STRATEGIC OUTCOMES PLANNING GUIDANCE

UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR PLACE

STAGE 2

2

Understand your community and your place

INSIGHT

SPORT ENGLAND

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STAGE 2
UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR PLACE

Identifying current barriers and opportunities for behaviour change in a place will inform where future interventions will make the biggest sustainable impact.

Taking time to understand what contribution the wider physical environment and infrastructure in a place can make is important. This can enable more people to get active through active design.

Bringing all the elements developed to date together to identify a 'current state position' for a place will form a needs analysis that can be used by a local authority to identify where it wants to be in the future.

This will enable tangible objectives to be identified that contribute towards wider local strategic outcomes in a place and provide the foundation to support the development of interventions.

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Understand your community and your place

INSIGHT

STEP 2A
GATHER INSIGHT FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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Understand your community and your place

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WHY IS THIS STEP IMPORTANT?

Using the initial research and consultation from Stage 1, further work may be required to better understand specific barriers and issues in a local place and define the underlying causes of lower levels of physical activity within particular communities, areas or target groups.

Considering the wider whole system with partners such as education, youth offending and adult social care can enable a more joined up response to tackling longstanding barriers and inequalities faced by specific groups in the community.

A GATHER INSIGHT FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE.

B CONSIDER THE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WIDER PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

C ESTABLISH WHERE YOU ARE NOW AND WHERE YOU WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE

D AGREE THE OBJECTIVES NEEDED TO CONTRIBUTE TO SHARED LOCAL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS STEP?

i) Research specific local barriers experienced by identified target groups and communities

Following the research and consultation in Step 1B, further engagement will be necessary to understand in detail particular issues and barriers impacting on behaviours. The approach to how further consultation is undertaken should depend on the audience. The size of the sample needs to be sufficient to ensure it is representative of the local community.

Target group representatives could be invited to attend a focus group or a consultation meeting, ideally where these communities would regularly attend other activities or sessions. Working with community workers, housing officers and third sector community leaders can facilitate bringing groups together and establish the context for the consultation. Exploring issues which were cited and highlighted through Stage 1 will develop greater understanding of what impacts on their lives and participation and will present a chance to explore potential solutions that are developed 'bottom up'. For example:

Potential issues and barriers	Potential target group representatives
Confidence	Young single parents
Motivation	Disabled people and their carers
Age	Young people aged 16-24 from a BAME community
Injury and illness	
Awareness	Socially isolated elderly people
Family and childcare commitments	Existing active users of clubs/schools/facilities
Time	
Affordability	
Physical Environment	

Questionnaires or surveys could be completed by target group representatives to provide an alternative means of engagement. Suggestion boxes can also work to provide anonymous feedback and may drive alternative comments. Web pages with comment boxes can also provide a useful source of feedback to a wider audience.

ii) Identify possible opportunities to support behaviour change

Working with cross sector partners who have a real interest in supporting particular target groups within a local community can provide insight and create opportunities to identify a more joined up approach to tackling longstanding issues preventing participation. This may be through leveraging existing local networks but may also be creating new partnerships.

There are also a number of published research guides that will provide evidence that supports behaviour change in relation to levels of sport and physical activity that will help gain an understanding of the wider barriers and motivators that impact on participation. This evidence can provide a useful context in which to examine specific issues and share common themes. Creating a long list of potential opportunities for behaviour change can be beneficial as an output from the consultation and research, but the refinement of this takes place in Stage 3 - Interventions.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ENABLERS TO SUPPORT THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

High quality data and analysis from Stage 1

Continued engagement with community groups and stakeholders in regular contact with target groups and communities

Working closely with cross sector partners

Building trust and showing commitment to those parties engaged in this step

WHAT ARE THE KEY OUTPUTS FROM THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

Key findings from further research

Prioritised ideas, opportunities and potential long list solutions to support behaviour change

Regular communications showing progress and how target group and stakeholder input is shaping future policy decisions and programming

FURTHER GUIDANCE, MATERIALS AND CASE STUDIES

- Sport England Research Guide

- Sport England Understanding Audiences

- Tackling Inactivity – What we know: Key insights from our Get Healthy Get Active pilots

- Applying Behaviour Change Theories – Real World Examples from the Get Healthy Get Active Projects

STEP 2B
CONSIDER THE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WIDER PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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WHY IS THIS STEP IMPORTANT?

The environment where people choose to be active can be any place or space. How the whole physical environment is described and designed can have a significant impact on behaviour, both in terms of how the environment is used but also how it is perceived so it is important to explore the local place in detail.

This place-based thinking around the strategically planned physical environment is termed Active Environment and it can in itself encourage physical activity and drive impact on local strategic outcomes.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS STEP?

i) Understanding the local area

Often different parts of a local area, such as parks, streets, leisure facilities, civic space and schools, deliver in silos and are not 'joined up' through alignment with shared objectives and outcomes.

A local authority should explore and identify any environment that can be an Active Environment in the local area, including homes, streets, parks, leisure centres etc.

It should explore these aspects:

- **Physical** – the actual environment, its characteristics, design and how it may have positive or negative impacts on how people use that space (including perceptions)

- **Social/activation** – the activity that takes place in that environment including events and campaigns.

Mapping particular needs and priorities of a local place against the Active Environment can identify opportunities to contribute to increased participation in sport and physical activity as well as wider local outcomes.

For example, physical design principles like co-location, walkable neighbourhoods and integrated cycle networks can be implemented to drive community cohesion and social development. Further, activation such as parkrun or community run programmes can further boost physical activity in a space, particularly when targeting certain groups.

Finally, understanding how these environments work together collectively to provide a seamless journey for the user will ensure the active environment is more than the sum of its parts.

ii) Existing stakeholders who have an interest in the Active Environment

Working with existing stakeholders who have an interest in the Active Environment could provide you with the resources needed to explore particular opportunities further. They could work in planning, regeneration, placemaking, parks and open spaces or street scene etc.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ENABLERS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS STEP?

Support from the stakeholders with an interest in the Active Environment

WHAT ARE THE KEY OUTPUTS FROM THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

Map of existing and future environments with associated sport and physical activity activation opportunities

FURTHER GUIDANCE, MATERIALS AND CASE STUDIES

Active Design Guide

STEP 2C
ESTABLISH WHERE YOU ARE NOW AND WHERE YOU WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE

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WHY IS THIS STEP IMPORTANT?

It is now possible to identify a 'current state position' for a place using the work completed to date. This will then enable a local authority to identify where it wants to be in the future and what interventions can be developed to contribute to local strategic outcomes.

This process can be very powerful in communicating the current strengths as well as where opportunities for improvement lie, paving the way in the next stage for what interventions can enable achievement of the strategic objectives and contribute to strategic outcomes.

This is often summarized in a user-friendly needs analysis document at the end of this step.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS STEP?

i) Consolidate your research and analysis

Bringing all the elements developed to date together into a succinct, easy-to-read document can support the communication of the developing strategic approach and present needs-based evidence to shape future policy decisions and investment.

Some local authorities have called this document a 'needs analysis'. The detailed analysis and supporting information can be provided in a supporting document or appendices. There is a risk that too much information is provided and the target audience is overwhelmed by data, so key core content must be presented to make the biggest impact.

As a guide the needs analysis document may be structured as:

1   Introduction

- Strategic vision
- Scope of the study

2   Background

- Introduction
- Physical activity and its benefits
- Campaigns to increase participation in sport and physical activity
- Physical activity rates
- Demographics
- Priority groups for the needs analysis
- Existing physical activity landscape
- The purpose of the needs analysis research
- What enables behaviour change?
- Known attitudes towards physical activity

3   Consultation

- Methodology
- Online survey findings
- Street interviews findings
- Stakeholder consultation findings
- Focus group findings
- Summary findings and analysis

It is important to remember that this step of the process focuses on identifying the priority areas that need to be addressed linked to the wider local strategic outcomes which sport and physical activity can contribute to. This step does not explore solutions on how to address these gaps. This will be developed in Stage 3 – Interventions.

ii) Identifying a long list of priority areas to address in the future

The potential opportunities highlighted in the needs analysis can be developed into a long list of draft priority areas to support addressing the barriers, issues or gaps. This step should cross reference the areas mapped in Step 1C as well as using insight from Steps 2A, 2B and 2C to help shape the long list of priority areas.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ENABLERS TO SUPPORT THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

Establishing a project team to complete the needs analysis

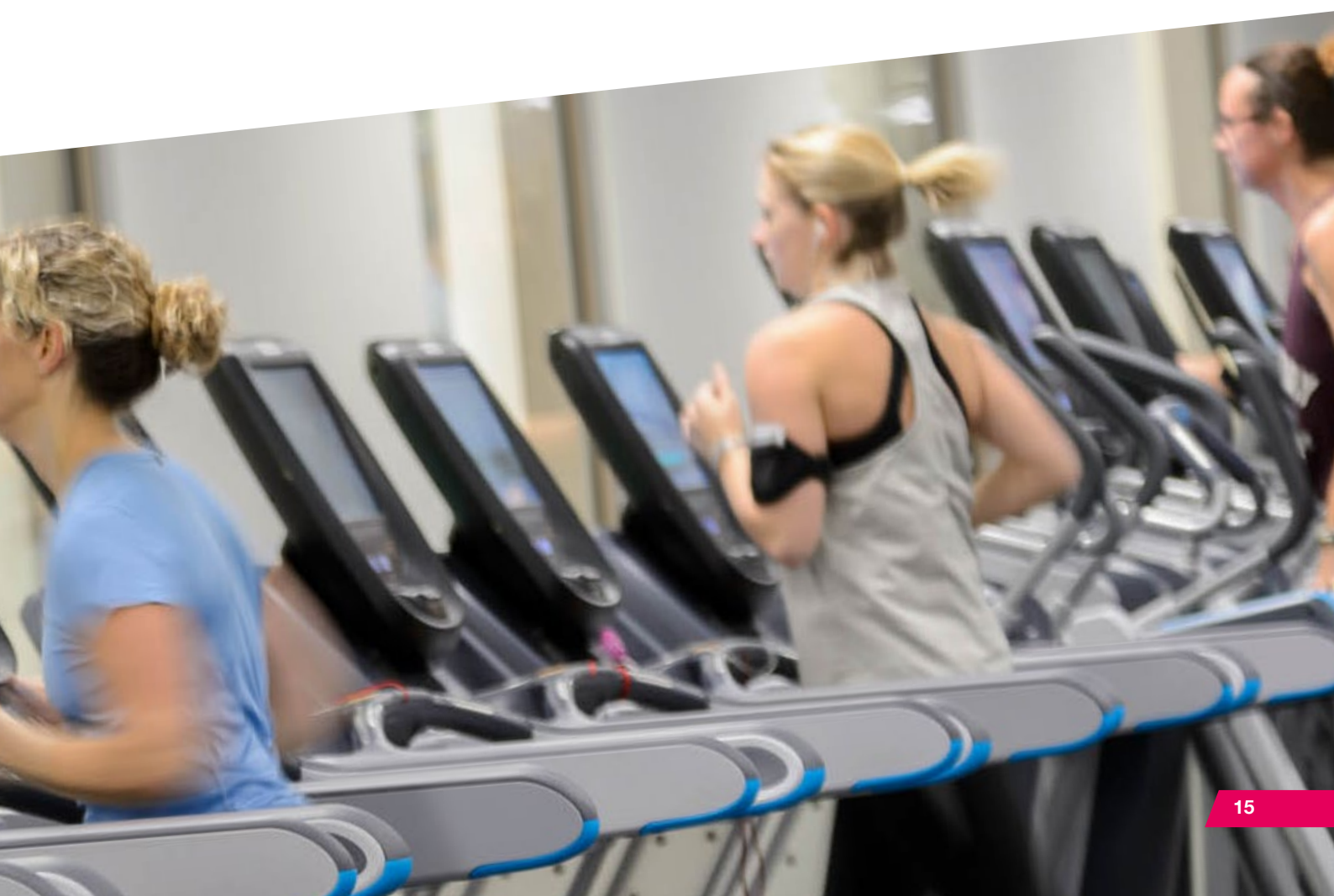Securing support, time and resources for this process from the steering group

WHAT ARE THE KEY OUTPUTS FROM THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

Needs analysis report

Long list of priority areas to address gaps and inequalities, issues and opportunities

STEP 2D
AGREE THE OBJECTIVES NEEDED TO CONTRIBUTE TO SHARED LOCAL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

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WHY IS THIS STEP IMPORTANT?

Developing a clear set of objectives, which are evidence based, will provide a clear policy position for the local authority. It will help shape the local authority and its partners' approach to exploring and selecting facility and service interventions in the next stage.

By taking senior stakeholders on this journey, there will be a growing enthusiasm and understanding of the potential impact sport and physical activity can have on a place.
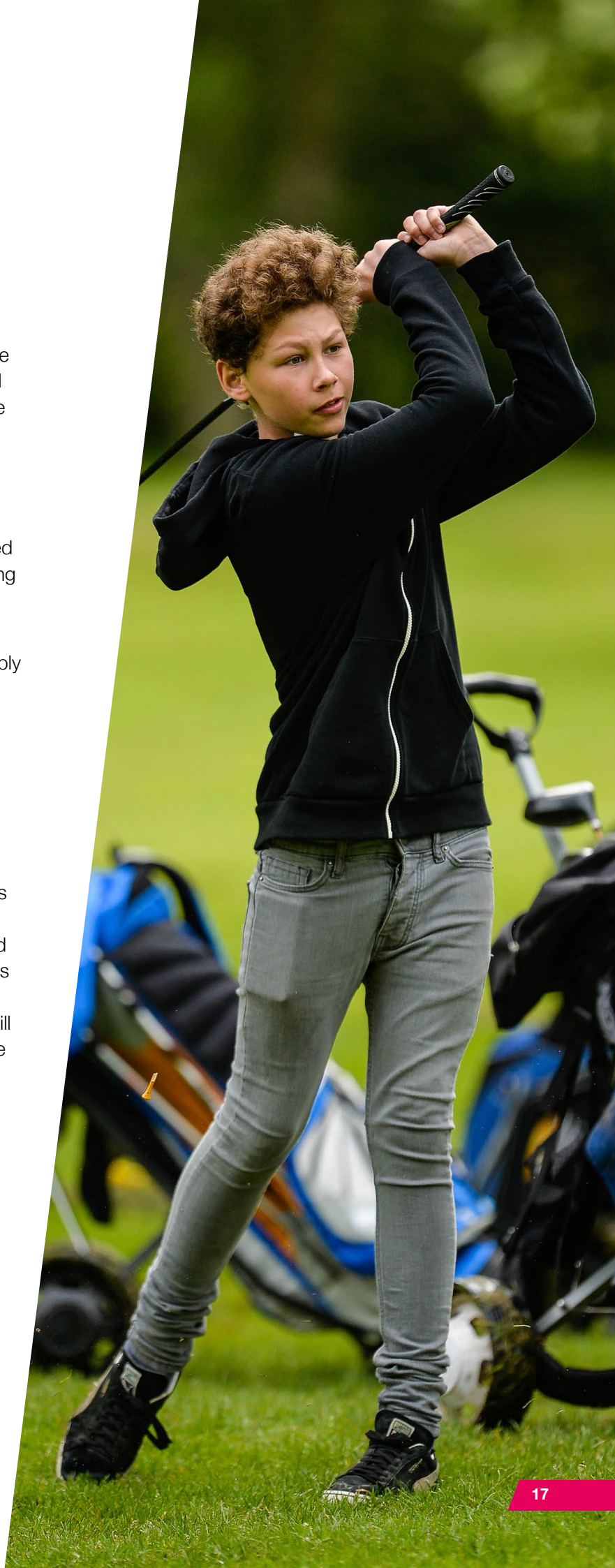
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WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS STEP?

i) Undertake an exercise to identify strategic objectives

The steering group should now consider the relative importance of a long list of potential objectives which have emerged through the previous stages. This prioritisation exercise should be based on an agreed evaluation criteria, which is often based around the extent to which:

- the objective is addressing an evidenced need in a community that is experiencing inequalities and barriers preventing regular physical activity

- the objective can be delivered sustainably

- the objective supports wider local strategic outcomes in a place

- the objective can be measured, monitored and evaluated in a cost-effective way

It may well be that some current priorities are no longer important or relevant and thus will not be taken forward. This could result in decommissioning those interventions and reallocating resources to greater priorities as part of Stage 3. This is normal and should not be avoided. The evidence developed will be able to provide strategic leaders with the reason why they wish to stop supporting a particular intervention.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ENABLERS TO SUPPORT THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

Needs analysis as an evidence base

Clear and consistent evaluation criteria

WHAT ARE THE KEY OUTPUTS FROM THIS STEP OF THE PROCESS?

List of clear objectives with supporting evidence available as required

Sign off from the steering group

FURTHER GUIDANCE, MATERIALS AND CASE STUDIES

📌 [Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Councils – Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy](#)

📌 [North Kesteven District Council – Sport and Physical Activity Strategy](#)