

REPORT TO: Policy and Resources Committee – 9 September 2002

REPORT ON: A Strategy for Physical Activity: Consultation

REPORT BY: Chief Executive

REPORT NO: 564-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider Dundee City Council's response to the Physical Activity Task Force consultation document; "Let's Make Scotland More Active"

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that members agree the response contained within this report for submission to the Scottish Executive.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The proposed response is consistent with Local Agenda 21 principles.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The proposed response is consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 A Strategy for Physical Activity Consultation Document

- 6.1.1 Ministers set up the Physical Activity Taskforce in June 2001 following a commitment in the Government's White Paper "Towards a Healthier Scotland". The PATF was brought together to consider, and make recommendations on, a strategy for increasing physical activity in Scotland. It consists of people from a wide variety of organisations such as Local Authorities, COSLA, Health Education Board for Scotland, Scottish Executive, sportscotland, etc chosen for their knowledge, expertise and interest in the issue of physical activity.

The Physical Activity Taskforce Report "Let's Make Scotland More Active" is the outcome of this work and forms the proposed National Strategic Framework for Physical Activity.

6.1.2 What is meant by Physical Activity ?

Physical activity is the broad term used to describe movement of the body that uses energy. It includes active living, recreational activity, sport, exercise, play and dance.

As a nation, Scotland is inactive, unfit and increasingly overweight. The health of two-thirds of the Scottish adult population is now at risk from physical inactivity, making it the most common risk factor for coronary heart disease in Scotland to-day. Perhaps most worryingly this trend starts before young people have left school.

The figures show that:-

- 72% of women and 59% of men are not active enough for health.
- 27% of boys and 40% of girls are not active enough to meet recommended guidelines.

6.1.3 Disadvantages of Physical Inactivity

Some of the risks of physical inactivity for Scottish people are that they have;

- Twice the likelihood of Coronary heart disease than active people
- Higher blood pressure
- Higher risk (3.6 times more) of colon cancer
- A higher risk of developing type II diabetes
- Lower bone density leading to a higher risk of osteoporosis
- A greater risk of being overweight or obese
- More injuries and accidents

6.1.4 Advantages of Physical Activity

On the positive side, people who do manage to incorporate physical activity in their lives are likely to have;

- A longer life
- Less risk of developing diseases
- Greater well-being
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Lower rates of smoking and substance misuse
- More ability to function better at home and work.

6.2 The National Strategy for Physical Activity

6.2.1 Vision and Goal

The report outlines a Vision that;

People in Scotland will enjoy benefits of having a physically active life with the goal of increasing and maintaining the proportion of physically active people in Scotland.

6.2.2 Strategic Co-ordination Framework

National

One of the key recommendations given in the report is that Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Executive and its agencies provide leadership and co-ordination, in developing policies and identifying resources in order for the national framework to be developed and sustained.

Recommendations for strengthening the national infrastructure

- Appoint a national physical activity co-ordinator
- Set up a physical activity planning team with members from many departments and national agencies as well as outsiders who can challenge and energise the permanent and mainstream staff.

- The planning and implementation team should have responsibility for:
 - Developing appropriate action plans
 - Identifying baseline data and performance indicators
 - Evaluating the effectiveness of their action
 - Reporting on progress
 - Appointing to this team senior representatives who are able to make decisions about how resources are used and how the strategy can be put into practice.

Local

The key recommendations that have direct impact on local authorities relates to the local framework for physical activity. The community planning process has been identified as the main mechanism for delivering the physical activity strategy. This would allow community-planning partners to identify local physical activity needs and deliver on national policy.

Recommendations for strengthening the local Infrastructure

The recommendations for this are based around community planning partnerships to:

- Deal with the strategic priorities of this strategy, taking account of local needs and priorities.
- Ensure these are expressed clearly as objectives within the joint Health Improvement Plan
- Put these objectives into practice across the relevant service areas
- Monitor progress relating to these objectives and evaluate their effects
- Ensure that everyone involved acts in line with any existing or new legislative or audit requirements.

6.2.3 Strategic Objectives in the Report

The PATF report recommends that Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Executive and its agencies provide high-level leadership and co-ordination to develop policies and identify resources to support the development of four strategic objectives.

These objectives are:-

- To develop and maintain sustainable, high quality physical and social environments to support inactive people to become active.
- To provide accurate and evidence-based advice to staff who are involved in Government policy and service delivery, and who work in the voluntary and private sectors.
- To raise awareness and develop knowledge and understanding about the benefits of physical activity and provide access to information.
- To carry out research, monitoring and evaluation.

6.2.4 Strategic Priorities

The report goes on to identify strategic priorities for life stage groups (i.e. children, young people, older people) and settings (workplace, schools, residential homes, colleges and nurseries). The PATF believe that this life course approach (looking at opportunities from cradle to grave) is required to bring about the fundamental shifts in levels of physical activity.

Recommendations for Children and Young People

- All parents should have support to gain the necessary skills and confidence to take an active role in helping their children enjoy an active life.
- All children, including children with disabilities, should take part in at least one hour of physical activity.
- This physical activity should include physical education, play, sports, exercise, dance outdoor activities, active travel and support to live actively at school.
- All children, including children with disabilities, should take part in at least 2 hours of physical education classes per week.
- All children, including those with disabilities, should gain the movement and behavioural skills for an active life.
- To achieve this, a review of the status and content of physical education curriculum and the resources for its delivery is recommended.
- All young people, including young people with disabilities, should have access to a range of physical activities including exercise, sports, dance, outdoor activities, active travel and support to live actively at college or university.

Recommendations for Adults of Working Age

- Adults of working age, who come into contact with primary care, should be offered personal counselling to become more active and should be referred to appropriate activities.
- Employers should be given incentives to promote physical activity and this should be developed and supported through initiatives such as Scotland's Health at Work (SHAW). This is an award scheme to encourage and support employers to develop policies for promoting health in the workplace.
- Employees should have opportunities to be active in and through their workplace.

Recommendations for Adults in Later Life

- Adults in later life, who are able, should be supported and encouraged to stay active in the community for as long as they chose.
- Frail older people living independently should have self-help resources and staff support to be physically active within their homes.
- Those living in residential care should have opportunities for physical activity in line with the Care Home Standards 2001.

7.0 Dundee City Council Response

7.1 General

The Physical Activities Task Force Consultation document is an important document for Local Government, coming at a time when physical activity is receiving a high profile with Scottish Ministers and The Scottish Executive. It raises significant cross cutting issues affecting a range of local services and departments within Dundee City Council. It recognises the role local authorities play as a public health/health improvement organisation; and reinforces the central role in the community planning process. The Task Force report is warmly endorsed by Dundee City Council, including its vision and goals.

7.2 Strategic Approach

7.2.1 There are a number of implications for local authorities highlighted within the report under the Co-ordination Framework, Strategic Objectives and Priorities. Dundee City Council would make the following specific comments:-

- The Community Planning process has rightly been identified as the main mechanism for delivering the physical activity strategy. If local authorities are given the responsibility for implementation it is essential that adequate resources and support are made available by the Scottish Executive to ensure this can be delivered upon.
- Physical activity is a cross cutting issue. If it is to be successfully supported by Departments in Dundee, (including Leisure & Arts, Education, Social Work and Neighbourhood Resources & Development), adequate resourcing of education and training and monitoring of good performance information will be required.
- It is helpful that the strategy outlines a range of recommendations and actions for specific target groups. However, central to the Community Planning process and individual local authority approaches is the ability to identify and prioritise local needs. Dundee City Council would suggest that priorities are set locally following detailed consultations and that this informs the local implementation of the Task Force strategy.
- It is noted that a national co-ordination and planning team is set up to oversee the implementation of the strategy. It is important that local authority interests (as one of the key delivery agents) are fully represented.
- Stress the need for support for activity clubs to aid the transition of young people into club based structures at school.
- Advocate support to open up more Council provision for sports activities after school and at weekends at affordable rates.
- Highlight the potential for sports activity to divert potential offenders from vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- Stress the need to explore innovative ways to involve more females and ethnic minorities in regular sport activities.
- Welcome the promotion of safe walking/cycling routes for young people to encourage activity in accessing school.

7.3 Strategic Priorities

7.3.1 There are many activities presently being undertaken or planned in Dundee that will have an impact on the PATF recommendations for the three target groups. This is particularly relevant for children and young people where the proposals presently being progressed for the New Opportunities Fund PE and Sport grant should provide a step change in provision over the 3 years of the programme. The joint approach between Education, Social Work, Neighbourhood Resources and Development and Leisure and Arts will be one of the key factors in increasing the amount of physical activity undertaken by children and young people both during school time and out of school hours.

7.3.2 Dundee has agreed that a Physical Activity short-term Working Group be set up to take forward the concept of a strategic framework and gather evidence to underpin investment. The group would:-

- Develop a creative strategic framework, a shared philosophy and set of objectives.
- Continue the physical activity mapping exercise, bringing in current strategic documents.
- Identify gaps between existing priorities and services.
- Identify primary prevention as a priority.

- 7.3.3 The Task Force recognises that there needs to be cross cutting policies across local authorities and between partners, and that physical activity should be encouraged in a whole range of settings. Dundee would endorse this approach, stressing that more effective links between Council staff and the various components of NHS Tayside would ensure a concerted effort and improve communication. The ball has been set rolling through the work of a Local Sports Strategy Implementation Group and the working group mentioned above. The emerging Corporate Health Network will assist this process and provide one of the Council links to the Joint Health Improvement Plan.
- 7.3.4 The recommendations reflect some of the pilot activity that has taken place in Dundee, including exercise for Over 50s in Neighbourhood Centres and Sheltered Housing Complexes, the OPEN Project through Social work and research carried out by Dr Marion McMurdo from Dundee University. It seems, however, that these initiatives are delivered through additional short-term funding and that to integrate these with mainstream service provision would require an additional investment.
- 7.3.5 A number of positive initiatives are being progressed locally via the establishment of the Youth Sports Development Team. Increasing PE sessions in the curriculum would be one way of further increasing activity, but it would also be positive to increase awareness that not only “sporty” people can participate in exercise. Consistent messages can be delivered through a number of organisation in the community and via parents in the home. Children are more likely to be active out of school hours if their parents participate in exercise and/or recognise the benefits of activity.
- 7.3.6 The recommendation that primary care service offer advise and counselling on exercise could incorporate better relations and communication with the Local Authority in referring to facilities on offer. Health at work and the SHAW scheme is taking higher priority within Dundee and there is huge scope for employers, including the Council, to encourage staff to exercise. Incentive scheme have worked well in the city.
- 7.3.7 The case studies demonstrate the good practice recognised by the Task Force. Where volunteers are used there requires to be appropriate infrastructure and support, but, ultimately, these types of initiatives can be sustained over the longer-term for less investment. Dundee has a few good examples of volunteer initiatives that could be built upon.
- 7.3.8 Accessibility and affordability are frequently given as reasons for non-participation in physical activity by those people living on a low income in deprived communities. More focus at a local level would enable greater participation. Affordable and frequent transport to sports centres during the day may also help. In addition, crèche facilities are seen as an important factor for parents with young children, and seem to be lacking in the city.
- 7.3.9 To implement the recommendations in the report there needs to be a prioritisation exercise locally, and of course, additional investment. However, a concerted approach to awareness raising, and publicity and promotion would be a first step in encouraging the population to become more active. Physical Activity will be given a higher profile as a health improvement priority in the city.

8.0 CONSULTATION

The Directors of Leisure & Arts, Education, Social Work and NRDD have contributed to the contents of this report. In addition the Directors of Finance, Corporate Planning and Administration have been consulted on its contents.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Strategy for Physical Activity – a consultation, The Physical Activities Task Force, The Scottish Executive, June 2002.

Chief Executive **Date**