.0 Our Assets & People

5.1 **Our Assets** - Fife has a wealth of assets and offers a wide variety of opportunities, both indoor and outdoor provision, to enable individuals and groups to participate in physical activity, sport & leisure. This includes:

- 2,855 hectares of greenspace, including;
- 446 play parks
- 406 hectares of playing fields
- public golf courses
- Fife Cycle Park
- Lochore Meadows & Outdoor Education Centre
- 14 sport and leisure centres
- 152 community facilities, including halls/centres and community use schools
- Over 300 grass football pitches (either directly managed by Fife Council or leased/owned by community and third sector organisations)
- Numerous community-based assets
- Private leisure centres and gyms
- Private sports clubs, golf, tennis, bowls, gymnastics, fencing etc

5.2 **Our People** – the planning, coordination, development and delivery of physical activity and sport across Fife involves huge effort, commitment and collaboration from a number of individuals, groups/clubs and organisations. This includes local community groups/clubs, sports councils, volunteers, coaches, tutors and instructors. While some have their own Delivery Plans, they will feed into, and contribute to, the overall strategy.

It is, however, recognised that physical activity and sport is not just about 'managed' activities, many people participate in their own ways individually, or with family/friends. For example, walking/running groups, Football/Rugby, Tennis, Badminton, and active travel & active workplaces etc. These all contribute to people being active.

## **6.0 Our Vision & Ambitions**

### **6.1** *'An Active Fife where everyone has opportunities to be more active, with better physical and mental health & wellbeing'*

We aim to improve the lives of people across Fife through participation in physical activity and sport. This will contribute the delivery of the six Active Scotland outcomes:

- 1) We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active;
- 2) We encourage and enable the active to stay active throughout life;
- 3) We develop physical confidence from the earliest age;
- 4) We improve our active infrastructure – people and places;
- 5) We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport;
- 6) We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport.

## **7.0 Our Priorities & Actions**

### **7.1 Provide strategic leadership** - leading policy, legislation and system change so that physical activity becomes a central feature in policy and practice relating to planning, transport, health and social care, economic development, education and the environment:

#### **Priority Actions:**

- 1) Implement a new operating model for the delivery of physical activity, sport & leisure in Fife, whereby Fife Council and Fife Sport & Leisure Trust (as the main public service providers) are more integrated (strategically and operationally) providing collaborative leadership and accountability.

### **7.2 Create an 'Active Fife'** – where everyone is encouraged and enabled to take part in physical activity, sport and leisure by increasing participation rates and ensuring everyone has access to the same opportunities, regardless of personal circumstances:

#### **Priority Actions:**

- 1) Further develop our 'Active Fife' product, with improved promotion & marketing
- 2) Improve how people can access physical activity and sport opportunities across Fife, including knowledge & awareness
- 3) Become a 'Daily Mile Kingdom' – where people walk/run/job/cycle a mile or more per day



- 7.3 **Put communities at the heart** - by championing and enabling community led approaches which promote community wellbeing, in partnership with local community groups and clubs including community sports hubs and wider partners:

**Priority Actions:**

- 1) Review and map existing community-led provision, to establish what and where the offer is
- 2) Work with communities to support and enable further community-led provision

- 7.4 **Changing Lives & Inclusion** - Support individuals and community organisations to intentionally use sport and physical activity to positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals (their skills and learning), where cost is not a barrier to participation and ensuring a more inclusive and healthier Fife:

**Priority Actions:**

- 1) Continue to build capacity and capabilities with community clubs/groups
- 2) Implement a new concessions arrangement which removes cost as a barrier to participation, particularly for those on low incomes

- 7.5 **Provide seamless services** – with opportunities designed to meet the needs of individuals and communities across Fife and to attract visitors to Fife:

**Priority Actions:**

- 1) Implement a new online Leisure Management System
- 2) Improve our promotion & marketing, making better use of data and business intelligence
- 3) Implement standard approach to pricing & concessions across Fife, regardless of the public provider
- 4) Develop and implement a new concessionary access/membership scheme, with a 'smart card' which provides discounted access to a range of physical activity, sport & leisure opportunities
- 5) Develop and maintain more cycle and walking routes, linked to the climate-Fife agenda

- 7.6 **Development & Improvement** - ensuring local assets/facilities are better used, through joint planning of programming and provision, recognising the contribution community clubs/groups make towards engaging the people of Fife in physically active lives:

**Priority Actions:**

- 1) Review how we support and develop the vast number of community sports clubs across Fife
- 2) Review how we support and develop coaches, tutors, volunteers and others involved

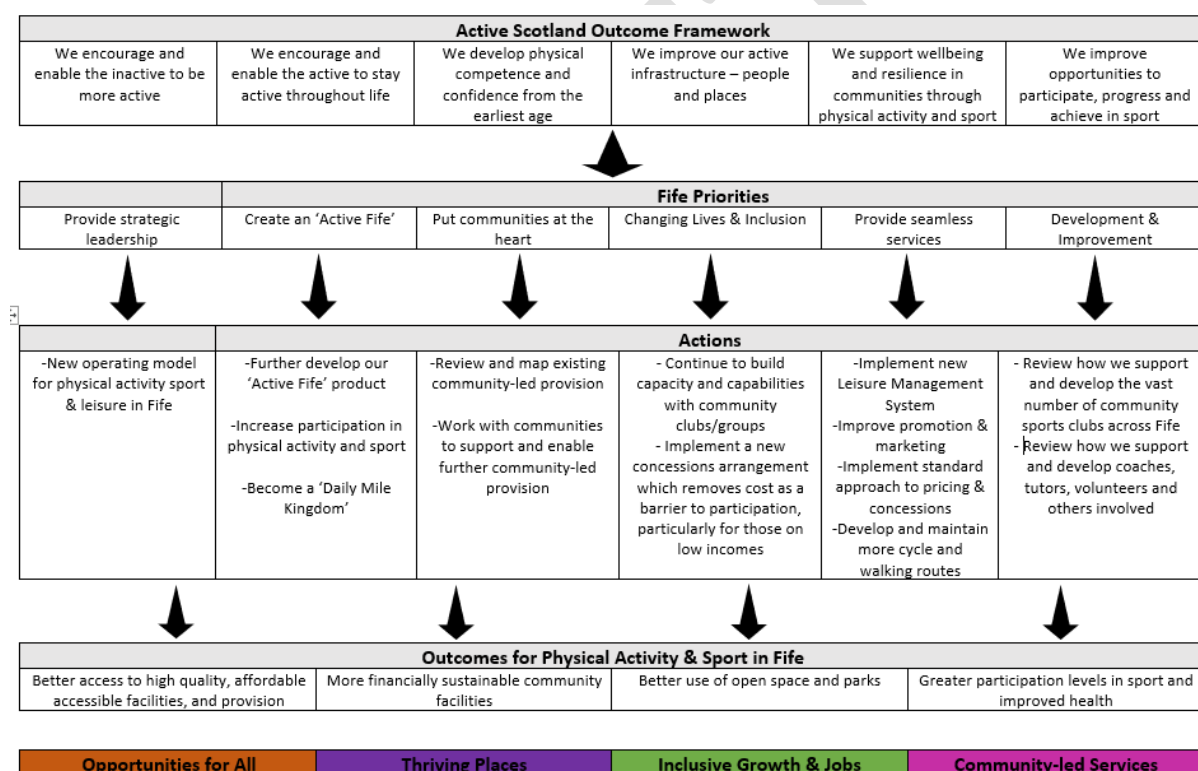
**8.0 Our Outcomes**



8.1 Physical activity and sport plays a major role in improving outcomes and tackling inequalities across many different aspects of our lives and society. Positive changes being achieved through physical activity and sport initiatives in Scotland include improving mental health, supporting weight management initiatives, overcoming loneliness and isolation; reducing reoffending; promoting sustainable forms of transport; and enabling people to connect with the natural environment.

8.2 As Section 4 outlines, The Plan for Fife clearly sets out four key outcomes under its '*Thriving Places*' Priority Theme:

- Better access to high quality, affordable accessible facilities and provision;
- More financially sustainable community facilities;
- Better use of open space and parks; and
- Greater participation levels in sport and improved health.



## 9.0 Measuring Our Progress

9.1 We will measure the progress of the actions highlighted in section 7, in order that they deliver against the outcomes highlighted in section 8, via the leadership arrangements outlined in section 12. Each priority action will have a nominated 'Lead' who will be required to provide regular progress updates to the Leadership Team. In turn, the Leadership Team will provide progress update reports to on a periodic basis to the Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee.

Delivery Plans developed by the various stakeholders, detailing their progress and how they are contributing to overall strategy, will be developed. Once

fully implemented, the new Leisure Management System will provide data and business intelligence which will enable participation rates to be analysed and monitored, and appropriate action taken, where required.

## **10.0 Our Stakeholders**

10.1 Our stakeholders are defined as those who collaborate and work with us in delivering, providing and supporting physical activity and sport in Fife, and those who participate and are recipients of the services and provision we offer. Supporting the citizens of Fife to take part in physical activity requires dedicated support and resources. This includes the Fife Partnership, and number of Council Services, working collaboratively; Communities and Neighbourhood Service; Education and Children's Services, Transportation Services (Active Travel), Fife Sports and Leisure Trust, Fife Coast & Countryside Trust, Sports Councils, sportScotland, NHS Fife, national governing bodies and numerous local clubs, organisations and community groups.

10.2 **Community Sport Hubs** - bring together sport clubs and community organisations who want to develop and grow the sporting offering in the community. They focus on sustainable, community-led approaches that get clubs working together to develop welcoming, safe and fun environments for sport. Community Sport Hubs are National Lottery funded and are one of sportScotland's key programmes which contributes to legacy and supports local sport clubs to play their part in a world class sporting system.

A Community Sport Hub is focused on the clubs around a sports centre, community centre, school, park or a playing field pavilion. In some cases, a community sport hub combines a number of these places, or it may centre on a single venue, hosting many clubs. The 'hub' is essentially a collective of progressive sport clubs and community organisations working together in a local community.

10.3 **Sports Councils** – There are three Sports Councils in Fife; East Fife – Kirkcaldy & Central – Dunfermline & West Fife. Their main roles & functions are monitored and evaluated via the recurring grants (circa £40k per annum), to ensure they are consistent in their provision of support and services for local member clubs.

## **11.0 Investment**

11.1 The recently approved Capital Investment Plan 2021-31, has secured significant capital funding for a wide range of investment requirements in maintaining and enhancement of the existing portfolio of sports and recreational facilities. This investment reflects the need to have a fully resourced, structured and ongoing programme of maintenance and upgrade of the existing portfolio of sports, leisure & community facilities, to ensure they remain open, maintain disability and health & safety/compliance standards as buildings deteriorate.

11.2 The 2021-2024 Physical Activity & Sports Strategy will provide the overarching policy and planning framework within which the Council and its key partners work together to address the sporting needs of Fife. As such, it sets the wider context for the development of a long term “sports and leisure facility strategy”. This would provide a framework to guide the Council and its key local and national partners in the future provision and development of indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities in Fife, ensuring that, insofar as is possible, all relevant needs and aspirations are met. The development of the strategy would realise this aspiration and assist targeting future investment and underpin opportunity to attract external funding to support this. The strategy would be influenced by extensive consultation with a range of key stakeholders including; sports clubs, local Sports Councils, national governing bodies of sport, community organisations and the Council's seven area committee members.

## **12.0 Leadership & Accountability**

12.1 There has been improved collaboration and partnership working at both strategic and operational level, in response to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. A new Leadership Team has been established, chaired by the Head of Communities & Neighbourhood Services in Fife Council and the Chief Executive of Fife Sports & Leisure Trust. It is intended to include representation from the Sports Council's. A cross-Service/Partner Operational Recovery Group was also established, including Active Communities, Outdoor Education, Active Schools and the Trusts. It is the intention that these new arrangements continue, to provide the overall leadership and accountability of the strategy.