

<b>BRIEFING</b>	<b>TO:</b>	Health and Wellbeing Board
	<b>DATE:</b>	June 2026
	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Carole Foster, Moving Rotherham Programme Manager
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Moving Rotherham Partnership Update

**Background**

- 1.1 Physical activity has benefits that are wide ranging; not only reducing health risks and improving physical and mental health outcomes, but it can also positively influence economic prosperity, such as through improved productivity, as well as community and social connectedness.
- 1.2 The Moving Rotherham Partnership have been working together to improve levels of physical activity and sport across the borough. In April 2025, Rotherham was successful as a Sport England Place Expansion partner, securing a £455K development award grant. This paper describes an update on the delivery of the Moving Rotherham Programme over 2025-26, including the development grant and associated learning and evaluation of the projects. It also sets out a draft 5-year Physical Activity Strategy for Rotherham developed with partners from this learning and a proposed full award bid.

**Key Issues**

- 2.1 **Moving Rotherham delivery 2025-26**  
A wide range of activity, engagement and evaluation work was delivered through the development phase. This included creative physical activity programmes in green spaces, a behaviour-change health coaching offer, extensive school-based consultation, and system-level inclusion work. Activity took place in trusted community settings such as schools, GP practices, libraries, community hubs and local parks, demonstrating strong partnership working and an asset-based approach. This work engaged thousands of residents and stakeholders across the borough, generating valuable insight into the barriers to, and enablers of, physical activity.
- 2.2 **Evaluation and learning outcomes 2025-26**
  - **Children and young people consultation** was a key strength of the development phase, with engagement delivered through School Games, FLUX, Children’s Capital of Culture (CCoC) and Rotherham United, using a range of creative and inclusive methods. The School Games survey engaged **1,756 children in Key Stages 2 and 3**, alongside **244 parents of KS1 pupils**, with strong reach into priority groups, including **37.5% from the most deprived communities** and **47.5% reporting additional needs or uncertainty about additional needs**. CCoC delivered creative consultation with under-18s across youth cabinets, panels and groups, reaching **8 youth groups and 70 participants**, many from SEND, LGBTQ+, high-deprivation and non-school settings, with creative methods proving particularly effective for those less interested in traditional sport. FLUX further supported consultation through **40 creative outdoor sessions**, engaging **over 600 children and young people** as part of delivery-based engagement. Targeted engagement by Rotherham United focused on groups less likely to access mainstream provision, including children and young people not in mainstream education and those accessing faith-based settings.

- **1:1 behaviour change support** in Rotherham for people with long-term health conditions was delivered through the Every Move Counts programme and the leisure centre exercise referral pathway. Every Move Counts provided a structured 12-week intervention for adults with long-term health conditions, receiving **375 referrals** and achieving a 60.3% engagement rate, with strong reach into communities typically less active, including residents from the most deprived areas. Participants reported increased physical activity levels and improvements in mood and emotional wellbeing. This offer was complemented by the leisure centre exercise referral programme, which supports people into Active Health sessions and leisure centre membership following a 12-week period, with 32.1% of participants from the 20% most deprived communities, demonstrating effective reach and impact across the borough.
- **Community engagement and delivery** was achieved through a range of place-based and co-produced approaches. FLUX delivered 40 creative outdoor physical activity sessions, engaging **810 people** from early years, families, older adults, disabled young adults, care home residents and global majority communities, while embedding consultation to better understand perceptions of green spaces and barriers to activity. Yorkshire Sport Foundation worked intensively in 5 priority neighbourhoods - Greasbrough, Rawmarsh, Masbrough/Bradgate, East Herringthorpe and East Dene - to identify key barriers and enablers to physical activity using an asset based, community-led approach.
- **System collaboration, training and development** activity supported system leaders, healthcare professionals, community members and partners to strengthen capability and confidence to promote physical activity. This included cross-sector inclusion events and workshops to embed inclusive practice, training for healthcare professionals in GP settings to increase confidence in physical activity conversations, and development activity for community and voluntary sector partners. Learning from delivery also identified future priorities, including building confidence among adult caregivers to support children's activity in outdoor spaces, helping to shape next steps for workforce development and system change. This work has also focussed on expanding reach across partners and sectors, such as workshops with planning, housing and regeneration colleagues to consider ways in which environments can be designed and improved to facilitate and promote active everyday lives.
- Some **key learning themes** were identified that came through all the work which included:
  - Trusted settings and trusted relationships drive participation and engagement
  - There is a demand for both online and offline activity and information options (support digital inclusion, accessibility of online/ telephone but increased impact from face to face). Demonstrating the need to be adaptable and flexible to different groups (marketing, comms and delivery all different).
  - The need to use existing networks as well as build new networks.
  - The importance and challenges of embedding programmes into existing pathways.
  - Visibility and representation are essential for all groups - older people, families, disabled people, all want to see more people like themselves out doing activities.
  - There is a need for strong communication and marketing to increase the visibility of local offers to the public and stakeholders.
  - Sustained work, longer term activities ie going every week not one-off is critical to building confidence, engagement and lasting impact.

## 2.3 Proposed 5-year Physical Activity Strategy

The draft strategy is appended.

It sets out **5 core principles** as ways of working together. These have been developed from the evaluation outcomes and in collaboration with System Leaders. We have together committed to:

- Join things up
- Start with people
- Explore and be brave
- Build for the long term
- Embed equity, diversity and inclusion

We have chosen **3 priority audiences** that align with the Sport England's Uniting the Movement strategy:

- Children and young people,
- People with long-term health conditions and/or disabilities, and
- Communities where activity levels are lowest.

To ensure we work effectively with these audiences, we are also prioritising **3 enabling themes** of:

- Communication,
- Inclusion, and
- Place making system change.

As we are working using a systems approach, there will obviously be overlap between these priorities and themes.

We are also mindful, that whilst we have focused on getting the least active people more active, we will not completely remove our focus from supporting those people who are currently active to stay active. There are thousands of people in Rotherham active every week through a range of sport, leisure or informal activity. For them to stay active, we need to continue to ensure facilities are suitable, a skilled workforce or volunteer network is available, and activities remain accessible.

The strategy describes how we will seek to understand our progress. We recognise that creating a more active borough within a constantly changing context is a significant and long-term challenge. To achieve this ambition, it is essential that we focus on creating the conditions that enable sustainable change, rather than short term activity alone. We will collect stories of inspiration, monitor and evaluate data and insight and continue to assess how well we are working as a system by engaging in the National Learning and Evaluation Partnership and regularly completing a system maturity matrix.

## 2.4 Proposed Place Expansion main award bid

The funding applied for reflects the priorities of the strategy and gaps in capacity and provision. The main elements of the funding will be:

- Programme Manager role to continue to provide necessary capacity to oversee the programme of work and provide a key stakeholder point of contact and support the networks
- Communication platform development and comms lead capacity – funding to support capacity with partners to promote Moving Rotherham via social media, increase brand awareness and engagement and provide a source of information about physical activity opportunities in Rotherham

- Children and young people staffing capacity through School Games or partners to use the Creating Active Schools framework to develop how schools support wider physical activity, including promoting and providing activities out of school and supporting parents with the information about what their children can engage in.
- Supporting cycling confidence and skills development and opportunities for families, children and young people.
- Continuing the Every Move Counts referral scheme to support people with long-term conditions to access health coaches to enable and build confidence in sustainable physical activity.
- Community Activation budget to support Community Wellbeing Champions and others to build on local assets and opportunities in target communities identified by Sport England, such as supporting new training or providing equipment or new opportunities to increase activity.
- Providing training opportunities, especially with regards to improving inclusion, supplemented by support through AccessAble.
- Continued support to partners in the system, including networking events and developing an annual award ceremony to celebrate and raise awareness of the activity delivered by partners across the borough.

Other funding and capacity has been identified to deliver the wider Moving Rotherham strategy to complement the Sport England Place Expansion funding.

For example, we will undertake a Built Facilities Plan and Open Spaces Strategy to look at where investment is best spent in the future and identifying increasing demand and need so that we can direct capital funding, which is available through other Sport England funding opportunities, as well as other sources of funding such as Section 106 monies.

Other partners are contributing a range of capacity in-kind, including:

- Public Health funding Community Wellbeing Champions through Voluntary Action Rotherham, and support to evaluation and analysis
- Voluntary Action Rotherham providing walk leader training through the Rambers and developing a way of promoting activity through expansion and re-design of the Gismo website and database
- Connect Healthcare supporting the Every Move Counts scheme,
- Culture Sport and Tourism working with National Governing Organisations in a range of sports to develop and improve coaching capacity and facilities
- Places Leisure delivering their Healthy Communities programme of exercise support for people with long-term conditions
- Not forgetting the huge number of important partner organisations and volunteers who deliver and promote physical activity in a range of different ways across the borough.

### Key Actions and Relevant Timelines

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| <b>3.1</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 2025-March 2026: Sport England Place Partnership development award delivery</li> <li>• April 2026 – June 2026: Evaluation and learning and strategy writing and main award development</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026: Sport England Place Expansion main award bid submission</li> <li>• Mid-September 2026: Expected decision from Sport England on main award</li> <li>• October 2026: Seek approval to spend main award from Cabinet</li> <li>• October 2026-March 2028: Main award delivery alongside wider Moving Rotherham partnership work</li> </ul> |
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<b>3.2</b>	We are awaiting further information from Sport England with regards to likelihood of further funding after the main award period. Given the continued investment in Local Delivery Pilot areas to date, we would expect not to face a cliff edge in funding following the main award in March 2028. However, national budgets have not been agreed, so no commitments have been made regarding the future funding for Place Expansion areas at this time.
<b>Implications for Health Inequalities</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p>Evidence shows that opportunities to be physically active are not equally distributed across Rotherham. For some people, being active is far more difficult due to factors such as income, geography, poor health, disability, age, social circumstances, design and safety of neighbourhoods, and access to facilities. These barriers are not about motivation or personal choice, but about the environments and conditions people live in. This inequality in opportunity results in exacerbation of health inequalities.</p> <p>As can be seen in the strategy and proposed Sport England main award bid, we are focusing our priorities on those who are least active, therefore seeking to address health inequalities.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<p>Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the Moving Rotherham Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2026-31.</li> <li>• Support the delivery of the Moving Rotherham Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2026-2031.</li> </ul>

Appended:

- Moving Rotherham Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2026-2031.
- Moving Rotherham Evaluation 2025-26