



All Together Now –

Uniting the Movement
in Hertfordshire





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Section One

Background



Introduction

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full intro 

It gives us great pleasure to introduce this refreshed version of the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership's Strategic Plan 2022-27.

Much has changed in both the political and social landscape since we launched the Strategy over three years ago, hot on the heels of a pandemic which hugely disrupted community life.

Since that time, we have seen a change of Government, further global instability, and on the home front, a deepening of the cost-of-living crisis. Nevertheless, our Vision has remained constant – More People, More Active, More Often – and since launching the strategy, we have intensified our efforts in using sport and physical activity to help address the disadvantage and inequalities faced by many of our inactive population.

The pandemic may be over, but it very much left its mark, particularly in terms of the mental health of the nation, and we have adapted our work to play our part in countering this.

The hike in energy costs and their subsequent impact on leisure operators, has caused

hardship to our voluntary sports clubs that were already reeling from a significant loss of volunteers following the covid years.

Given the scale of the changes to the operating environment, it was thought prudent to revisit our strategy to test and challenge its relevance and effectiveness, and we did this through extensive consultation with key partners and stakeholders across the sector.

Encouragingly, our approach and the overall thrust of the strategy was endorsed but on the back of that consultation, we have made several key changes. Uppermost amongst those is that we have included Children and Young People as a standalone key strategic objective – replacing Covid Recovery. The impact of the pandemic on the lives of our children and young people should not be underestimated and this has been reflected in the refreshed document.

“Given the scale of the changes to the operating environment, it was thought prudent to revisit our strategy to test and challenge its relevance and effectiveness.”



Mervyn Morgan
Chair,
Herts Sport & Physical
Activity Partnership



Hester Hearn
Vice-Chair, Herts Sport
& Physical Activity
Partnership

About HSP

Founded in 2003, the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) is one of 42 Active Partnerships across England. As the strategic lead for sport and physical activity in Hertfordshire, we work closely with our core funder, Sport England, to drive meaningful change through movement.

At HSP, we believe in the power of sport and physical activity to transform lives. That's why we collaborate with a broad network of partners and stakeholders to create the conditions (see diagram) where physical activity can thrive – across communities, organisations, and individuals.

Our passionate **team** of full and part-time professionals leads a wide range of impactful **projects**, dynamic campaigns, and strategic initiatives that tackle local challenges and promote active lifestyles for all. Supporting this work is our voluntary **board**—an expert panel representing our diverse focus areas—who provide invaluable strategic oversight and direction.

Together, we're not just promoting sport and physical activity – we're shaping a healthier, more active Hertfordshire for everyone.



“Together, we're not just promoting sport and physical activity – we're shaping a healthier, more active Hertfordshire for everyone.”

HSPs Role in Creating the Conditions for an Active Hertfordshire

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Progress to Date

£6M+

secured to **invest** in community sport
and physical activity in Hertfordshire

220,000

activities listed on the Moving More
Activity Finder

Compliant with **Tier 3** of UK
Code for Sports Governance

The infographic below highlights some of our key achievements from the start of the Strategy period (May 2022) to Spring 2025, and overall, gives us confidence that we are on the right track.

222,000

(HAF) HAPpy Activity Camp
opportunities

5,000

delegates on CPD training

2,100

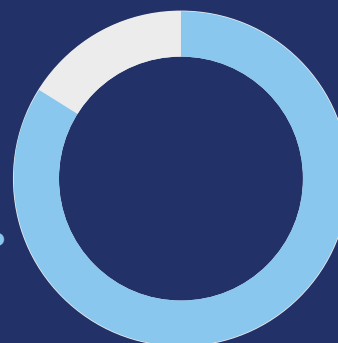
registered with **Live Longer Better** in
Hertfordshire

199

Partners in our **Supported Places**
(Active Local)

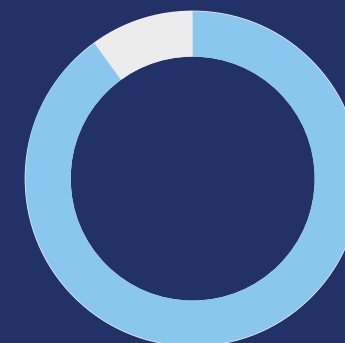
84%

of staff would
recommend HSP
to others



90%

Net Promoter
Score **feedback**
from Partners



Key Drivers Influencing the Refreshed Strategy

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Vision

More People
More Active
More Often

Mission

Working strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of people in Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

Values

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more info

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Section Two

Strategic Objectives

We will focus on six Strategic Objectives, which will help us to maximise impact against our Vision and Mission. All our work programmes will align with at least one of the following Strategic Objectives.



Community Sport & Physical Activity Sector



Strategic Objective: In partnership with the community sport sector, to provide opportunities for the people of Hertfordshire to start, continue and thrive in their chosen sport or physical activity.

Making the Case

Clubs and other sporting organisations make an immeasurable contribution to community life in the county, playing a vital role in making our communities safer and better places to live and work. They provide a myriad of opportunities for our residents to get involved and stay involved in sport and physical activity, making a positive impact on key social issues including health and wellbeing, social inclusion, community cohesion, educational attainment, crime and disorder reduction, and skills and employment.

Unfortunately, however, for many of these organisations the daily reality is a hand to mouth existence where they face increasing regulation, escalating costs, and working in a society where gratitude is often in short supply.

A good welfare culture is key to attracting and retaining participants. Welfare standards have come into the spotlight recently following the critical Whyte Review, and as a result, HSP have been tasked with improving welfare standards across county.

Our Commitments

- Supporting the **development of a fit for purpose workforce** that better reflects, understands, and represents the communities that it works with, to encourage lifelong participation.
- **Advocate for affordable community access** to schools, leisure centres, community facilities, parks and open spaces.
- **Working in partnership with National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and other partners** to assist community sports organisations in the county to develop and sustain inclusive opportunities that prioritise strong welfare principles, and pathways to participation in sport and physical activity.
- Working across the education sector to encourage positive experiences for children and young people in physical education, sport, exercise, and physical activity, including the **transition from school to community-based opportunities**.

Children & Young People



Strategic Objective: To support children and young people to enjoy positive sport and physical activity experiences, embedding a habit of lifelong involvement and benefiting their physical and mental health.

Making the Case

Sport and physical activity plays a vital role in the healthy development of children and young people, offering benefits that go beyond physical fitness. Regular participation is proven to foster teamwork, leadership, and social skills – helping children and young people build meaningful relationships and learn to collaborate effectively.

Sport and physical activity also creates a positive impact on mental health, offering an outlet to reduce stress, improve mood, as well as enhancing cognitive functions such as concentration and memory.

The Partnership is committed to working with partners to establish active habits for children and young people, laying the early foundations for good health throughout their lives. By prioritising sport and physical activity, together we can empower children and young people to lead healthier, happier, and more productive lives, while equipping them with valuable skills to thrive in the future.

Our Commitments

- **Developing our relationships with local schools** to enable them to offer a diverse and inclusive range of sport and physical activity opportunities, with the aim to empower children and young people to foster a positive relationship with physical activity.
- Strengthening Hertfordshire's local sport and physical activity infrastructure and to help **create sustainable pathways from schools to community sport.**
- Using physical activity and sport to **support the emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people** within educational and community settings.
- **Delivering a range of volunteering, youth mentoring and leadership opportunities** to children and young people.
- **Championing the importance of movement and activity for children under five years old**, with the aim to foster a strong foundation for a healthy and active lifestyle.

Physical Activity for Health and Wellbeing



Strategic Objective: Positioning movement, sport, and physical activity at the heart of how we think about people's health and wellbeing in Hertfordshire.

Making the Case

It is well documented that being physically active can help people to lead healthier and happier lives, encouraging improvements in physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Those taking part in regular exercise have a lower risk of developing many long-term health conditions and is also proven to increase self-esteem, mood, sleep quality, energy levels and reduce the risks of stress, clinical depression, whilst helping to reduce social isolation.

However, the benefit of good health is not experienced equally by everyone, with key contributing factors being: economic stability, education, social and community context, healthcare access, and neighbourhood and built environment. These effects are felt more significantly by certain groups within society and can lead to a marked reduction in physical and mental health, as well as overall life expectancy. Physical activity has been described as the 'miracle cure' that can help overcome the inequalities faced by so many. Our goal is to ensure that the people in Hertfordshire can reap the benefits of physical activity, regardless of wider circumstance, targeting resource at those that are least active and facing greatest inequality.

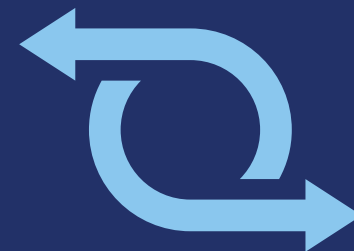
Our Commitments

- **By stimulating and promoting fully inclusive physical activity and sport provision** in Hertfordshire, recognising that people with more challenging health needs may need extra support or new ways to take part.
- Through advocacy for movement, physical activity, and sport as beneficial to health and wellbeing by working collaboratively to support meaningful **connection between local health systems and physical activity**, harnessing the power of the NHS's 'Four ways forward' approach.
- By working as a systems connector with those who have trust, credibility and reach among people who are least active, or in poorer health, to **ensure that those facing greatest inequality have accessible, affordable, and appropriate opportunities to be physically active.**



Sport for Social Change

Strategic Objective: Use sport and physical activity to drive social change – building social capacity and inclusive communities to enhance the lives of Hertfordshire's residents.



Making the Case

Sport has significant potential to play a greater role in addressing social issues across Hertfordshire, as it can act as a catalyst to support community cohesion, social inclusion, economic prosperity, crime and antisocial behaviour reduction, educational attainment and employability.

If we are to connect with the most inactive, disadvantaged and marginalised within our communities we will need to work closely with those organisations that have the reach to, and trust of, our target audience. Some of these less traditional sports and physical activity organisations are best placed to make the biggest difference in helping us achieve our goal of ensuring that every resident of the county can get involved and stay involved in their chosen sport or physical activity.

We aim to collaborate with relevant agencies and organisations to maximise the impact of sport and physical activity on enhancing community life in the county.

Our Commitments

- Engaging with a wide range of leaders, community stakeholders and policy makers in sport, health, education, criminal justice, housing and community development, to **provide appropriate opportunities which champion the use of sport and physical activity in driving positive social change** across Hertfordshire.
- **Help upskill the sporting and non-sporting partners** working in this space so that the wide-ranging benefits of engaging with sport and physical activity (participation, coaching and volunteering), can be accessed and experienced by all.
- **Gathering, building and sharing of evidence** of what works, and what doesn't, when using sport and/or activity for positive social outcomes. Empower partners to develop their knowledge, understanding and application of monitoring and evaluation so that it becomes embedded in delivery, meaning impact can be regularly measured.
- **Securing resources** to co-design and implement appropriate sport and physical activity programmes, with partners, so that we can better serve our target audiences and include them in the project planning / decision making process along the way.

Stronger Communities



Strategic Objective: Taking a place-based approach to tackling inequalities and reducing inactivity, by concentrating limited resources and empowering local communities from priority areas, for maximum impact.

Making the Case

We are passionate about making sure that everyone across Hertfordshire has the same access to physical activity and sporting opportunities, to enhance their health, wellbeing, and life chances.

However, there is a widening inequality gap in certain parts of the county, therefore, it is imperative that we adopt a place-based approach to address stubborn inequalities and worrying physical inactivity levels.

Sport England's insight highlights two 'Priority Places' in Hertfordshire, providing a range of support (tools, resources, and funding) to enable systemic, long-term change. We aim to achieve this change by bringing cross-sector organisations together to address the underlying causes of complex social problems – including physical inactivity levels – in a more holistic and joined-up way.

Our Commitments

- Developing a granular **understanding of these priority places**, ensuring that any community provision is co-designed and that outcomes are aligned with local priorities.
- By **sharing insight and learning around place-based working**.
- **Collaborating with organisations and individuals that know their communities best**, creating robust local partner networks to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- By **targeting available resource towards communities of greatest need**.
- Through the **enhancement of local community leadership capacity** – to help grow and sustain meaningful change.
- Through the development of a suite of **Test & Learn approaches** within our Supported Places.



Active Environments



Strategic Objective: Creating inclusive and sustainable places that inspire everyone to take part in sport and physical activity and enjoy the lifelong benefits of an active lifestyle.

Making the Case

Well-designed places and spaces are powerful catalysts for change. They encourage higher levels of physical activity, leading to better physical and mental health, stronger social connections, safer communities, cleaner air, and reduced noise pollution. But their impact goes even further.

Active environments are essential in the fight against the climate emergency – by promoting walking, cycling, and other forms of active travel, we can reduce harmful emissions. By investing in green infrastructure and encouraging sustainable land use, we can tackle both sedentary lifestyles and carbon footprints simultaneously.

However, building infrastructure alone is not enough. Planning decisions must be paired with targeted interventions that address the social and cultural barriers preventing many individuals and communities from becoming more active. True change comes when spaces are not only available—but also welcoming, inclusive, and well-used. By connecting people, place, and purpose, we can build active environments that move us all toward a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future.

Our Commitments

- **Supporting the planning system** to design inclusive, accessible environments that enable and encourage active lifestyles for all.
- **Promoting sustainable transport**, including walking, cycling, and public transit, as everyday choices.
- **Embedding sustainability across all our work**, ensuring every initiative contributes to healthier lives and a healthier planet.
- Working with partners to **improve access to nature** and activate our parks, countryside and open spaces for regular use.



Section Three

Ambitions, Performance Measurement & Summary



Ambitions

Driven by our Strategic Objectives, we have set out our key ambitions until the end of the Strategy period (March 2027).

Click for
more info



Performance Measurement & Learning

We will use our 'Performance & Learning System' (PALS) to measure and learn from our performance including:



Project Indicators

Tangible and ambitious measures for our key projects linked to our strategic objectives.



Place-based Learning

Qualitative learning linked to our Active Local work.



Outcome Measures

Where work is directly related to specific social outcomes.



System Change

Providing progress on our work to influence relationships, policy and resource flows.



National Indicators

Observing high level and long-term direction of travel from the Active Lives Survey.

Each work stream will have a detailed Action Plan, including measures that will feed into PALS, and will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team, Board and key stakeholders.

Measures that demonstrate our effectiveness at reducing inequalities will be a key feature of PALS, and ongoing learning and improvement will be embedded across all work streams.

Values



Proactive



Reliable



Inclusive



Collaborative



Environmentally Sustainable

Our Long-Term Mission

Working strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

Our Strategic Objectives

- Community Sport & Physical Activity Sector
- Children & Young People
- Physical Activity for Health and Wellbeing
- Sport for Social Change
- Stronger Communities
- Active Environments

Activities

- Deliver projects and programmes
- Commission projects and programmes
- Influence policy, practice and funding
- Support and advise
- Convene and connect
- Workforce development
- Place-based Capacity Building

Long Term Outcomes

- Increased activity levels
- Reduction in inactivity levels
- Reducing the inequality gap between those who are least active and those who are most active
- Our ability to positively transform lives through sport and physical activity

Vision

More People
More Active
More Often



**Fit for purpose
workforce**



**Fit for purpose
organisation**



**Insight
led**



**System
change**



**Embracing technology
& innovation**

Enablers of Change

Full Introduction

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As always, we are keen to ensure that this document is a living one that reflects the needs of our partners. Already the Partnership has set about delivering the new objective, by adopting children and young



people as the focus for our Sport England funded place-based work in two of the county's most deprived areas – Cowley Hill (Hertsmere) and Waltham Cross (Brombourn).

Whilst remaining responsive to new opportunities and challenges, this refreshed strategy will very much guide our work until the end of the current Sport England funding period – March 2027 – and will provide the wherewithal for the Partnership's Board to hold the Executive Team to account for its delivery – as well as reinforcing our values and key enablers of change.

However, we fully appreciate, that the strategy can only be successfully delivered with the support of the wider sport, physical activity and health sector in Hertfordshire and we want all stakeholders to join us on what will continue

to be a very challenging journey where the stakes are high but where the rewards – including the health and wellbeing of our residents – could be massive.



Mervyn Morgan

Chair, Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership



Hester Hearn

Vice-Chair, Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

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