

# Sports and Active Recreation Strategy

2016 - 2021



# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>A Sports and Active Recreation Strategy for 2016 - 2021</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Delivering the Strategy</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	National Context	6
3.2	Regional Context	8
3.3	Local Context	10
<b>4.</b>	<b>Our Objectives</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Priorities 2016 – 2021</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1	Raising the profile of sport and active recreation	16
5.2	Promoting healthy lifestyles	18
5.3	Increasing opportunities for sport and active recreation	20
5.4	Improving sports facility provision	22
<b>6.</b>	<b>Measuring Our Progress</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>	<b>25</b>

## 1. A Sports and Active Recreation Strategy for 2016 - 2021

It is increasingly recognised that sport and active recreation<sup>1</sup> has the potential to improve the quality of life for residents and communities and deliver wider social, health, economic and environmental benefits. There is now a shift in emphasis away from sporting achievement and participation for its own sake, towards harnessing sport for social good, including delivering health outcomes and promoting physical activity and wellbeing.

The wider benefits of sport and active recreation include:

- providing positive activities and opportunities for young people, promoting a sense of inclusion, self-esteem and achievement
- safeguarding and improving health outcomes for those who regularly participate in healthy activities and lifestyles, reducing the burden on the NHS
- delivering economic benefits and raising the profile of local communities by attracting visitors to high quality facilities and sporting events
- developing a sense of community by pulling together local groups and organisations
- providing opportunities for residents and communities to take ownership of and make best use of their parks and open spaces, contributing to overall well-being.

This Sports and Active Recreation Strategy will set out Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's aims, objectives and priorities for developing sports opportunities and facilities in the borough, and using sport and active recreation to develop and promote healthy lifestyles. We will seek to maintain and enhance existing high quality facilities and develop other key centres of excellence worthy of the borough.

The strategy will provide a framework for the development of sport activities, facilities and services in the borough of Tunbridge Wells over the next five years. It will enable the Council to work towards an agreed set of actions to help deliver our current Five Year Plan and our corporate priorities. The strategy is also intended to:

- provide a link with national and regional strategies relating to sports and active recreation
- demonstrate the significance and benefits of sport and active recreation as it relates to other local agendas - for example, health, well-being and stronger communities
- highlight the need to consider sport and active recreation within the planning, policy and decision making processes of the Council
- help target Council resources and funding more effectively, in line with corporate priorities, and help attract external funding for the delivery of infrastructure and facilities improvements
- provide a platform for further work on a sport and recreation open space needs analysis, and a sports facilities audit
- support continued work with partners at local, regional and national level to develop and implement a shared vision for a more active and healthy population.

---

<sup>1</sup> active recreation – includes activities other than organised sports, such as dance, yoga, active play, recreational walking or cycling

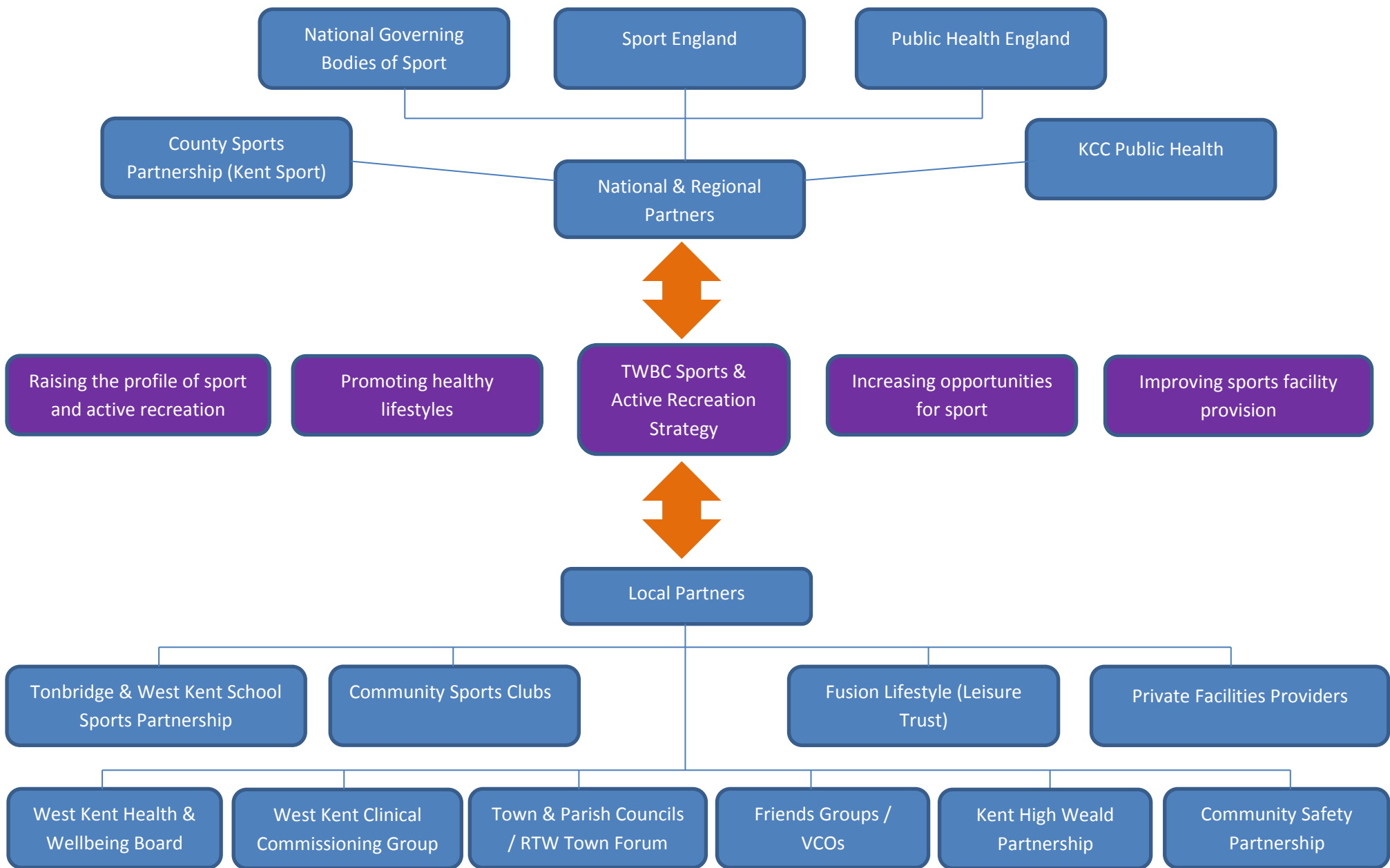
## **2. Delivering the strategy**

The Council recognises that it no longer has the resources to deliver on the full range of ambitions of local groups and residents and has positioned itself as an 'enabling council', seeking to support others in realising those ambitions wherever possible. This direction of travel is encompassed in our Five Year Plan.

The Borough's sport and leisure offer will not focus solely on formal participation at outdoor and indoor sports facilities. We also need to reach under-represented groups and individuals who may not ordinarily be motivated to participate in sport, or who do not wish to pursue activities within a club environment, or perhaps find the traditional gym or leisure centre environment intimidating. We want to make full use of all the Borough's assets, including our beautiful parks, woodlands, open spaces, and stunning countryside to provide opportunities for informal recreation and promote healthy activities such as walking, running and cycling.

This strategy is designed to ensure that the Council is better placed to deliver our own programmes, but we recognise that no one organisation can influence the changes in perception and behaviour required to create a more active and healthy population. As a Borough Council, we do not have a statutory responsibility for the delivery of sports and leisure services, or public health improvement services (which sit with Kent County Council). We therefore need to work in partnership with other organisations across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to improve the sports and leisure offer for residents and visitors, and to help build stronger, healthier and more active communities.

The chart on the following page details the range of organisations the Council will work with to help deliver this strategy.



## **3. Background**

### **3.1 National Context**

#### **Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation**

Following a boost linked to the positive effects of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, recent participation figures now indicate a downward national trend in the number of people playing sport. The government has responded to this by launching 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation' (December 2015).

The strategy aims to improve the way funding is distributed to grassroots sport, maximising the role of sport in promoting positive life outcomes, while increasing overall levels of physical activity rather than participation in sport for its own sake. It considers what people get out of participating and what more can be done to make a physically active life transformative, concentrating on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing; mental wellbeing; individual development; social and community development; and economic development. The strategy recognises that the engagement of some demographic groups in sport and physical activity is well below the national average – such as women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people – and future funding programmes will focus on encouraging those who tend not to take part to become more active.

Local councils have a vital role to play in helping to achieve these outcomes; they are well placed to reach those who play sport, and those who want to start doing so, as the majority of sport and active recreation takes place in the swimming pools, leisure centres, parks and open spaces that they own or manage.

Local authorities have seen central government grant funding reduced by 50% since 2010, and this looks set to continue through the current parliament, putting added pressure on the provision of non-statutory services such as sport and leisure. However, many councils have been responding innovatively to these financial pressures through measures such as integrating sport and leisure with health and social care programmes, contracting out services to leisure and community sports trusts, using planning and development opportunities to maintain and build new facilities, and forging strategic partnerships with local partners to pool resources for community sport.

The new national strategy will see funding focused more closely on programmes that can demonstrate positive social outcomes for communities. This redirection should provide councils and their local partners - including schools, community sports clubs, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), health providers and the private sector - with more opportunities to drive an increase in sport participation rates and improve the population's physical and mental wellbeing.

#### **Sport England**

As a distributor of national lottery funding, Sport England's role is to build the foundations of community sport by working with national governing bodies of sport and other partners, including local authorities, to increase the number of people who play sport regularly and to make lives better through sport. In 2012 they produced their 'Creating a sporting habit for

life' strategy, which outlined their five-year plan to increase the number of people participating in sport.

By 2017 Sport England aims to have:

- invested around £500 million in 46 national governing bodies of sport to help them increase the number of people who play their sports and improve how they support their talented athletes
- offered every secondary school in England a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more sports
- helped secondary schools open up their sports facilities for local community use
- provided at least 150 further education colleges with a full-time sports professional
- given three-quarters of university students aged 18-24 the chance to take up a new sport or continue playing sport while they study
- encouraged 2,000 young people on the margins of society to take part in sport to help them gain new life skills
- established enhanced England Talent Pathways in at least 30 sports to ensure young people fulfil their potential
- invested £265 million into facilities for the most popular sports, building on the success of 'Places People Play', the London 2012 legacy programme
- invested £10 million in projects targeting disabled people.

The government's new strategy for sport will broaden Sport England's remit so that it becomes responsible for sport outside school from the age of five rather than fourteen, recognising that a positive experience of sport and physical activity at a young age can contribute to a lifetime of participation. Sport England will be tasked with helping to develop local physical activity strategies, and supporting local partnerships to implement specific projects to increase levels of physical activity. Sport England will develop a new strategy by the end of 2016.

### **National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs)**

NGBs, such as England Athletics and the Football Association, have responsibility for managing their specific sport at a national level. Sport England recognises over a hundred NGBs and supports them in developing national programmes to address the specific barriers that are stopping people from participating in individual sports. 46 NGBs have developed 'Whole Sport Plans' to create opportunities for more people to play sport, by providing innovative activities and improving sports facilities in local communities.

### **Public Health England**

Public Health England was set up in April 2013 as an agency of the Department of Health to protect and improve the nation's health and well-being, and reduce health inequalities. Part of their remit is to share information and expertise with local authorities to help them make improvements in the public's health.

Across our population, obesity continues to rise and 62% of adults are now overweight or obese. We are 20% less active than we were in 1961 and projected to be 35% less active in 2030 than we were in 1961. We have increasingly sedentary lifestyles and if current trends

persist, one in three people will be obese by 2034 and one in ten will develop type II diabetes.

Over one in four women and one in five men do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week, so are classified as 'inactive'. Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK - this is unsustainable and the cost of inactivity in the UK is estimated at £7.4bn a year.

There is recognition of the need for further integration of physical activity into public health policy as part of a wider shift from treating physical health to promoting overall wellbeing. 'From evidence into action: opportunities to protect and improve the nation's health' (October 2014) identified seven priorities for the next ten years to tackle the behaviour that increases the risk of poor mental and physical health, including tackling obesity, reducing smoking and reducing harmful drinking. 'Everybody active, every day' (October 2014) focuses on the need to embed physical activity into the fabric of daily life, making it an easy, cost effective and 'normal' choice in every community in England.

## **3.2 Regional Context**

### **Growth and Infrastructure Framework for Kent & Medway (to 2031)**

The Kent & Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework (GIF) has been developed between Medway Council and Kent's twelve district authorities, as well as the health and utilities sectors, to provide a strategic framework for identifying and prioritising investment in infrastructure, including sports facilities and open space and recreation needs. The document reflects the infrastructure needs identified in district Local Plans and will be regularly refreshed as Local Plans are updated and developed.

The GIF will be an essential tool in negotiations with developers when stating what facilities and services are required over the next 20-30 years as Kent grows. Significant investment into sports facilities (both indoor and outdoor) is likely to come from future developer contributions and contractual arrangements for the provision of community needs. It is therefore important that the infrastructure needs of each local authority, including those related to sports and recreation, are fed into and reflected in the GIF.

### **Kent and Medway Sports Board**

The Board seeks to represent the interests of sport in Kent, feeding into appropriate regional and national discussions and strategies. It is accountable to Sport England and is responsible for ensuring Sport England's resources are used appropriately and to best effect in Kent.

The Board has two main functions:

- to oversee the work of the County Sports Partnership in Kent, particularly in supporting governing bodies of sport, coaching, clubs and volunteers, in order to increase participation in sport
- to oversee the planning, implementation and monitoring of the 'Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity' in Kent



The 'Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity' (2012) sets out a ten year vision, working with local partners, to develop a range of quality, accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for everyone in Kent to be more active more often, and enabling those who wish to progress in sport to do so.

The Framework is designed to be complementary to local authorities' own plans and, where possible, be used to influence other plans to ensure that the contribution of sport and physical activity can be recognised and that the County's sporting and physical activity needs are met.

### **Kent Sport & Physical Activity Service (Kent Sport)**

The Kent Sport & Physical Activity Service is an integrated team of Kent County Council and Sport England funded staff, working together as the County Sports Partnership (CSP). The service works closely with local authorities across Kent to increase the levels of participation in sport and physical activity, with a focus on attracting new participants and encouraging the least active to become active.

Their core services include co-ordinating sports grants programmes, support and development for community sports clubs, developing coaching and volunteering, supporting professional development for coaches and officials, supporting NGBs to deliver their 'Whole Sports Plans' priorities at local level, improving health and wellbeing in the workplace, and supporting talented and elite performers.

Under its new strategy for sport, the government will commission an independent review of the role of CSPs in the delivery of sport and physical activity at a local level to complement Sport England's new strategy.

### **3.3 Local Context**

#### **Tunbridge Wells Borough**

The latest set of population projections published by the Office for National Statistics in May 2014 suggest that the population of the Borough will increase from 116,000 to 135,000 between 2013 and 2033, a 16.4% rise. This projected growth will have a significant impact on our housing, education, employment, transport and associated infrastructure needs, including those related to sport, leisure and recreation.

In its Five Year Plan (2014-2019), Tunbridge Wells Borough Council recognises that it needs to be 'an enabler of change – encouraging economic growth and investment into the borough whilst ensuring the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support growth and enhance quality of life'.

The plan identifies a number of specific projects that the Council, with its partners, will look to deliver over the next five years, separated into the three themes of prosperous, green and confident. Sport and active recreation has an important role in contributing to each of these key themes: for example, it can draw investment and new infrastructure into the borough through developing more opportunities for sport; enhance and promote the use of our parks, open spaces and countryside; and build more active, healthier and stronger communities.

This strategy recognises the significant impact and influence that other Council plans and strategies have on the provision of sport and active recreation in the Borough. To ensure that sports and recreation infrastructure needs are considered as part of any planned growth, the strategy serves to provide a link to the Local Development Plan and related planning documents. The strategy is aligned with the aims of our Urban Design Framework and Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which include improving the provision of linked urban green spaces thereby creating greater opportunities for active recreation and active travel.

The Council worked closely with partners including KCC and the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group to develop our new Cycling Strategy for 2016 - 2020, with the intention of making Tunbridge Wells a more bicycle friendly town. Implementation of the strategy will have an important role to play in promoting healthy lifestyles and increasing opportunities for active recreation and active travel. The strategy acknowledges that levels of cycling in Tunbridge Wells are currently relatively low with limited provision of cycle routes, but aims to make cycling a normal part of everyday life in the Borough by creating a safe and welcoming environment for cyclists of all ages and abilities. Key actions will include completing a network of high quality cycle routes in urban areas and delivering where possible connecting inter-urban and leisure cycling routes around the Borough.

The Council will also be working with the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum to develop our green infrastructure and promote opportunities for active travel and recreational walking and cycling. The Town Forum's 'Developing Our Green Network' report (May 2015) contains many cross-cutting proposals and recommendations for a long term strategy to develop leisure and tourism, making use of our green assets to promote alternative transport choices and improve the general health of residents.

Ongoing reductions in central government grant funding have made it more difficult for local authorities to maintain levels of provision for non-statutory services such as sport and leisure. However, despite the increasing pressures on finance and staff resources, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has continued to support sports and active recreation development.

In 2012, our 'year of celebrations', the borough was host to the Olympic Torch Relay, we launched the Sports & Culture Passport initiative to encourage people to try out new activities, and held a spectacular free event in Dunorlan Park to mark the opening weekend of the London Olympics.

Building on the legacy of the Olympics, the Council has helped to set up and support a number of free popular participation events. Dunorlan Park has been the venue for a very successful weekly 'parkrun' for the last two years, and there is now a junior 'parkrun' in Goudhurst. An additional 'parkrun' event, based in the east of the Borough, has just opened up at Bedgebury Forest. The first 'Skyride' cycle events took place in Tunbridge Wells in the summer of 2015, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Great Tunbridge Wells Bike Ride took place in September 2015, with over 200 riders taking part.

In the summer of 2015, with the help of substantial funding from a number of partners including the Town and Borough Councils, Paddock Wood Athletics Club was able to open a new all weather '2-4-6' training track (the first of its kind in the region) with full in-field facilities at Putlands in Paddock Wood.

The Council and Fusion Lifestyle have recently invested over £2m in Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre for the refurbishment of the swimming and diving pool and the addition of a range of modern facilities. New changing facilities have been built at Hawkenbury Recreation Ground and there have been major multi-million pound renovation and improvement projects in Dunorlan Park and currently at Hilbert & Grosvenor Recreation Ground with the help of Heritage Lottery Fund money. Several of our parks have been awarded and retain the coveted Green Flag status.

Across the Borough, the Council is encouraging more use of our parks for informal sport and active recreation such as tai chi, outdoor fitness sessions and 'boot camp' style training. New outdoor gyms are an increasingly common sight in parks and recreation grounds across the Borough.

### **Tunbridge Wells Local Sports Profile 2015**

Sport England's Active People Survey has been conducted twice a year since 2005/06 and provides valuable information on national, regional and local participation levels and trends. The results are put together in Local Sport Profiles, which provide councils with a profile for their area covering demographics, population health, participation rates, facilities and the economic value of sport. It is a useful tool for local authorities and other partners working in community sport to inform strategic planning, develop sporting opportunities, and demonstrate the value of sport to other sectors such as Public Health and Local Enterprise Partnerships. The latest data for December 2015 is summarised below.

### How active is our community?

- 57.5% of adults (16+) undertake 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity, compared to the national average of 57.0%
- 40% of adults (14+) take part in sport at least once a week compared to the national average of 36.5% (39.9% of men and 40.1% of women in our community)
- 24.4% of adults (16+) take part in sport and active recreation three times a week compared to the national average of 23.9% (25.4% of men and 23.4% of women in our community)
- 31.5% of adults (16+) in the community are inactive, compared to the national average of 27.7%
- 45.3% of adults who are currently inactive want to take part in sport, and that figure rises to 53.9% of adults when including those who are already active but want to take part in more sport

### How involved is our community?

- 14.5% of adult residents have volunteered in sport in the last month compared to the national average of 12.9%
- 29.3% take part in organised sport by belonging to a club, receiving tuition or taking part competitively, compared to 33.9% nationally
- The most popular activities for adults are swimming, cycling, gym, athletics, fitness and conditioning
- 67.2% are satisfied with sporting provision in the area, compared to 61.7% nationally

### What is the value of sport to our local economy?

- £50.3m in gross value added (wages and operating profits) - £23.3m of this is from people directly participating in sport, and 27.0m from wider non-participation activities and trading
- 797 jobs are provided in the sports sector
- £20.8m represents the value that volunteering brings to the local economy
- £45.1m is the economic value of improved quality and length of life, plus health care costs avoided

### Sports and physical activity summary

Adult (16+) participation in sport (at least once a week: 1 x 30 mins) by year:

Year	Tunbridge Wells (%)	South East (%)	England (%)
2011/12	36.5	38.4	36.9
2012/13	41.0	38.1	36.6
2013/14	35.3	37.6	36.1
2014/15	39.2	36.9	35.5

Adult (16+) participation in sport and active recreation by frequency:

Frequency	Tunbridge Wells (%)		South East (%)		England (%)	
	2005/06	2014/15	2005/06	2014/15	2005/06	2014/15
None	45.4	46.3	46.2	49.5	50.0	50.9
Moderate	30.9	29.3	30.9	26.3	28.8	25.1
Regular	23.7	24.4	22.9	24.2	21.3	23.9

None = 0 days per month / 0 x 30 mins per week

Moderate = 1-11 days per month / 1-2 x 30 mins per week

Regular = 12+ days / 3 x 30 mins per week

The data indicates that generally people in Tunbridge Wells participate in sport more regularly than the average both regionally and nationally, although that may be through informal sport and recreation rather than through club or competitive sport. Although rates of participation in Tunbridge Wells have risen slightly since the Active People survey began in 2005/06, there has not been a significant change, barring possibly a London Olympics related boost in 2012/13 and subsequent dip the following year.

The number of residents who are classified as inactive, and the proportion of both inactive and active people who would like to participate more in sport, demonstrates that there is a great opportunity to increase participation in sport and active recreation, and to reap the health benefits associated with that.

As a result of the government's new strategy for sport, from 2017 the Active People survey will be replaced by a new survey called Active Lives as the primary means of measuring engagement in sport and physical activity among adults and children. The new survey will capture more of the different types of activity that people take part in so that it can more accurately reflect levels of physical activity and inactivity in communities, rather than just participation in a more limited field of traditional sports.

## **Tunbridge Wells Health Profile 2015**

Public Health England's 'Health Profiles' are designed to help local government and health services understand their communities' needs so that they can work together to improve people's health and reduce health inequalities. The profiles are produced annually and present a set of health indicators that show how each authority compares to the national average. The indicators are carefully selected to reflect the most important public health issues.

### **Health summary**

The health of people in Tunbridge Wells is generally better than the England average and deprivation is lower than average, although about 10.6% (2,300) of children are described as living in poverty.

Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average, and is not significantly different for people in the most deprived areas of Tunbridge Wells than in the least deprived areas.

In Year 6 at school, 13.7% of children are classified as obese, better than the average for England. Alcohol specific stays in hospital for under 18s is slightly lower than the average, at 28.6 per 100,000.

15.2% of adults are classified as obese, significantly better than the average for England, although the percentage of overweight adults is only slightly better than average. Smoking prevalence among adults is not significantly different to the average but the level of smoking related deaths is significantly less. The rates of early death from cardiovascular disease and cancer are better than the England average. The estimated percentage of physically active adults is significantly better than the England average.

However, incidences of hospital stays for self harm are worse than average, as are the number of excess winter deaths.

### **Health Priorities**

The Council works with Kent Public Health and the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to achieve the outcomes and priorities that have been set out in the Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2014–2019). The Health Inequalities Action Plan (2014-2019) for the Borough addresses our top priorities based on national and local data for reducing health inequalities.

Priorities for Tunbridge Wells include reducing levels of obesity, reducing deaths attributable to smoking, decreasing alcohol related hospital stays, preventing falls among the elderly population, reducing incidences of self-harm and lowering the level of excess winter deaths. Promoting participation in active recreation and increasing physical activity levels can clearly have a significant impact in a number of these areas.

### **Promoting active lifestyles**

Public health policy is now reflecting a more holistic approach to improving health outcomes, recognising the need to promote and encourage physical activity as part of a wider shift from treating physical health to promoting overall wellbeing. The health and social benefits of physical activity are also being recognised and promoted through wider planning and transport policy.

An Active Travel Strategy for Kent has recently been developed at county level. The strategy emphasises that being more physically active can benefit everyone and can lower the chances of developing diabetes, heart disease and other preventable conditions. Active travel gives people an opportunity to be physically active as part of their daily routine and incorporating physical activity into everyday tasks reduces the need to find extra time or money for exercise.

The health benefits of active travel and active recreation are also key considerations in the Borough's Cycling Strategy, and both our Urban Design Framework and Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan aim to improve the provision of linked urban green spaces thereby creating a more encouraging environment for active recreation and active travel.

## 4. Our Objectives

The Council's aim in delivering this strategy is:

'to enhance the quality of life for our residents and enable our communities to be active, healthy and confident through increased participation in sports and active recreation.'

By 2021, we will have more residents in Tunbridge Wells enjoying the benefits associated with active and healthy lifestyles. We will see more people engaging in at least basic levels of sport and physical activity, encouraging less active residents to view higher levels of physical activity as desirable and achievable.

We expect the borough to be a place where residents and communities have access to high quality sports and recreation facilities, have more opportunities to participate in sports and active recreation, and enjoy better health as a result.

Over the period of this strategy we aim to:

- enhance the sports and leisure offer for our residents and visitors
- increase levels of customer satisfaction with our sports and leisure facilities
- raise the aspirations of residents to participate in sport and active recreation
- develop the capacity of our community sports clubs by promoting learning, coaching and volunteering opportunities
- work with national and local health partners to deliver programmes to reduce inactivity
- support local businesses to promote active and healthy workplaces

To meet these objectives, we will work with our partners at national, regional and local level to deliver on four key priorities:

- Raising the profile of sport and active recreation
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Increasing opportunities for sport
- Improving sports facility provision

## **5. Priorities 2016 – 2021**

### **5.1 Raising the profile of sport and active recreation**

#### **Overview**

Providing excellent facilities, developing opportunities for people to participate and promoting the benefits of healthy lifestyles will not be enough to deliver positive results without raising the profile of sport and active recreation both within the Council and among our residents.

With rising levels of inactivity across the country and an increase in levels of people who are overweight or obese, it is essential that the importance of sport and active recreation in promoting healthy lifestyles is recognised. More importantly, we need to ensure that sport and recreation are seen as attractive, accessible and available to all.

Within the Council, we need to highlight the positive impact sport can have on economic growth, tourism and building stronger communities. We need to ensure sport and active recreation is considered within planning, policy and decision making processes. We also need to demonstrate the significance and benefits of sport and active recreation as it relates to other local agendas such as health, well-being and community cohesion.

We want to promote Tunbridge Wells as an active borough where people have easy access to a broad range of activities provided by a broad range of suppliers. The Council will continue to work with partners in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors at local, regional and national level to develop and implement a shared vision for a more active and healthy population. To inspire people to get involved we need to have a clear message and work together with our partners to deliver specific objectives; the development of a Sports Strategy for the Borough is central to that aim.

#### **Actions**

The Council will:

1. develop a user-friendly on-line Sports Directory to promote sports opportunities, facilities and community sports clubs in the borough
2. celebrate success stories and promote sports programmes through a range of media outlets, including the Council's 'Local' magazine, website, social media, and local press
3. recognise the achievements of local sports people by incorporating sports-specific awards into our annual Love Where We Live awards
4. support the development of our talented and elite performers by offering free access to leisure and sports facilities for personal training under the Kent FANS scheme (Free Access for National Sports people)
5. enable community groups to plan and manage their own events more easily by providing and promoting an on-line 'Events Planning Toolkit'



## **Outcomes**

- Residents will have easy access to information on how and where to participate in sport and active recreation
- The profile of sport and recreation in the borough will be boosted
- Achievement at all levels in sport will be supported and celebrated
- Communities and local organisations will feel confident to organise more events independently of the Council

## **5.2 Promoting healthy lifestyles**

### **Overview**

Recent participation figures indicate a downward national trend in the number of people taking part in sport and active recreation. If these trends continue, the results will be more residents becoming inactive and suffering negative health impacts. It is therefore very important that the Council continues to signpost and provide services to encourage inactive residents and those who could achieve greater health benefits to engage in moderate daily exercise or sporting activities.

Taking part in sport and active recreation is an important part of developing healthy lifestyles, alongside other elements such as healthy eating, weight management, sensible alcohol consumption and stopping smoking. Being physically active and maintaining a healthier lifestyle has been shown to improve mental health and reduce levels of depression and anxiety. It can also play an important part in reducing the prevalence of serious health conditions such as coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

The Council's Health Team (currently funded through a Service Level Agreement with Kent County Council Public Health) delivers a range of health improvement and behaviour change advice services throughout the borough. These include adult and family weight management programmes, mental health awareness programmes, targeted physical activity programmes, NHS health checks, Workplace Health programmes, and one-to-one and group support in the community.

Kent County Council Public Health will be commissioning services differently in the future in order to deliver a more integrated and holistic approach to health improvement services. The specific services currently provided by the Borough Council's Health Team may therefore change. Regardless of the exact nature of these changes, having a team of health improvement experts working within the Council means that we are better placed to work closely with and influence other council services that have a significant impact on health outcomes. It also allows us to engage directly with local communities and partners to ensure that services are responsive, integrated and targeted to local needs.

The Council will continue to work with national and local health partners to develop interventions and programmes to reduce inactivity and break down the barriers that prevent people taking part in sport and active recreation. This involves changing attitudes to how we live our lives both at home and at work.

### **Actions**

The Council will:

1. provide targeted and accessible adult weight management programmes that are free to attend - to support overweight and obese adults to make sustained behavioural changes to increase physical activity, improve eating behaviour and improve emotional well-being
2. deliver a programme of diet and lifestyle support to families and children, working in partnership with schools, school nursing and Kent 'Healthy Schools'

3. support and encourage local businesses to develop active and healthy workplaces through the delivery of the Kent Healthy Business Awards
4. work with our voluntary sector partners to promote and increase attendance at the monthly Tunbridge Wells Tea Dances
5. work with our local GP surgeries and leisure centres to promote and increase uptake of exercise referral programmes
6. promote healthy activities and improved mental and emotional wellbeing by funding Kent High Weald Partnership - our local countryside management partnership - to provide targeted programmes, (such as 'Men's Sheds' and 'Wellbeing Walks') and community volunteering opportunities
7. raise awareness of the problems associated with obesity and physical inactivity in isolated rural communities and disadvantaged neighbourhoods through tailored advice sessions and the delivery of NHS health checks

### **Outcomes**

- Over 200 adults a year will participate in weight management programmes and be supported to adopt sustained long-term behaviour change and achieve maintained weight loss
- There will be a reduction in the percentage of children who are overweight or obese at reception and year 6, using National Child Measurement Programme data as the baseline
- Twenty new businesses a year will be actively engaged in the Kent Healthy Business Awards programme
- Older people will have more opportunities to engage in social and healthy activities, improving emotional wellbeing and physical health
- Over 100 adults a year will be engaged in the GP exercise referral scheme and demonstrate positive health outcomes as a result
- Social interaction and physical activity in a countryside environment will lead to improved wellbeing amongst KHWP volunteers and programme participants, as measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
- There will be an increase in the number of people from disadvantaged and rurally isolated communities participating in health improvement and physical activity programmes

## **5.3 Increasing opportunities for sport and active recreation**

### **Overview**

In order for sport and active recreation to have a positive impact on residents' lifestyles, we need to ensure that there is a broad range of options open to all. We will promote the variety of activities on offer across the borough, from traditional sports to new emerging activities.

The Council is keen to promote participation in sports and healthy activities for all ages and abilities. We want to get more people more involved in activities such as walking, running, cycling and swimming – activities that can be pursued in different ways and at different levels, individually or as part of informal group or club activities, for fun or for competition.

We will work with our partners to engage with and promote opportunities for hard to reach groups and residents who may not be motivated to participate in sport, or who do not wish to pursue activities within a club environment, or perhaps find the traditional gym or leisure centre environment intimidating.

We will promote sport as a means of helping people achieve their goals in life, whether that may be improving their health and well-being, socialising and making friends, or achieving sporting success. In doing so, we will need to remove the real or perceived barriers that prevent people from participating, and promote sport and active recreation as an integral and enjoyable part of everyday life. Taking part in sport does not necessarily have to be competitive or unaffordable.

The Council will work with governing bodies of sport, community sports clubs and schools across the borough to ensure that the excellent facilities already provided are used to their full potential to increase participation in sports and promote healthy lifestyles. In areas of the borough where sports facilities and opportunities are more difficult to access, developing community access to existing schools facilities offers a practical means of providing additional capacity.

We will harness opportunities for sport and active recreation to raise aspirations and build stronger communities. We will promote opportunities for people to engage in volunteering, develop improved employability skills and take advantage of coaching education courses, and so strengthen our community sports clubs.

### **Actions**

The Council will:

1. support and promote the use of our parks and open spaces for organised and informal sport and active recreation for all - for example: parkrun; Run England '3-2-1' routes; outdoor gyms; fitness classes; 'boot camps'; tai chi; BMX and skateboarding
2. engage with schools and community sports clubs across the borough to look at ways of maximising community access to sports facilities and develop community use agreements where appropriate

3. encourage and assist community sports clubs to access the funding, coaching and learning opportunities provided through Kent's Sport and Physical Activity Service
4. support Fusion Lifestyle to develop a broader programme of summer activities for children and young people at their leisure centres in Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook
5. work with our partners to develop and promote opportunities for sections of the community that are not able to easily access existing sport and active recreation: for example, older people and people with disabilities
6. promote the Council's Go!Card leisure concession scheme for residents on low incomes
7. work with the Community Safety Partnership and community sports providers to use sports programmes to engage with young people in areas of the borough where there is a risk of anti-social behaviour

### **Outcomes**

- There will be an increase in the number of residents taking part in regular sport or active recreation, as indicated by the Sport England Active Lives Survey
- There will be more opportunities for older people and people with disabilities to participate in a wider variety of sports and active recreation
- Community sports clubs will be supported to develop the skills of coaches and volunteers
- There will be an increase in the level of external funding drawn into the Borough for new and existing sports and healthy activities programmes
- In areas where anti-social behaviour can be an issue, there will be positive activities and opportunities for young people, promoting a sense of inclusion, self-esteem and achievement

## 5.4 Improving sports facility provision

### Overview

Tunbridge Wells Borough boasts a huge range of sports facilities including: leisure centres; gyms; swimming pools; athletics tracks; community sports halls; grass playing pitches for football, rugby, cricket and hockey; artificial and 3G pitches; golf courses; tennis courts; netball and basketball courts; bowls facilities; outdoor gyms; skate parks and MUGAs (multi-use games areas). They attract a huge amount of community use and we therefore need to ensure that residents are satisfied with the facilities on offer and that they are accessible and attractive to all users.

Satisfaction with, and the availability of, sports facilities is closely linked to participation levels. It is therefore essential that we strive to meet today's higher standards of customer expectations and provide the best possible facilities across the borough. We know that the condition of some grass playing pitches, especially in the winter months, has been below the standard we would aim to provide and adequate maintenance across a number of different sites has presented problems. Currently, the distribution and varying quality of pitch surfaces and amenities involves a considerable amount of maintenance and associated costs. We need to look at how best to provide the number of pitches that the borough requires, where they need to be situated and how we ensure that they are of the required quality to meet future needs linked to population and housing growth.

We will certainly need to invest in more synthetic turf pitches, such as modern 3G playing surfaces, which will be able to accommodate many more games throughout the season and help meet increased demand. Although some schools in the borough have been able to install 3G pitches in recent years with the help of government and lottery funding programmes, the Council itself currently only provides one synthetic turf pitch at Hawkenbury – this surface is not 3G and is in need of refurbishment.

The Council will work with governing bodies of sport and community sports clubs to consider the viability of development centres for each sport where appropriate, in line with the current and future needs of the sports development programmes for each sport.

We will need to work closely with other departments in the Council to ensure that community sports infrastructure is at the forefront of planned growth. A significant proportion of future investment into sports facilities is likely to come from developer contributions and contractual arrangements for the provision of community needs. It is therefore important that the Borough's sports and recreation infrastructure needs are clearly referenced in our Local Plan and feed into the Kent & Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework. This will be important in enabling us to secure additional funding from development opportunities to enhance provision of facilities across the borough

We will need to continue to invest in our leisure centres to ensure that they are modern, safe and welcoming venues, meeting the current needs of residents as trends in sports and health activities develop and change.

Over the last few years there has been significant investment in existing and new sports facilities, including those provided by the Council, Fusion Lifestyle (the leisure trust that operates our leisure centres), community sports clubs and schools. At Putlands in summer

2015, Dame Kelly Holmes opened Paddock Wood Athletics Club's new all-weather '2-4-6' training track with full in-field facilities, the first of its kind in the region. This excellent facility was funded through contributions from Sport England, KCC, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Paddock Wood Town Council grants, developer contributions, and fundraising by the athletics club and local community.

The Council and Fusion Lifestyle have recently invested in major improvements to the Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre, including refurbishment of the main pool and diving pool, upgrades to the gym and fitness facilities, and a new soft play area for young children. Mascalls School in Paddock Wood and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys have new 3G pitches – both are used regularly by community football clubs – and St Gregory's School is also looking to install a new 3G pitch for school and community use. High Weald Academy in Cranbrook and the Skinners' School in Tunbridge Wells have recently built new sports halls, and Skinners Kent Academy has extensive indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including three floodlit netball courts, regularly used by local netball clubs and leagues.

## **Actions**

The Council will:

1. undertake a sports facilities and playing pitch audit to identify usage and needs, and rationalise the provision and distribution of pitches, with a focus on providing additional modern synthetic turf pitches
2. undertake a new sport, recreation and open space study as part of the local development plan to establish the adequacy of current provision and the borough's future needs, and ensure that these needs are reflected in our Local Plan and the Kent & Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework
3. acquire, where possible, land currently allocated in the local development plan for sports pitches and outdoor recreation to enable provision of facilities in line with future needs – for example, at Hawkenbury, Rusthall and Pembury
4. seek to release Council assets where appropriate and attract external funding to help with the capital costs of facilities development
5. work with Town and Parish Councils across the Borough to improve and enhance the facilities they provide for local residents
6. examine the potential, with community sport clubs, for establishing development centres or 'centres of excellence' for individual sports: for example, football / hockey at Hawkenbury; rugby at St Mark's Playing Fields; and cricket / tennis at the Nevill Ground
7. work with Fusion Lifestyle to improve facilities at our sports and leisure centres in Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook to ensure that they meet customer needs and expectations

## **Outcomes**

- There will be a clear understanding of the level and distribution of facilities required throughout the Borough and who is best placed to provide them
- The Borough will have high quality indoor and outdoor sports facilities, able to meet the demands of future population and housing growth
- Community sports clubs will be supported to develop and manage their facilities as local 'centres of excellence' where appropriate
- There will be increased levels of customer satisfaction with the range and quality of facilities provided across the Borough



## 6. Measuring Our Progress

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council recognises the importance of setting challenging but realistic objectives. We will monitor and review our outcomes, and the continued relevance of targets, in order to measure our progress against the objectives set out in the strategy. Performance management is crucial to ensure that the Council is delivering the best that we can for our borough residents and visitors.

The objectives detailed in this strategy will be carried across into departmental service plans and key performance targets where appropriate. Performance against these targets will be reported to the corporate management team and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

Significant projects will be included in the Council's annual list of community projects and priorities, contributing to the delivery of the Five Year Plan. The end of year community project update will report on our progress against these priorities and the Council's annual report will summarise our overall performance and intentions for the coming year.

## 7. Contact Details

If you would like to comment on this strategy or require any further information please contact:

Sports Development  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN1 1RS

Email: [sports@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:sports@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

Tel: 01892 554108

Web: [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

If you require a copy of this document in large print or any other format please phone **01892 526121**

