



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

## WMCA Wellbeing Board

<b>Date</b>	17 July 2020
<b>Report title</b>	Physical Activity Review
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Sean Russell, Wellbeing Director, WMCA

**Recommendation(s) for action or decision:**

**The WMCA Wellbeing Board is recommended to:**

- 1. Consider the proposed purpose and priorities for the WMCA's physical activity strategy review and proposals for consultation set out in this report.**
- 2. Bring forward the Physical Activity Strategy action plan for approval at its next meeting.**
- 3. Develop the detailed case for a WM Physical Activity Commissioner for consideration at its next meeting.**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** At the last January 2020, the Board approved the start of a review of the WMCA's Physical Activity Strategic Framework 2017-30, this paper sets out its proposed future direction informed by the learning from the lockdown and looking forward to Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022.

## **4. Background**

- 2.1 The number of people who are physically active in England is measured by Government and Sport England's Active Lives Survey. The survey indicates that the WM has the highest levels of physical inactivity in England with an estimated 93,000 additional adults needed to do some activity to get to England average levels of physical inactivity. The WMCA sees this as the "physical inactivity gap". Lockdown and the Commonwealth Games provide a significant challenge and opportunity to addressing this gap. In late Autumn, Sport England will be releasing this year's funding.

### **Lockdown Impact**

- 2.1 With the implementation of Government's lockdown, despite the guidance on undertaking one form of exercise a day, the majority of sport and exercise became impossible overnight. Generally, physical activity levels have remained intact, with around of a third of adults nationally being active. The lack of traffic has also made walking and cycling more accessible and safer.
- 2.2 The agility of the physical activity sector has shown with the repurposing of leisure venues to foodbanks and medical centres and the rise of online exercise by many personalities and service providers. Many services have adapted focusing on providing the essential community services such as befriending and volunteering. Lockdown has also meant that many venues and community sport organisations remain shut, with staff furloughed or redundant.
- 2.3 The inequalities that already existed in those who take part has been exasperated. The whole population has been affected, but not equally.
- 2.4 The WMCA's physical activity 2020/21 work programme have either halted, refocused or new priorities have emerged to respond to issues and opportunities. For example, the WMCA, working with Local Authorities has been successful in gaining just under £3m Department for Transport funding for an 8-week emergency active travel programme. In response to need, refocusing its digital physical activity bootcamp programme to focus on addressing digital exclusion and convening 2 Communities of Practice involving over 40 stakeholders on what we have learnt and what we should jointly as part of the recovery. Any stopping of projects has been done in consultation with delivery partners and funders such as Local Authorities and Sport England.

### **Birmingham Commonwealth Games**

- 2.5 The 2022 Commonwealth Games along with the 2021 City of Culture provides some of the catalysts for the WM community and economic recovery and this includes how the Games can deliver a physical activity legacy.

- 2.6 The WMCA has been working with B2022 and physical activity stakeholders to determine where our collective purpose and priorities should be and what role each organisation should play.
- 2.7 The recovery and Birmingham 2022 provide the catalysts for change for the West Midlands and for the WMCA on how our physical activity priorities focus on getting more people active by addressing inequalities in those who take part. A West Midlands commitment has the potential to deliver a long-term impact on community and the economy.
3. **Draft WMCA Physical Activity Strategy Review (please view accompanying slide deck)**
- 3.1 The problem the Physical Activity Strategy review is aiming to solve how does the WM deliver a long-term physical activity legacy which makes a significant contribution in reducing the inequalities in those who take part. What is needed to co-ordinate effort and energy across the WM? How can we lever influence, better collaboration and investment to deliver long term change?
- 3.2 To achieve this, the Strategy review proposes 5 priorities:
- **Walking and Cycling** – Working alongside TfWM in increasing the number of people who actively travel and for PSR/IG leading work with the health and physical activity sector to deliver a robust inclusive approach including activation campaigns to reduce inequalities in those who walk and cycle.
  - **Active environments** – co-ordinated work which delivers a network of active streets, neighbourhoods, green and blue spaces working alongside communities. Developing and influencing policy and investment. This builds on our work on the Housing Design Charter and Public Space Design.
  - **Workforce and volunteers** – Building on our Include Me West Midlands movement to increase the diversity and inclusivity of the. Working with West Midlands stakeholders to enable the sector to grow during and post recovery and growing the work the WMCA is doing to address digital exclusion and increase the digital skills of the WM applying the learning from lockdown and the WMCA's Physical Activity digital bootcamp programme.
  - **Games Venue legacy** – how the WMCA can work with venues to deliver a more inclusive long-term approach to community sport and physical activity delivery.
  - **Children and young people** –potentially how our Thrive and physical activity work can improve mental wellbeing and levels of physical activity in young people.
- 3.3 There is emergency consensus for these priorities and work is beginning to shape the detailed proposals linked to B2022 legacy. Getting the consensus in what we work on and how we work leading to and beyond the Games is paramount. The WMCA acknowledges that this is a difficult space given local through to West Midlands and national priorities and resources. The WMCA was convening a collaborative engagement programme, which was paused during lockdown and moved to providing the WM community of practice, looking at the opportunities and issues about physical

activity during the lockdown. Overwhelmingly the biggest issue is how lockdown has grown the gap in inequalities in those who take part.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 Work has started to review existing programmes in response to recovery and how they can contribute to “**halting the gap**” in 2020/21 and work jointly with partners to “**bridge the gap**” delivering actions the year before and immediate years beyond the Games and then planning long term to go “**beyond the gap**” to ensure that there is a long term legacy and commitment to getting more people active.
- 4.2 Reconvening the WMCA and Sport England jointly funded “collaborative engagement” programme to focus on how the WM can be the best it can to deliver a long-lasting physical activity legacy.
- 4.3 As plans emerge, following the clarity on the WMCA function, the levers the WMCA can pull and bring as well as capturing the added value that working at WM level brings and resources it can attract. 2020/21 expenditure and 2021/22 projections are set out in the slide deck.
- 4.4 Given the challenges and opportunities that reducing inequalities and delivering a long-lasting legacy brings, consideration is been given to appointing a “WM Physical Activity Commissioner” to oversee the development of this work both delivery and collaboration and to inform and influence policy and direction.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The 2020/21 expenditure set out in the slide deck is in line with existing budgets. Indicative budgets for 2021/22 are subject to business cases and approval by the WMCA. The ability for the WMCA to attract additional funding is also subject to approvals.

#### **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no additional legal implications.

#### **7. Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 This paper marks a shift from reducing levels of physical inactivity to reducing inequalities in those who take part in line with available data and insight and the WMCA’s Recovery Plan. The development of all priority action plans set out in the strategy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and be monitored to demonstrate impact.

#### **8. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 8.1 The focus on inequalities is aligned to the inclusive growth purpose and direction.

#### **9. Geographical Area of Report’s Implications**

9.1 The focus is agreeing on common priorities with geographical areas and strengthening the collaborative work across the WM to deliver a long lasting legacy.

**10 Other Implications**

None

**11. Schedule of Background Papers**