



# Active Southwark

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Sport and physical activity strategy  
2019 to 2023

# Foreword

## The health of our borough is of paramount importance to its ongoing success.

Our ambition is for a fairer future for all of our residents. Through supporting healthy life choices we can help our residents to live their lives to the full for as long as possible.

Southwark Council has previously introduced a universal Free Swim and Gym scheme which has seen a phenomenal take-up across the borough, bringing lots of residents to our leisure facilities for the first time and encouraging those already active to continue to be active going forward. This is just one of a number of schemes and initiatives that Southwark Council has delivered to enrich the lives of our residents.

However, the journey does not stop there. Our Council Plan outlines a number of other commitments aimed at improving residents' health and wellbeing. One of them takes the Free Swim and Gym scheme to the next stage by making it more flexible and also by providing free swimming lessons for residents who can't swim so that they can learn and gain confidence in the water.

Combine this with the work we have been doing over the past few years – investing over £50 million in our leisure facilities, parks and open spaces, delivering 29 satellite sport clubs and supporting over 170 sports organisations to access quality parks and leisure facilities – and we are a borough leading the way.

This strategy is therefore an important next step in continuing to help our residents to take up physical activity and remain active throughout their lives. In engaging with our communities across three themes: active people, active places and active communities, we can reach out and interact with all our residents across the borough, ensuring that no one is left behind.

This strategy is also only the first step; we remain ambitious about delivering more support and services for our residents that ensures that they have access to the best quality resources, and leading facilities.



**Cllr Rebecca Lury** – Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Equalities, and Communities.

# Vision

**A borough where people can easily lead a more healthy and active life.**

## About the strategy

Helping our residents lead healthy, active lives is a top priority for us. This strategy sets out the borough wide vision and direction for achieving greater participation and enjoyment in physical activity and sport.

### What we are going to do:

- > Contribute to reducing health inequalities
- > Improve the health, wellbeing, happiness and quality of life of residents through physical activity
- > Ensure physical activity and sports are integral to the social regeneration of the borough
- > Contribute to the delivery of the council's fairer future principles.

### How are we going to do it?

- > Ensure physical activity and sports priorities are reflected in other emerging plans and strategies
- > Influence and secure further investment in our sports infrastructure
- > Establish better connections between our sports community and residents
- > Maximise opportunities to develop partnerships that foster collaborative working
- > Maximise the resources available to achieve the biggest possible impact in reducing inactivity
- > Ensure the delivery of physical activity and sporting experiences is positive for our residents every time
- > Bring communities together through the enjoyment of being active
- > Be a borough that celebrates sporting success and achievement
- > Contribute to creating a place where our residents love where they live
- > Harness the opportunity that digital innovation can bring to increasing physical activity.

## Why take part in sport and physical activity – adults and children?



### Reduces your chance of:

Type II Diabetes	- 40%
Cardiovascular disease	- 35%
Falls, depression and dementia	- 30%
Joint and back pain	- 25%
Cancers (colon and breast)	- 20%

UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines 2011 Start Active, Stay Active:  
[www.bit.ly/startactive](http://www.bit.ly/startactive)

# Where are we now?

Implementing our previous strategy led us to achieve significant improvements in participation in sport and physical activity. It was a result of investing in new leisure facilities, parks and open spaces, offering increased opportunities to participate, and enhancing the delivery of health intervention projects.

This continued commitment to physical activity and sport enabled us to increase the number of active residents such that 2 in 3 people are participating in at least 150 minutes of activity each week. Some of our previous achievements are:

- > Over £50 million of investment in our leisure facilities, parks and open spaces
- > Opening a new state of the art leisure centre in Elephant and Castle
- > Delivery of the 'Free Swim and Gym' scheme, allowing all residents free access to our leisure centres at specific times during the week
- > New improved leisure contract with Everyone Active for the management of our main leisure centres
- > More and improved delivery of key physical activity and health intervention projects such as exercise on referral, diabetes prevention programmes and weight management services
- > Continued engagement each year with over 1500 young people through the London Youth Games and London Mini Marathon
- > Help bridge the gap between school, college and community sport by providing new opportunities for young people to get active, by delivering 29 school satellite sport clubs and Beat the Street
- > Widening opportunities for disabled young residents to get involved in sport through the creation of sport and activity clubs
- > In 2014 we supported the reintroduction of an athletics club into the borough which now has over 200 competition affiliated members, and 50 young athletes regularly attending club sessions
- > Supporting over 166 sport and physical activity organisations to access quality parks and leisure facilities
- > Supporting over 185 people to complete community sports training courses.

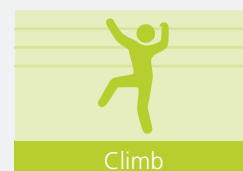
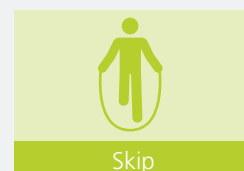
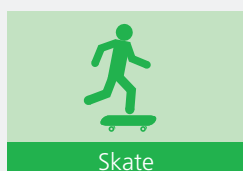
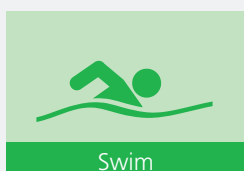
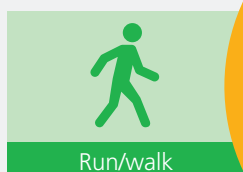
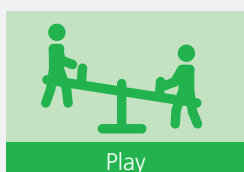
A number of other strategies have helped inform this document and positively impacted on the health of residents across the borough. Thanks to the help and support of our council colleagues and wider partners. The other strategies used to inform this document are listed on page 18.

Despite our recent successes, we continue to face a number of health issues, which physical activity and sport can help to address. The Chief Medical Officer for England recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity each week to benefit their health. For children aged 5 to 17 this increases to at least 60 minutes per day, and for children under the age of 5 increases again to 180 minutes per day.

Whilst we are working to bring all residents up to the recommended levels of activity, we still have some way to go to reduce levels of inactivity. We know that about 20% of our residents do not meet the recommended minimum levels, and it is estimated that 308 premature deaths are recorded in Southwark every year as a result of inactivity. We need to reduce this.

## What sport and physical activity should children do to lead a healthier life?

Spread activity throughout the day

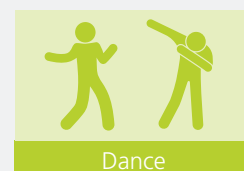
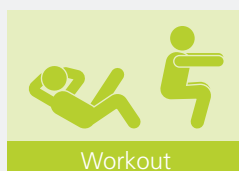
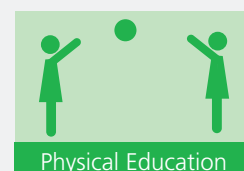
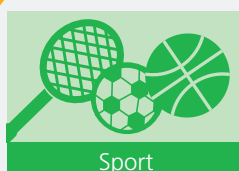
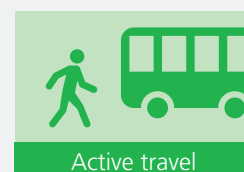
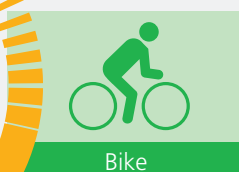


Sit less

Aim for at least  
**60**  
minutes everyday

Include muscle and bone strengthening activities  
**3 TIMES PER WEEK**

All activities should make you breathe faster & feel warmer



Move more

## What sport and physical activity should adults do to lead a healthier life?

For a healthy heart and mind

To keep your muscles, bones and joints strong

To reduce your chance of falls

### Be Active

### Sit Less

### Build Strength

### Improve Balance

VIGOROUS

MODERATE



Run



Run/walk



TV



Gym



Dance



Sport



Cycle



Sofa



Yoga



Tai Chi



Stairs



Swim



Computer



Carry bags



Bowls

MINUTES PER WEEK

**75** OR **150**

VIGOROUS INTENSITY

BREATHING FAST  
DIFFICULTY BREATHING

MODERATE INTENSITY

INCREASED BREATHING  
ABLE TO TALK

OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH

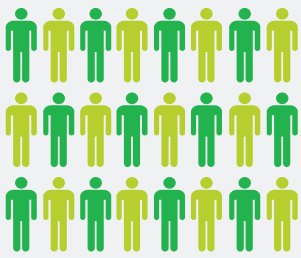
BREAK UP SITTING TIME



2 DAYS PER WEEK

# About Southwark

## Population



314,200 residents in Southwark Council <sup>1</sup>



Population growth is concentrated among young adults. Southwark's population is projected to continue to increase by 20% by 2030, an additional 60,000 residents <sup>1</sup>

33.1 years

Young population – median age is 33.1 yrs <sup>1</sup>

54% OF WHITE ETHNICITY<sup>1</sup>

25% BLACK<sup>1</sup>

11% ASIAN<sup>1</sup>

10% OTHER ETHNICITIES<sup>1</sup>

49.8 

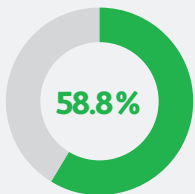
Male population 49.8% and female population 50.2% <sup>2</sup>

50.2 



4 in 10 residents live in communities considered the most deprived nationally <sup>2</sup>

## Health



58.8% of the adults (18yrs+) are overweight or obese <sup>3</sup>



39.8% of children are overweight or obese by year 6 <sup>3</sup>

78.9 years 

84.4 years 

Life expectancy for males at birth is 78.9yrs and for women is 84.4yrs <sup>4</sup>



It is estimated that 47,600 of Southwark's population has a mental health problem <sup>4</sup>

47,600


## Physical Activity

£17 million 

In Southwark the estimated cost of physical inactivity exceeds £17 million each year <sup>5</sup>



24.5% of children in Southwark schools average 60 mins physical activity a day across the week <sup>7</sup>

65.5%  65.5% of Southwark's population (16yrs+) would like to do more sport <sup>6</sup>



63% of Southwark's population are active (meeting national PA guidelines). 71% of men met the national guidelines, compared to 55% of women <sup>5</sup>



1. JSNA Factsheet 2018-19 Demography  
2. protected characteristics JSNA 2017  
3. Public Health Outcomes Framework

4. Mental Health JSNA 2017)  
5. JSNA Active Travel 2017  
6. Sport England

7. Active children's lives – Sport England 2108



# Strategy overview

The Active Southwark Strategy consists of three main themes that reflect the areas we believe are pivotal to achieving a reduction in inactivity and an increase in levels of physical activity. This strategy is owned by all organisations, clubs, groups and agencies linked to the delivery of sport and physical activity, and we will work with those key stakeholders to develop an action plan which ensures the strategy is implemented, and our ambitions realised.

## Active people

Understanding the people within our borough is essential for shaping the services we provide. By considering the personal circumstances of individuals and recognising how their needs change throughout life, we will be able to support residents in leading active and healthy lives.

## Active places

Ensuring our streets, housing areas, open spaces and sports facilities are the best standard possible and receive ongoing development are key to encouraging activity in the environment. Improving access to our community facilities, utilising more venues and spaces, and ensuring activity is designed into new development will maximise opportunities for physical activity and sport across the borough.

## Active communities

Effective local networks of organisations, clubs, schools and businesses provide opportunities for residents to become active across the whole borough. Maximising available resources and collaborating with various groups will help engage and build communities that increase participation in physical activity.



# Active people

Our residents are our top priority, and it is essential that we shape physical activity and sporting opportunities to meet an individual's needs as they progress through the different stages and events that life presents.

Southwark is a culturally rich and densely populated borough with 314,200 residents which is expected to grow by 37,000 people over the next ten years, particularly within the over 60 age group.

With a diverse and changing population comes the need for a range of opportunities for activity and sport on offer across our borough. We need to balance taking part and having fun with opportunities for competition and the pursuit of excellence. We need to embed active habits for life as we know this can lead to better health outcomes and enriched lives.

## What are the challenges?

Physical inactivity presents the biggest health risk of our time. It leads to greater risks of developing life limiting illness, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and depression. Physical inactivity is a great risk to particular groups within our community.

**Children and young people:** We have one of the highest levels of obesity amongst young children in the country and physical activity can help with addressing this. We know there is a risk around the poor behaviours adopted in our younger years becoming habits that lead to ill health later on in life, and we need to address this before children even reach school. We need to educate parents on recommended levels of activity for their children and encourage formal, informal and risky active play as one of the many ways they can help develop their child's physical literacy.

**Women and girls:** Women and girls across our borough are shown to be less likely to take part in physical activity and sport compared to males. Just over 40.2% of males compared to only 28.8% of female participate in sport for at least 30 minutes per week. We need to better understand why this happens and put measures in place to reduce the gap in participation.



**Residents living with a disability:** 13.5 % of our residents have one or more disabilities and we know that many of them want to be more active but for various reasons feel unable to do so. Although no local data exists, all measurement of disabled participation shows a worrying trend – disabled people are twice as likely to be physically inactive (43%) than non-disabled people (21%) – Sport England, Active Lives 1 (2015-16). We need to work hard to make our facilities, clubs and programmes inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Mental ill health: is a growing issue in our borough; over 47,000 people are currently experiencing a common mental disorder. We know that physical activity can contribute to a person's mental wellbeing but we also know mental ill health can act as a barrier to being physically active.

Older People: We know that sport and physical activity can play a significant part in reducing social isolation and loneliness. This is important in Southwark because our older population will grow bigger and at a faster rate than any other age group. Whilst we have been recognised by the World Health Organisation as an Age Friendly Borough, there will still be difficult challenges for this age group such as dementia, diabetes and heart disease. Almost 1,200 people aged over 65 in Southwark have been diagnosed with dementia and this is increasing. We must adapt our services and sports networks to help tackle these increasingly challenging issues with a more inclusive approach.

Southwark is both ethnically and culturally diverse, particularly amongst those under the age of 20. However, we know that some of our residents from black and minority ethnic backgrounds can be up to 13% less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines, of doing 150 minutes each week of moderate intensity exercise. We need to better understand why this is the case and shape our offer to reduce those barriers to participation.

### What do we want to achieve?

We need to reduce the participation gaps amongst specific groups of people to begin to tackle the inactivity and health inequalities that exist across our borough. We need to continue to transform, increase and promote opportunities for our residents to become more active, and especially target those who are less likely to take part in physical activity due to their personal circumstances.

### We commit to tackling inactivity through:

- > Tailoring programmes, activities and facilities with our residents in mind, to make it easier for them to remain active regularly throughout their lives
- > Working with partners and devising programmes aiming to tackle mental ill health and promoting physical activity as a contributor to improved mental wellbeing
- > Increasing activity levels amongst our older residents, helping to improve their quality of life, and contributing to reducing social isolation
- > Working collaboratively with schools and partners using physical activity to contribute to the reduction in childhood obesity levels starting from the early years
- > Improving the opportunities and quality of sport on offer to our young people in our schools
- > Reducing the participation gap between females and males
- > Delivering more inclusive activities and facilities that remove barriers for deaf and disabled people to be more physically active
- > Reducing the participation gap among people of different ethnic backgrounds.

# Active places

The physical landscape of our vibrant inner city borough is changing every day and finding space for everything our community needs to thrive is a constant challenge. We have already invested over £50 million in our leisure facilities, parks and open spaces, all of which are great places for people to enjoy, be active and take time out. We need to protect and continue to develop such spaces to ensure we can meet growing demand if we are to continue encouraging people to play sport and be physically active more often.

## What are the challenges?

Maximising use of our assets: Despite facing significant budget reductions, major improvements have been made to our sports and open spaces infrastructure in recent years and we need to ensure that the legacy of this is maintained and remains sustainable. It is important that we maximise usage of what we already have, whilst also providing access to previously untapped resources such as schools, as they are great facilities right in the heart of our communities.

With 28 green flag parks and £26 million investment since 2010, the borough has some of the best parks and open space in London. Given the clear links between green spaces and mental wellbeing, we are uniquely positioned to use these spaces to promote both physical activity and improved mental health. By developing the offer in our parks, we can encourage more people to use them, as they are great places to have fun and be active. We need to ensure that they are welcoming places where people feel safe and where a balance between formal and informal sport is encouraged and achieved.

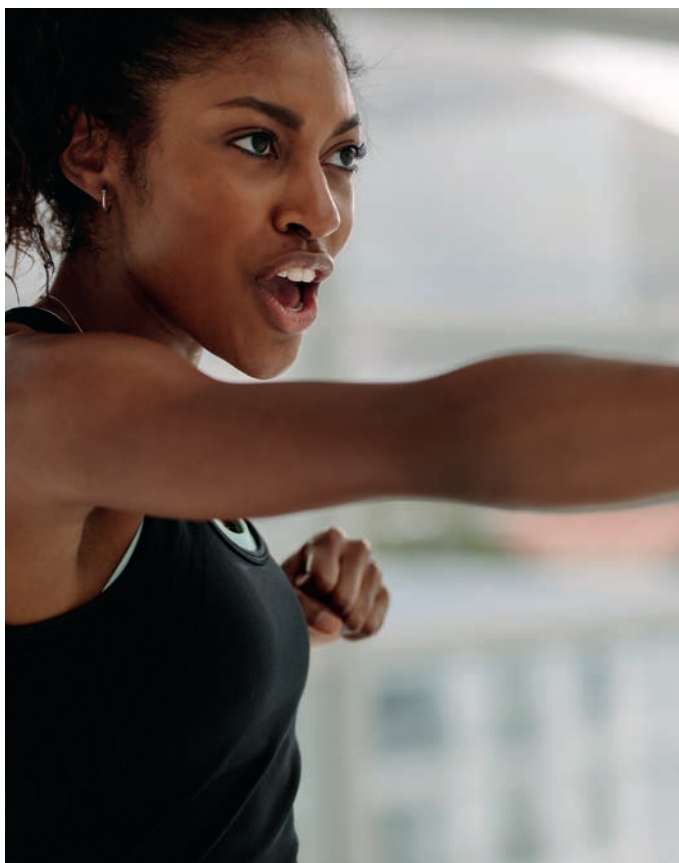
As significant areas of our borough are being regenerated, we need to ensure that our facilities and spaces enable physical activity and sport to take place, and that they meet the needs of a growing population. As part of this we must ensure the transport infrastructure facilitates more journeys to be made by walking and cycling, particularly for children. At the moment 30% of children said they would like to cycle to school but only 4% currently do. We need to change this.



Eight neighbourhoods within Southwark are classified as being in the bottom 10% most deprived in the country, and we know that in addition to numerous other challenges, there is a direct relationship between greater levels of inactivity and areas of deprivation. We need to tackle this by engaging our partners to strategically and collaboratively focus resources in these areas.

### What do we want to achieve

We want our growing communities to have access to a wide range of high quality local facilities and spaces that make it easy and enjoyable to be active. We need to be a borough where participation levels are able to grow due to the access to great spaces, no matter where someone lives.



### We commit to ensuring there are places and spaces that encourage physical activity by:

- > Encouraging greater and wider use of our open spaces for physical activity, informal play and structured sport

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- > Maintaining and building on the improvements already completed across our facility infrastructure

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- > Ensuring that physical activity and sport are an integral part of the regeneration plans for Canada Water and the Old Kent Road

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- > Increasing access to school sports facilities and other alternative spaces making it easier for the community to be active locally

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- > Significantly supporting the active travel agenda and increasing the number of journeys made by foot and bicycle

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- > Shaping the borough's sporting hubs that offer a range of activities in key areas of the borough

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- > Ensuring the places where we are active are fully accessible

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- > Building 'Active Design' principles into all new developments including offices and homes

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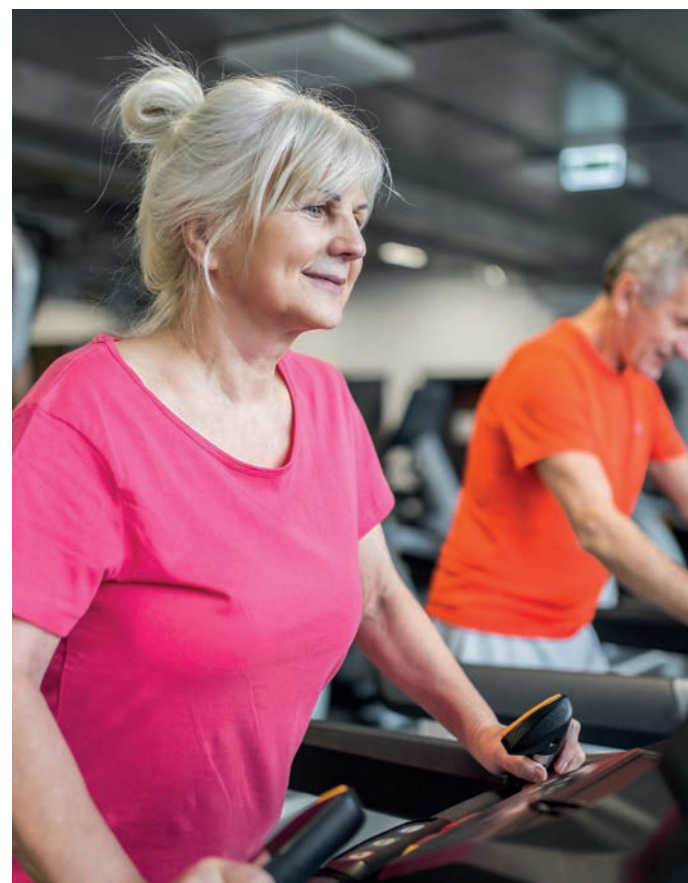
- > Improving the range and choice of activities that our residents have access to across the borough.

# Active communities

Thanks to the great engagement from our partners we have a fantastic network of clubs and organisations who encourage all our communities to be active and have fun. Many of them are managed and operated by dedicated volunteers and others are run commercially. These people, clubs and organisations are the backbone of our active community and significantly contribute to the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods. If they thrive, our communities thrive. We need to work together with our partners local organisations and neighbouring boroughs to support this network, building its stability and capacity for the future.

Connecting and strengthening our partnerships with a wider range of community organisations but particularly those who are in direct contact with our most inactive residents, will further enhance our community reach so that we can work together to creatively influence and encourage them to take the steps toward a more active lifestyle.

It is our hope that non-sporting organisations and communities will engage in this agenda. Our aim is that together our residents will encourage and influence each other to get to be active, make friends, and strengthen their social connectivity.



## What are the challenges?

There is a heavy reliance on the voluntary sector and clubs to engage with communities but at the same time the grant funding environment is becoming more competitive. Maximising the use of resources is becoming evermore important, and often this is best achieved by collaborative working. We need to support our clubs and organisation to work collaboratively and effectively communicate what they do for our residents.

As lifestyles become busier, time for volunteering becomes more difficult. Amazingly there are still many volunteers across our borough who dedicate many hours to promoting physical activity sport for their fellow residents. We need to ensure this workforce grows, that they are maximising their skills, and that we are celebrating their efforts as they are often our unsung heroes.

There are a wealth of physical activity and sport sessions available to residents but the challenge is how we communicate these offers to our residents in a way that is relevant to them as individuals.

## What do we want to achieve?

We want Southwark to have a strong and sustainable network of activity providers working collaboratively to reduce inactivity. We want to ensure our residents can easily find safe and enjoyable activities within their own neighbourhoods. We will create a menu of great quality physical activity opportunities where residents have a variety of choices that fit into, and become part of, their lifestyles.

We want a borough with well established networks in more traditionally recognised sports but also to be a place where new and emerging activities and sports are on offer for residents to try. We also want

a sporting network with clear routes to participation and pathways for progression where those that want to progress in their chosen sport are able.

We need to build strong communities who actively encourage everyone to be physically active either through clubs, health professionals or community champions. We want these active advocates to be part of the health solution, where they are linked to our health services as simple routes to wellbeing. We want the sports community to regularly and successfully connect with other communities to reach those that sport and physical activity does not factor in their lives.

### We commit to supporting strong and sustainable communities delivering physical activity opportunities:

- > Creating innovative, robust and collaborative partnerships aimed at tackling inactivity
- > Increasing the number and quality of local coaches, particularly where specific gaps in sport and activity have been identified, increasing the number and range of volunteers across the borough's sporting infrastructure
- > Continuing support of our local community clubs and organisations so they can reach as many people as possible
- > Strengthening the traditional sport structure through sport specific development plans whilst also embracing new and emerging sports and physical activities that may attract different groups within our communities
- > Making Southwark a place to be proud of by championing our sports competitors, celebrating success and ensuring that there are opportunities and clear elite pathways available
- > Ensuring borough wide collaborative working to deliver positive and safe sport and activity experiences every time
- > Promoting sport and physical activity within workplaces
- > Using our extensive networks to contribute to the NHS 'Making every contact count' agenda
- > Engaging communities in decision making through consultation processes
- > Delivering excellence in provision of activities for young people during and after school time.

# Implementing the strategy

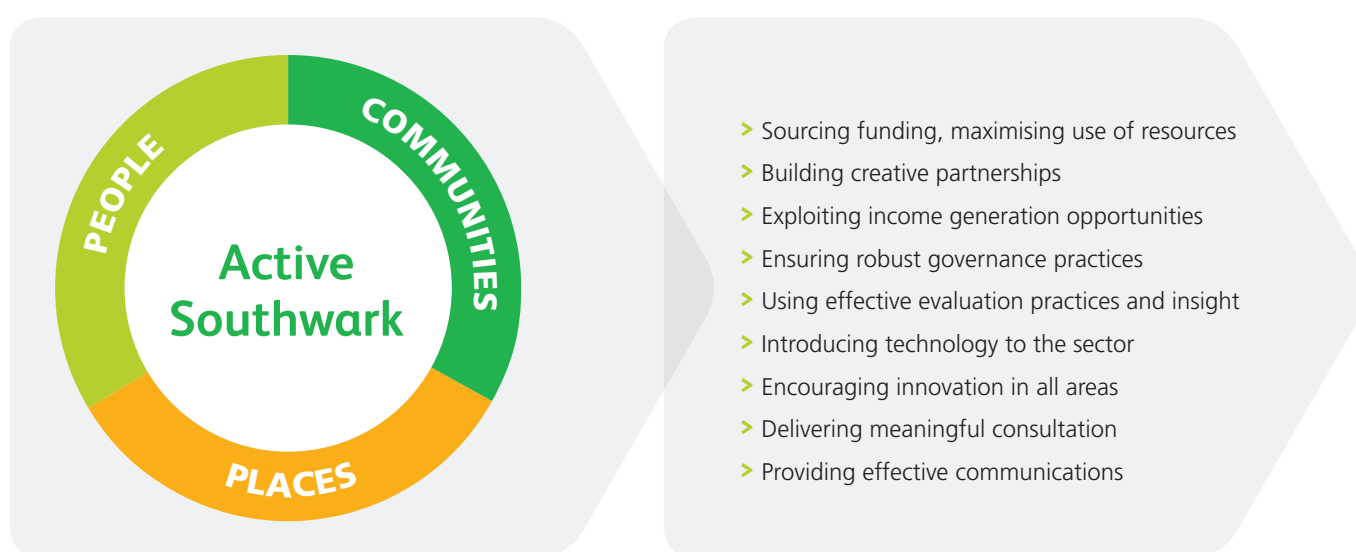
The success of this strategy will be reliant on an effective multi partnership approach. That partnership is Active Southwark, a dynamic network of organisations who work together with other key partners to increase opportunities, participation and enjoyment in sport and physical activity.

As part of the delivery of this strategy an action plan will be formed and will contain challenging targets and measurable key performance indicators which are applicable to our local communities. These will be reviewed annually to enable continuous improvement and development. Active Southwark will be open to good practice from other networks but also share the lessons learned on the strategy journey over the next few years.

Active Southwark will ensure the promotion, development, delivery and evaluation of this strategy. Regular, meaningful evaluation will be important to understand the impact Active Southwark is making and to ensure that the information we gather can then be used to effectively shape what we do in the future.

Active Southwark commits to maximising the resources available to our community groups and working proactively to attract further opportunities for the best possible support and growth for our physical activity and sports networks. Our partners are the foundation of Active Support, and through collaborative engagement we will be able to optimise our collective resources to ensure all residents, whether inactive or active, have access to and are encouraged into physical activity and sport. The diagram below shows the key areas and tools that will be the focus throughout the life of this strategy.

## How Active Southwark will support active people, places and communities.





# Methodology

A number of tools and methods have been used in the process of shaping this strategy. A review of the lessons learned from the previous strategy was conducted as part of our drive for continuous improvement and development.

**The renewal of the strategy was started by consulting key local organisations and council colleagues who were involved in sport and physical activity, and discussing the continuing and emerging themes which could shape the new strategy. This included:**

- > London Sport, London PE & School Sport Network, Everyone Active, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, Millwall Community Trust, Kings College London, Community Southwark, Various council departments

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- > An online consultation was undertaken using the Southwark Consultation hub website to allow residents and the wider community to have their say on the draft strategy. This ran between the 17th January and the 14th February 2019, with additional views provided by email

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- > Three public events were programmed during the consultation to allow people to meet a council officer to go through the strategy and share their thoughts on the draft document

**In addition Community Southwark organised a first sport and physical activity network meeting with the third sector on the 13th February 2019 which focused on providing feedback on the strategy. This included:**

- > 2 x Residents, London South Bank University, Access Sport, Disability Sports Coach, Southwark Gymnastics Club, London Sport, Community Southwark, Alzheimer's Society, Blackfriar's Settlement, London City Runners Club, South London and Maudsley Trust, The Bridge (YWCA)



The overall outcome of all of the consultation was positive and those who fed back were supportive of the objectives and themes of the strategy.

# The wider picture

As the lead partner for the strategy the council has and will continue to invest in sport and physical activity in the following areas.



Leisure centres



Sports grounds



Sports programmes



Active travel and transport



Health and wellbeing



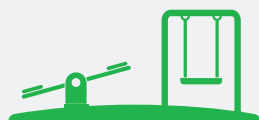
Regeneration



Estate based sports facilities



Parks and open spaces



Playgrounds and adventure play areas



Community grants



Youth services



School sport and physical activity

## Other strategies that have informed this document

Sport England: Towards and active nation (Strategy 2016 – 2021)

Southwark Council Playing Pitch Strategy

Southwark Council Movement Plan – Setting a direction for transport

London Sport: Blueprint for a physically active city

Mayor of London: Sport for all of us, the mayor's strategy for sport and physical activity Dec 2018

Everybody's business: Southwark's healthy weight strategy 2016 - 2021

Southwark Council Social Regeneration charters and Area Action Plans

Southwark Council Economic wellbeing strategy 2012 to 2020

Southwark Council Activity Strategy for Children and Young People 2017 to 2020

Southwark Council Plan - 2018/19 to 2021/22