

## Community & Housing

23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2004

# REPORT

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**Cllr Cole-Morgan : Cabinet Member for Community & Housing**

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### Choosing Health? Choosing Activity? - A Consultation on How to Increase Physical Activity

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- To consider and approve a response to the Department of Health's Choosing Health? Choosing Activity? Consultation paper and approve the different roles that the Council could play in delivering a future action plan.

#### 2. Background

- Improving health and narrowing health inequalities are priorities for the Government. However, the NHS and other public bodies, local government, the voluntary and community sector, individuals, communities, the food industry, employers and the media all have a role to play in this area.
- The Department for Health is therefore conducting a national consultation on improving health entitled 'Choosing Health? A Consultation on Action to Improve the People's Health'. That consultation sets out the major health challenges in England and has started a debate on the range of levers we have to bring about change and how they can be used by Government and other stakeholders. The ideas that develop from the *Choosing Health?* consultation will lead to a white paper on improving health, to be published in summer 2004
- The *Choosing Activity?* consultation is an important strand of the *Choosing Health?* debate. The document sets out potential goals for an activity action plan. There is already a wide-ranging programme of initiatives aimed at increasing activity levels. This consultation offers the opportunity to prioritise these within a more coherent strategy for increasing activity and improving health.
- A draft response to this paper is attached (appendix A), the goals for each section are typed in bold, the next section gives the Council's response, followed by the priorities that the D of H should focus on. The final section identifies the role that SDC could play in delivering these priorities

#### 3. Why have an activity action plan?

- The Chief Medical Officer's recent report sets out the scientific evidence on the contribution that physical activity can make to maintaining health and well-being. Increasing activity, together with changes in diet, would contribute to the prevention of obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes, and cancer and to ongoing weight management. Cancer and cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, are the major causes of death in England, together accounting for almost 60% of premature deaths. Increasing activity would increase musculoskeletal health, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, back pain and osteoarthritis. It also has positive effects on psychological well-being and mental health.

- The estimated costs of physical inactivity are £8.2 billion annually. This excludes the contribution of inactivity to obesity, which has been estimated at £2.5 billion annually. (Figures include costs to the NHS and related costs such as absence from work).
- Physical inactivity, along with unhealthy diets has contributed to the growth of obesity in England. 22% of men and 23 of women in England are now obese and 70% of men and 63% of women - 24 million adults - are either overweight or obese. Obesity brings its own health problems, including hypertension, heart disease and type 3 diabetes.
- As part of the overall *Choosing Health?* Strategy, the activity action plan will focus on the ways that better health can be achieved through increased activity at all stages of life and for different groups in society, recognizing and addressing different needs, particularly those of disadvantaged groups. There is a need to focus on what the priorities are, how to achieve them and overcome barriers to increasing activity.
- Recent work by Sport England has reinforced what existing research has already told us about the key barrier, which include - **Attitudinal** - the majority of people believe they are active enough; **Physical** - includes the condition, cost of and distance to facilities, time constraints, street lighting, presence of cycle/footpaths, weather, equipment, safety concerns, fitness, quality of provision etc; **Workforce** - shortage of skilled professionals and volunteers - eg sports coaches, quality of training and continuing professional development.

#### 4. Recommendations

Taking this into consideration, Members are asked to:

- (a) approve the draft consultation response to the *Choosing Health? Choosing Activity?* document, in particular the goals, and suggested priorities for action
- (b) approve the different roles identified that the Council could play in delivering a future action plan

#### 6. Background Papers:

- All documentation used is available in published format.
- The *Choosing Health?* and *Choosing Health? Choosing Activity?* Consultation documents are available on the web: [www.dh.gov.uk/consultations/liveconsultation](http://www.dh.gov.uk/consultations/liveconsultation)

#### 7. Implications:

- **Financial:** Financial implications relate to the provision of health /physical activity staff as recommended in the Sports and Recreation Strategy 2002 - 2006, and any funding for new health/physical activity related initiatives
- **Legal:** There are no legal implications
- **Human Rights:** Only as a result of activities being targeted at particular sectors of the community
- **Personnel:** There are no personnel implications at this stage
- **Community Safety:** The importance of sport as a diversionary tool for young and old is well documented. This report seeks to provide inclusive opportunities for specific target groups – an aim that is entirely consistent with the Council's role within the Community Safety Strategy to use Sport as a means to reduce crime.
- **Environmental:** Encouraging people to walk and/or cycle will have a positive affect on the environment.
- **Council's Core Values:** The Council's Core Values are fully reflected at all stages of this report
- **Ward(s) Affected:** Activity takes place in various wards across the district
- **Consultation Undertaken:** Consultation has taken place with various council units prior to the development of this report

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONSULTATION CHOOSING HEALTH? CHOOSING ACTIVITY? RESPONSE FROM SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **I. Choosing Activity**

- **Ensuring that people in all parts of society get the information they need to understand the links between activity and better health.**

#### **SDC's Response**

- To increase physical activity it is necessary not only to change people's attitudes to what constitutes 'health' but also to promote the improved physical and mental benefits that increased physical activity can have on health. The focus should be 1. on shifting the emphasis away from good health being the absence of disease, 2. engendering the belief that improved health is within many people's grasp and that the most significant health benefits come from increased physical activity. Everyone needs to be aware that increased physical activity yields more significant results in reducing CHD than stopping smoking, improving diet etc.
- Educating children about the effects of binge drinking, drugs, poor diet could alleviate problems of under-age drinking, use of drugs, and possibility obesity through poor diet and over eating.

#### **Priorities for Action:**

- Raise awareness of health benefits of exercise to the community and the medical profession, who should in turn increase their role in promoting physical activity
- Promote physical activity as an opportunity for enjoyment, achievement, fitness, improved vitality, optimal weight and health. Physical activity must be seen as fun, and not as a chore
- Promote the idea that physical activity need not be expensive e.g. - walking, swimming, cycling
- Define the information people need to make choices about activity
- Improve the quality and co-ordination of information and promote what is available
- Ensure that the public understand the health benefits of physical activity in the simplest of terms
- Increase the focus on prevention rather than cure (that will enable pro-active interventions from the DoH that stimulate and enable practitioners at the local level to undertake prevention work)
- A national public information/publicity campaign focused on how to achieve good health must underpin all other activity. This will attempt to change attitudes among the public, policy makers, healthcare services and use the full range of media available to deliver positive health messages. We should be seeking to:
  - Persuade people that they can make a difference to their own health & motivate them to try to do it
  - Change perceptions of what constitutes health, and physical activity and what constitutes the role of the NHS
  - Make better health a desirable 'commodity' that can be achieved by all through increased physical activity
  - Target campaigns at different groups in society
  - Introduce Smart Cards for young people allowing them to collect points which could be used at Sports Centres/clubs/recreational facilities/activities

#### **What role should SDC play?**

- Provide and make available sufficient and appropriate information about sport and recreation and the benefits of physical activity through a central information service
- Improve information for people with specific needs e.g. people with disabilities, elderly people, older people etc. who may see formal physical activity as the preserve of younger people, for example the feeling of intimidation at attending a fitness suite
- Maximise opportunities for the positive promotion of sport and recreation
- Target health professionals with information about the importance and benefits of physical activity and opportunities available within the district

- Promote health and wider benefits of sports and physical activity to specific groups where greater impact can be achieved - young people, sedentary people, elderly people, people with disabilities

### 2. **Choosing Activity in Education**

- **Encouraging activity in early years settings, schools, further and higher education.**
- **Extending further the use of schools, further and higher education facilities as a community resource for sport and physical activity, including out of hours use**

#### **SDC's Response**

- Young people represent a core group in society. The social and health benefits of sport, recreation and physical activity, along with recognition that needs and aspirations of young people vary greatly, are equally well documented.
- Educational establishments have a huge role to play in increasing physical activity levels. The emergence of Sports Colleges and School Sports Co-coordinator Programmes is beginning to increase the amount of physical activity that young people are accessing on a weekly basis. However greater priority needs to be placed on extra-curricular activities either at the schools site or within the community and greater links need to be created between schools and other opportunities within the community. Physical activity options also need to be as varied as possible in order to attract more young people into sport. Increasing access to school facilities for community use will see the creation of wider school communities.

#### **Priorities for Action**

- Creation of a multi-sport environment that will attract new participants and become a positive physical environment to engage public health messages, based at school sites, sports centres and clubs
- Emphasis of sports colleges and school sports co-ordinator programmes to be more related to improvements in physical activity and health rather than A - C grades at GCSE
- Encouraging more activity during play and break times through training of Adults Other Than Teachers
- Development of after-school/extra-curricular clubs that include all young people not just the elite
- Improved links to sports clubs and other community opportunities
- Identifying more schools willing to open up their facilities to the community at a reasonable cost

#### **What Role Should SDC Play?**

- Encourage the development of quality physical education opportunities in all schools across the district by working in partnership with our Sports College/s and School Sports Co-coordinator Programme/s
- Enable more young people to take part in a range of sports on a regular basis through extra-curricular and out-of-school sport
- Promote and increase the number and range of opportunities for young people in urban and rural communities
- Identify more ways of developing opportunities for informal/casual recreational activities
- Enable the transition between school/casual sport and club/formal sport
- Facilitate club development
- Encouraging young people to be involved in any consultation process

### 3. **Choosing Activity in the Workplace**

- **Encouraging employers (in the public, private and voluntary sectors) to engage and motivate staff to be more active**
- **Providing employers with support, such as practical advice and examples of best practice, on enabling and promoting activity in the workplace and promoting and disseminating best practice for an active physical and cultural environment**

### **SDC's Response**

- Employers have a huge role to play in influencing the health of their employees and potentially their employees' families. We also recognise that as policy makers, the decisions of organisations can impact both positively and negatively on the health of a large number of people. In addition, as purchasers and commissioners of services and products, organisations have the ability to influence the policies and practices of a wide range of additional organisations by making health-related conditions as part of contracts.
- Many large employers particularly those in the voluntary sector employ large numbers of people. They have an important role to play in setting an example to all other employers as to their ability to influence and facilitate the health of their employees. In order for employers to take this role seriously, the Government must provide guidance and incentives.

### **Priorities for Action**

- Remove barriers to participation – enable use of flexi-time, install showers & changing facilities, install secure cycle parking, encourage employees to park further from workplace & cycle/walk the rest of the way
- Encourage people into activity in the workplace - provide subsidised access to physical activity facilities, encourage walking/cycling to work/meetings/local appointments or site visits
- Provide employers with incentives and support to create active workplaces
- Provide health/physical activity related information and access to an occupational health service
- Offer employees opportunities to participate in community development activities with a specific focus on physical activity/health

### **What Role Should SDC Play?**

- Encourage 'healthy' forms of transport to and from work and to and from meetings/appointments - need to make this more accessible – encourage provision of showers/changing facilities, ensuring secure cycle parking is available at all park & ride sites and medium/large urban offices, encourage companies to acquire pool bikes, bike mileage rates
- Provide incentives for employees to become more physically active, i.e. subsidise use of leisure facilities
- Provide information on leisure opportunities and health related information for all employees
- Involvement of employers in targeted campaigns to encourage more walking and cycling to and within work
- Through the planning system make development of a travel plan a condition of all large employment/ commercial/ retail and education-based planning permissions.

## **4. Choosing Active Travel**

- **Ensuring high quality, well targeted facilities for walking and cycling**
- **Extending further school travel plans and encouragement of safe, healthy travel to school**
- **Raising awareness of the health benefits of walking and cycling as part of the daily routine**

### **SDC's Response**

- To have maximum impact on increasing physical activity, particularly for health benefits it is absolutely essential that local communities have safe and accessible walking and cycling routes. However, we need to ensure that these routes are also accessible to people with disabilities - wheelchair users, sight impaired and people with young families. We need to encourage people to integrate walking or cycling into their daily routines, walking the last mile to work, park and cycle, and working with School Travel Plan groups to establish safe walking and cycling routes to schools. Whilst walking and cycling routes may be well developed in urban areas, we need to improve these routes in rural areas.
- Rural transport is a huge concern for people living in a rural community such as Salisbury District and not only transport into the larger urban centres but between villages. This has a significant impact on opportunities for physical activity in rural areas.

### **Priorities for Action**

- Provision of safe walking and cycling routes and promotion of facilities through the Local Transport Plan process and through use of developer contributions
- Promotion of the health benefits of cycling and walking
- Encourage schools to set up and promote cycle training and road safety awareness in schools
- Work with schools to encourage greater take up of school travel plans to actively increase the number of young people walking/cycling to school or college
- Encourage schools to increase provision of cycle parking park and ride sites, car parks
- Work to improve public transport networks, especially in rural areas - provision of an affordable and more regular service

### **What Role Should SDC Play?**

- Provision and promotion of Walking for Health Initiatives – Salisbury & Wilton Walking Map, Doorstep Walks, Bus Walks, Into City Walks, Footsteps in the Park
- Provision of more safe walking and cycling routes in Salisbury & Wilton through the Local Transport Plan process
- Provision of walking and cycling routes in rural areas including more Doorstep Walks programmes
- Provision of sufficient cycle parking to meet demand
- Work in partnership to improve public and community transport within rural communities and from rural to urban areas so that more people can engage in physical activity, such as community minibuses, LINK schemes, Demand Responsive Transport etc.
- Work in partnership with Wiltshire County Council (School Travel Plan Advisors & Travelwise) to support schools in adopting, developing and implementing School Travel Plans in the district

## **5. Enabling an Active Community**

- **Continuing to make our public spaces more accessible and attractive to those wanting to be active and creating and maintaining a wider range of opportunities for activity through sports and other recreational activities**
- **Developing more opportunities for people who are not in education or work - including older adolescents, people with disabilities, parents of young families, unemployed and retired people**

### **SDC's Response**

- In order to benefit health, it is essential that current participation levels are increased and that opportunities to engage in physical activity are available to all the community. Clubs, local parishes/communities all have to play their part in promoting and providing a wider range of activities. Lack of current opportunities particularly for young people, people with a disability and the elderly is a big concern as is the lack of public transport not only between rural areas and the city but also between villages.
- Local community facilities are important if we want to increase and improve the quality of participation. Many parishes have facilities that are often in need of renovation, particularly village halls, sports pavilions, tennis courts and children's playgrounds. It will be increasingly important for planning departments to not only identify deficiencies but to secure funding through new building developments that could enhance existing provision and or provide new facilities. We also need to be creative and look beyond defined parish lines and by grouping areas together and provide more than children's playgrounds.
- Cost can also be seen to be a barrier to participation in physical activities. Much needs to be done to promote activity as not necessarily costing a lot of money e.g. many activities such as walking are actually free.

### **Priorities for Action**

- Removing barriers to participation to create an active community, costs, transport, access, provision
- Encourage people to become more active
- Provision of activities/facilities directly within local communities
- Improved publicity and information on activity opportunities
- Identification of volunteers and empowerment of local communities
- Improve access to the countryside
- Enable planning departments to access developers funds for facilities
- Funding for local facilities to be upgraded to a minimum standard particularly to improve disabled access and the development of new facilities

### **What Role Should SDC Play?**

- The provision of quality facilities, managed and maintained efficiently and effectively
- Securing developers contributions and ensuring that funding is put towards a broader range of recreational provision - e.g. skateboard/bmx areas, multi-use games areas
- Adopt policies to safeguard and protect existing sporting and recreational provision within the Local Plan
- Deliver and promote activities to specific target groups, breaking down barriers to participation and address the affordability of activities - Wisecard
- Extend use of the Wisecard to other local providers and to other users, not simply those on a low income

## **6. An Active Health System**

- **Health professionals increasing the provision of advice to patients on lifestyle, particularly on physical activity, but routinely and opportunistically**
- **Services developed within the community healthcare system to provide ongoing support to achieve sustainable behaviour change**
- **NHS providers and PCT's, working more closely with local government and private and voluntary sectors to create access to opportunities for physical activity**

### **SDC's Response**

- In order to make any significant and sustained difference to health through physical activity local government must work with the NHS and private and voluntary sectors and in turn the NHS/PCT's must recognise the role that physical activity and exercise prevention, secondary prevention and rehabilitation can play particularly in delivering specific elements of the National Service Frameworks (Coronary heart Disease, Older People, Mental Health).
- The medical profession must be encouraged to promote physical activity/health benefits, but they must also be aware of what is available in their community. Local authorities must work closely with health to deliver preventative and rehabilitation programmes

### **Priorities for Action**

- Improve the provision of lifestyle advice in the NHS especially physical activity
- Provide services in the healthcare system and community sector to support behavioral change. We have to work together at all levels to impact on this
- Ensure healthcare professionals utilise such services as appropriate - signpost patients to relevant community programmes
- Ensure physical activity is part of the performance management measures of PCTs and that PCTs work in partnership to achieve this
- Ensure that PCT's/NHS work actively in partnership with Local Authorities
- More joint posts between health and local authorities, joint training and leadership skills for deliverers and future policy makers
- Integrated facilities linking swimming pools, fitness centres, GP surgeries, and clinics - creating physical health environments rather than sickness services

### **What Role Should SDC Play?**

- Work with health professionals to provide information about physical activity and health and opportunities within the community
- Ensure that the Local Strategic Partnership encourages partnership working between the medical profession and the local authority
- Facilitate opportunities for older people to be physically active both in the community and in their homes
- Support the healthy living scheme through the GP referral programme
- Provide community rehabilitation schemes for individuals suffering or at high risk from heart disease and other related conditions
- Link the above 3 community programmes to hospital based programmes/GP surgeries
- Forge alliances with local regional and national agencies to help promote physical activity to the community

## **7. Enabling Local Delivery**

- **Development of a national framework for increasing activity in the context of the White Paper on improving health**
- **Supporting co-ordination at regional and local level for increasing physical activity**

### **SDC's Response**

- The council has an important role to play in bringing together, leisure providers, and health agencies to ensure a holistic and proactive approach to physical activity, health and sport. It is essential that we continue to look beyond traditional recreation facilities and enable people to build activity into their daily lives in order for the NHS, local government, the private and voluntary sectors to work more closely together, the government must make sport/physical activity a statutory service. Whilst we can be as creative as possible utilising existing resources, we are never going to have as big an impact on health through physical activity and the importance of the service being recognised, without the funding to go with it. Local authorities are best placed to co-ordinate an integrated approach at a local level, however we need the resources to be able to fund someone to pull this together.

### **Priorities for Action**

- Sport/physical activity needs to become a statutory service in order to have a massive impact on participation and health
- Capacity is a major issue - funding should be given for Local Authorities to appoint Physical Activity/Health Co-coordinator
- The NHS/PCT/LA private & voluntary sector need to work closely at a local level to effect increased physical activity
- Recommend that the 'At Least Five a Week' target, (5 x 30 mins of exercise), should be 50% of the population in line with Sport England South West's recommendations and not the 70% national target.
- A regional co-coordinator for physical activity be appointed for the south west
- Health/physical activity to play a major role in the development of emerging County Sports Partnerships
- Support for physical activity must be integrated into sport and recreation networks at a local, regional and national level.

### **What Role Should SDC Play?**

- Ensure that health is integrated into local sport and physical activity networks such as the Wiltshire County Sports partnership, Wiltshire Physical Activity Group, Wiltshire Health Promotion Service
- Consider the appointment of a physical activity/health post to co-ordinate physical activity provision in line with the recommendations in this paper. This person could draw together internal units and external organisations in a more coherent way, as it is currently a fragmented service.