

## **Response of Cllr John Smith, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being to Scrutiny Task Group Report on Increasing Physical Activity in Worcestershire on behalf of the Cabinet of Worcestershire County Council.**

I welcome the interest of the Scrutiny Task Group in increasing physical activity in Worcestershire. As chair of the Health and Well-being Board, I am well aware of the importance of physical activity to general health and well-being, including its key role in promoting mental health. Indeed, the Board has recently agreed that increasing physical activity should be one of its three priority areas for the 2016-2021 period, recognising that this is essential to achieve the Board's vision that residents are healthier, live longer and have a better quality of life – especially those communities and groups with the poorest outcomes.

Many of the recommendations of the Task Group relate to areas of work which are already in progress, and I can assure the Task Group that this work will continue to be driven forward and reported in to the Health and Well-being Board through the Health Improvement Group. Others are not ones that I would agree with, and reasons for this are clearly set out below in my individual response to each recommendation.

### Olympic Legacy

1. **Recommendation 1:** The Public Health Team should continue to work closely with the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire to improve participation rates and extend the Olympic legacy to everyone, maximising both the use of built and natural environment. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** This is accepted and in progress. The interim Director of Public Health, as vice-chair of the Sports Partnership, will ensure that Olympic legacy work continues through the Partnership.

### Action Plan for Physical Activity

2. **Recommendation 2:** We strongly suggest that the Director of Public Health lead on the preparation of a countywide inclusive and overarching Action Plan for Physical Activity, to encourage cultural change and increase physical activity across the County. The Action Plan should be published within 6 months and should include the identification of a responsible officer and focus on those who are most in need of support, for example those residents who are on benefits, **and our more elderly and very young residents**. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be looking at the issue of obesity in the context of their Panel. This Action Plan should form a key part of the business of the Health and Well-being Board, which will oversee the implementation of the new Health and Well-being Strategy which has physical activity as one of its three priorities. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** This is accepted and in progress. Since increasing physical activity is one of the three priorities of the Health and Well-being Strategy, an action plan will be drawn up and reported through the Health Improvement Group to the Health and Well-being Board. The first stakeholder event to take this forward takes place on 9<sup>th</sup> June, and has attracted a good level of interest..

Health Partners

3. **Recommendation 3:** The Public Health Team should promote training for all frontline health staff to encourage them to have motivational conversations with service users to support increased physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** This is accepted and in progress through the Health Chats training offered by the public health team to front line staff across the system. We are already delivering more 'train the trainer sessions' to scale up to reach higher numbers of NHS staff.

4. **Recommendation 4:** The Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) representatives on the Health and Well-being Board should be asked to encourage GPs across the county to consider greater use of '**social prescribing**' including referring to sports and physical activity opportunities where appropriate. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and in progress and we are making sure that social prescribing includes links to sports and physical activities through the Sports Partnership website.

Other partners

5. **Recommendation 5:** The Public Health Team should facilitate regular partnership meetings to share best practice, case studies and ideas from across the County, linking this with the Action Plan for Physical Activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and in progress.

Public Awareness and Recognition

6. Recommendation 6: Using the World Class Worcestershire brand, the County Council should raise the profile of elite sports men and women in the County and promote local success in amateur sport, providing a platform to encourage greater participation. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]

**Response:** this is accepted by the CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/ Director of Commercial and Change.

Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme

7. **Recommendation 7:** County Councillors should be actively encouraged (not mandatory) to spend at least 10% of their divisional fund on encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, drawing on the support and advice of the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire where necessary. This should be highlighted to new Members as part of the Member Induction Programme following the 2017 Elections. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]

**Response:** this is not accepted. CMR for Transformation and Commissioning does not consider that it is appropriate for himself or for Cabinet to dictate to County Councillors how they should spend their divisional funds. Decisions about these funds rest with Councillors and are based on their own assessment of local priorities.

### Sharing Information

8. **Recommendation 8:** As part of the Action Plan for Physical Activity (see Recommendation 2), the County Council should consider ways to share information amongst partners and increase awareness of activities available across Worcestershire, ensuring a joined up approach. A dedicated communications officer should be responsible for this aspect of physical activity using all forms of modern communication methods. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** The CMR for Health and Well-being accepts that we will continue and strengthen a joint approach to increasing awareness of available activities. However, it is not possible or appropriate to provide a dedicated communications officer to this task.

9. **Recommendation 9:** We recommend that the CMR organises and hosts an annual summit of Health Professionals, District and County Councils, the Sports Partnership and other appropriate sporting clubs and organisations (including Scrutiny) to discuss progress, share information and ideas towards meeting the goals of increasing physical activity and to report the outcomes to Cabinet. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** We note this recommendation and will consider it as part of the forward planning of events associated with the three priorities of the Health and Well-being Strategy.

### Schools

10. **Recommendation 10:** The Public Health Team should work with the Worcestershire Association of Governors, the Worcestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers, and representatives of Middle and Primary School Leaders in the county to highlight the importance of a quality PE offer in schools and effective use of their enhanced sports funding, and to promote opportunities available to schools for the involvement of local sporting organisations in their curriculum. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** CMR for Health and Well-being will make sure that the public health team links to education partners to ensure they are aware of on-line resources which can assist in implementing this recommendation.

### Employees

11. **Recommendation 11:** As a large employer, the County Council should do more to encourage its staff to become more physically active. [Leader of the Council/Chief Executive]

**Response:** This is accepted and work is in progress. Workplace Well-being Week at the start of June included a number of physical activities including a table tennis marathon in the Council chamber.

### Barriers to Participation

12. **Recommendation 12:** As part of the development of the Action Plan for Physical Activity, the County Council should carry out a Needs Assessment to establish any 'gaps' between what is needed and what is currently provided. The Needs Assessment should also look to identify what are the barriers to taking part in physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and will form part of the work behind the development of the Action Plan.

13. **Recommendation 13:** The County Council should investigate whether better use can be made of the S106 cycle funds arising from new developments. More cycle ways could be created across the County by being more flexible with regards to the current width restrictions where formal footpaths are changed from bridleways to formal cycle way provision (where safe and appropriate to do so). The County Councils recent response to the governments cycling and walking investment strategy should be aligned with this recommendation [CMR for Highways/Director of Economy and Infrastructure]

**Response:** this is accepted.

### Learning from successful practice elsewhere

14. **Recommendation 14:** The County Council should fully investigate successful work undertaken in other local authorities, such as Camden Council, in order to identify good practice that might be transferable to Worcestershire. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** the County council will continue to identify examples of good practice with sound evidence of effectiveness that might increase physical activity levels in Worcestershire, and will carefully consider their local applicability.

### Making Better Use of Public Spaces

15. **Recommendation 15:** The County Council should look to maximise the use of **public spaces and the natural environment** by working with planning authorities to identify more local opportunities to encourage physical activity and active travel. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and is in progress through the work of the public health team which includes an officer seconded to it from Planning. Three workshops linking health to planning have already been held.

Council Decision Making

16. **Recommendation 16:** The practice of including a Public Health Impact Assessment in agenda reports should be extended to all County Council committees and District Councils should be encouraged to do likewise. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** the HIA is currently being introduced for use in Council and Cabinet meetings and this will be evaluated before consideration of any extension. The County Council is able to share an HIA toolkit and method with those District Councils who want to develop this approach.

Councillor John Smith  
June 2016