

## **Manchester City Council Report for Information**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 6 September 2022  
Executive – 14 September 2022

**Subject:** Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update and Proposed Refresh

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

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### **Summary**

In May 2018, the Council adopted a ten-year Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity in Manchester and agreed revised operating arrangements to deliver it. In December 2019, a 12-month update report was provided to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee highlighting that the new arrangements with Manchester Active (MCRactive) and leisure contractors (GLL and SLM) had been formalised and that Manchester was making good progress in tackling inactivity. Since the Strategy was agreed in 2018, the following significant announcements have been made:

- In July 2019, Manchester declared a Climate Change Emergency in recognition that climate change is a serious risk to Manchester's future.
- In March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic, with the pandemic exposing and exacerbating the inequalities that already existed across the city.
- In 2021 several important strategies were updated, this included a refresh of the Our Manchester Strategy, alongside new strategies for Sport England (Uniting the Movement), UK Sport (Powering Success, Inspiring Impact) and Greater Sport (Greater Manchester Moving). These strategies advocate new ways of working to tackle the priorities for the sector.
- Rising inflation and cost-of-living crisis resulting in more residents facing financial hardship.

This report highlights the progress that has been made to date in delivering Manchester's Sport and Physical Strategy and the amendments that are proposed to ensure the city remains on target to deliver a sustained increase in participation levels and how the City builds back fairer from the impacts of the virus. Whilst the approach is not a radical shift from the existing strategic direction, it is important to ensure that Manchester's strategy remains aligned, not least as it helps all partners to come together behind a consistent and united focus. At a more operational level, this process is important to ensure there is a clear alignment between the work that is taking place and the ease of reporting this back within the strategy framework.

### **Recommendations**

- (1) The Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee is recommended to: -

- Consider and note the progress made since the implementation of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in 2018; and
- Endorse the recommendation to the Executive to approve the refresh of the Strategy.

(2) The Executive is recommended to approve the refresh of the Strategy.

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**Wards Affected:** All

**Environmental Impact Assessment** - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The inclusion of the new Theme 8, 'Contributing to a Zero Carbon City' directly contributes to this theme. MCRactive will continue to work with partners to support Manchester in accelerating its efforts to encourage all residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to take action on climate change.

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion** - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

As part of the refresh of the Strategy, MCRactive has added the following to ensure we instill EDI within our work practices: Champion an unrelenting emphasis on diversity, inclusion, skills, and behaviours, to open up and increase volunteering and employment opportunities for people from a broader range of backgrounds and experiences.

MCRactive continues to ensure a broad appeal of sport and physical activity and to recognise and overcome barriers to participation.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities.	The Sport and Physical Activity sector is a key economic driver within the City not only as an employer, but also in attracting inward investment to underpin a wide range of key sectors in the City.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success.	The Sport and Physical Activity sector provides significant opportunities for training, development, apprenticeship programmes and volunteering. This contributes meaningfully to employment within the Manchester economy.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities.	MCRactive is at the core of neighbourhoods and creates significant opportunities for all communities within the city to engage actively and energetically.

A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth.	The Sport and Physical Activity sector has over the last twenty years already invested significantly in new assets that have helped drive the City's growth agenda.
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Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

There are no specific or additional revenue consequences arising from the adoption of the refreshed Strategy.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

There are no specific or additional capital consequences arising from the adoption of the refreshed Strategy.

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### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Report to Scrutiny – Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019.
- Executive Report – Leisure Arrangements, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Item 7.
- Executive Report – Leisure Arrangements, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018, Item 14.
- Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019, Item 53.
- Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – Climate Change: Leisure Estate, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022, Item 5.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 A review of the arrangements for sport and leisure across Manchester was completed in 2017. In May 2018, the Council's Executive approved the delivery of key workstreams in response to the review, these are summarised below:

- Approval of the adoption of the vision, strategic themes, and actions to deliver Manchester's Ten-Year Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, following extensive consultation engaging over 2,250 people.
- Agreement to the governance arrangements and establishment of a new vehicle responsible for implementing the strategy: MCRactive – a not-for-profit organisation established and overseen by Manchester City Council.
- Approval of new leisure service delivery contract arrangements: Lot 1 – Elite and Community facilities (operated by GLL) and Lot 2 – Wythenshawe Forum Leisure and Facilities Management (operated by SLM).

1.2 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy adopted in 2018 set out a commitment to establish a single system for sport and physical activity with the dual aim of a) strengthening the whole sport and physical activity sector to realise the ambition of making Manchester a more active city, and b) reinforcing Manchester's reputation as a global city of sport. The strategy set out seven strategic themes to realise the aims, as follows:

No.	Theme
1.	<b>Tackling Inactivity</b> - Encourage residents who are currently inactive to become regularly active.
2.	<b>Young People</b> - Helping young people enjoy being active, healthy and reach their potential.
3.	<b>Adult Participation</b> - Sustain and increase adult participation in sport and physical activity.
4.	<b>World Class Sport</b> - The home of world-class sport that inspires people.
5.	<b>Creating Great Places</b> - Creating great places to be active.
6.	<b>Communicate and Engage</b> – Improve communication and engagement with all residents.
7.	<b>Workforce</b> - A skilled, motivated, and valued workforce (employees and volunteers).

1.3 Since the Strategy was agreed in 2018, the following significant announcements have been made:

- In July 2019, Manchester declared a Climate Change Emergency in recognition that climate change is a serious risk to Manchester's future.
- In March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic, with the pandemic exposing and exacerbating the inequalities that already existed across the city.
- In 2021, several important strategies were updated, this included a refresh of the Our Manchester Strategy, alongside new strategies for Sport

England (Uniting the Movement), UK Sport (Powering Success, Inspiring Impact) and Greater Sport (Greater Manchester Moving). These strategies advocate new ways of working to tackle the priorities for the sector.

- Rising inflation and cost-of-living crisis resulting in more residents facing financial hardship.

- 1.4 In the context of the above, officers have been working with sport and health partners to review and refresh the strategic priorities / themes and determine how best to adapt and respond to the challenges faced by the sector. This report highlights the progress that has been made to date in delivering Manchester's Sport and Physical Strategy and the amendments that are proposed to ensure the City remains on target to deliver a sustained increase in participation levels and how partners build back fairer from the impacts of the virus.

## **2.0 Progress on Sport and Physical Activity Strategy**

- 2.1 In summary, since the launch of the Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in the summer of 2019, there has been significant progress in the development and achievement of the seven strategic themes set out in section 1.3. Since the establishment of MCRactive, and despite the many challenges, officers have worked through the covid pandemic, attracted new world-class sporting events to the City, secured investment to deliver an unprecedented number of capital schemes, forged new relationships with health partners and created a one stop digital platform for residents to find activity across the City. The progress is set out in detail below.

### **2.2 Theme 1 - Tackling Inactivity**

- 2.2.1 Over the last three years, significant progress has been made in partnering with the local health system, forging partnerships with the likes of MHCC, MLCO, GMMH and Buzz, to recognise the role of physical activity in tackling health challenges. Along with vital support secured from other key sport and health partners, over £2.8m was committed to undertake engagement pilots to change communities' relationship with physical activity, hosting non-traditional partnerships, through the Active Ageing, Winning Hearts and Minds and Local Pilot programmes, with a focus on addressing health inequalities in targeted neighbourhoods.
- 2.2.2 MCRactive have worked closely with partners across Greater Manchester where collaborative work has resulted in increased investment in walking and cycling and £1.5m investment into a Local Delivery Pilot as well as unified approaches to Public Service Reform. The GM Moving Plan (2017-2021) had an ambition to achieve 2 million moving by 2021 and 75% of the population 'active' by 2025. This Strategy was refreshed in 2021 following the impacts from the pandemic with a revised focus on achieving Active Lives for All, (2021 – 2031). With a call to action for everyone.
- 2.2.3 MCRactive has explored opportunities to create a pathway for Mancunians moving between any health system – be that advice, signposting, or referral –

into physical activity. With a key focus on people living with health conditions, the ambition is to create an easy, simple patient journey, personalised and supported to increase their likelihood of being active and improve their health.

- 2.2.4 Community engagement programmes have been delivered, including 'Heart and Soul Get Together' Community Led Research Programme in Woodhouse Park, Game Changers programme with Active Communities Network (in Ancoats and Beswick, Clayton and Openshaw, Miles Platting and Newton Heath), Greening and Growing, Miles, and Manchester and Trafford Health Collaboration to create healthier neighbourhoods. It is recognised that low levels of physical activity are associated with poor outcomes including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal health, cancer, poor mental health and well-being, the prevalence of which is higher in areas such as East Manchester.
- 2.2.5 Whilst good progress was being made in tackling inactivity prior to the pandemic, the impact of multiple lockdowns decimated sport and leisure participation in Manchester and had a disproportionate impact compared to some areas of the UK. In the year 2019/20 the Active Lives Survey revealed that adult participation had dropped by 6.5%, this compared less favourably to the national average of 1.9%. However, the reductions in Manchester were consistent with other comparable areas, who have high levels of deprivation and/or were impacted heavily by the restrictions.
- 2.2.6 During the height of the pandemic, MCRactive worked closely with existing partners to establish new relationships with instructors, and coaches across the City. The workforce facilitated 'at home' fitness resources through online activity, pushing remote provision into Manchester's front rooms, gardens, and balconies to ensure residents did not become inactive. Since the lifting of restrictions, targeted inactivity initiatives such as free swimming for over 60's have been reinstated with uptake now beyond the pre-pandemic levels (43,680 visits in 19/20, increasing to 52,887 visits in 21/22).
- 2.2.7 New approaches to engagement have been tested through numerous pilot initiatives such as Match Fit, which is a partnership between MCRactive, Manchester City Football Club (Manchester City FC), and Five Oaks Family Practice. Together the partners designed and delivered a programme aimed to test whether the involvement of a professional football club can help get inactive people active. The programme is supported by the Manchester Local Pilot, who have prioritised support for people aged 40-60 with or at risk of developing long-term health conditions and has taken a place-based approach to increase engagement with physical activity. The programme attracted the desired cohort with 50% of all participants interviewed did no activity at all prior to Match Fit, while 40% did very little. The target group had all been screened using the QRISK health check and identified as having a greater risk of heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease and stroke who are also undertaking insufficient physical activity. Whilst recruitment figures were lower than envisaged (94 compared to the 200 target) the ability to maintain sustained engagement with the majority of this cohort has been outstanding, especially during the pandemic. 92.1% of participants took part in the adapted

Match Fit delivery which occurred post-lock-down (68.2% regularly/weekly and a further 23.9% sometimes). The two most common engagement motivators were to 'look after mental wellbeing' and having a 'positive relationship with the instructor' both of which 30.7% of participants put as one of their top three reasons they kept participating. The evaluation of this project has informed design of further projects of engagement.

2.2.8 MCRactive have been working closely with the Council to ensure that physical activity features in Manchester's Building Back Fairer (Marmot) Framework. The Build Back Fairer project team have identified five 'kickstarter' projects that will contribute to tackling Manchester's Health Inequalities, with one of the five projects being 'Physical Activity'. The aim is to take the principles and learning from Sport England's Local Pilot and other successful initiatives, such as the Parkrun model, to help build capacity to create the appropriate opportunities for residents to move more, ensuring they are relevant and informed by residents and the communities that they live in.

2.2.9 The latest Active Lives Survey results were published in April 2022 and although it shows no statistically significant change (due to confidence levels on the data), the direction of travel seems positive and shows a very good recovery through 2021 from the pandemic. Whilst Manchester is still some way behind where it was pre-pandemic, the numbers of active residents are up by 2.4% (to 60.1%) and inactive residents are down by 3.1% (to 27%). Manchester is now only slightly behind the national average, which is remarkable given the impact of the pandemic in Manchester. However, there is still more to do, continuing the journey of increasing active lives and widening access to tackle under-representation.

## 2.3 Theme 2 – Young People

2.3.1 **Coaching & Instruction** – Whilst all coaching and instruction programmes for young people at council owned leisure centres were heavily impacted by the pandemic, they have recovered well with patronage now at its highest levels to date, ahead of pre-pandemic levels across the city. As at the end of 2021/22 financial year, there were 7,990 young people registered on swimming lessons and courses across the city. The growth of dry sports is slower than swimming with just over 600 participants on the programmes including Tennis, Basketball, Gymnastics, Squash and Athletics. Moving forward, GLL are working with developers to create a learn to programme for Cycling and Taekwondo. GLL have had some challenges with coaching recruitment that is preventing some level of growth of some dry courses however, work is underway to address this.

2.3.2 **Education Swimming** - 148 schools are now receiving their regular educational swimming programmes in leisure centres, 237 sessions a week have been delivered, supporting 10,989 pupils. Although, the return of education swimming is positive, it should be noted that national curriculum attainment for swimming at Key Stage 2 remains 5% below pre-pandemic levels at 73% attainment. This is due to a number of factors including the impact of the multiple lockdowns, during which some schools did not swim and



more pupils have swam this year, therefore achieving pre pandemic attainment is not directly comparable. Schools have been offered additional lessons and provided advice and support to reduce the impact on the affected pupils.

- 2.3.3 After an initial slow return due to a reduced offer, the Council's city-wide Free Swimming for the Under 17's programme has recovered well. Visitor numbers during school holiday periods and over weekend sessions are now higher than pre-pandemic levels (at 19,870 in 21/22). Whilst this is positive in part due to additional promotional activity, there is also an element of a better recording of data with the operator's booking system now in place.
- 2.3.4 Holiday activity provision has grown significantly since the lifting of restrictions, with a focus on providing support for children and families eligible for free school meals, with funding secured from the Department for Education, allowing the delivery of enriching and inclusive activities alongside a healthy meal. This year, MCRactive commissioned over 80 partners to deliver the scheme and provided activities to over 11,500 residents.
- 2.3.5 The 'Active Streets' programme has been restarted, bringing together a range of services including waste and recycling, street cleansing and sport, 'closing off' 14 different streets in 12 wards, with nearly 600 adults and children enjoying activities from snakes and ladders to table tennis and swing ball, leaving a lasting resource for continued delivery by residents. This programme of activity continues to grow as we evolve and strengthen the offer working alongside our partners.

## **2.4 Theme 3 - Adult Participation**

- 2.4.1 Keeping adults active and healthy during the pandemic has been the main priority over the last two years. During the period of restrictions sport and leisure partners were encouraged to come together to repurpose provision. This resulted in:
- The Etihad Campus being established as the UK's largest DHSC COVID drive through testing centre and numerous localized PCR, lateral flow testing and surge testing centres.
  - Establishing one of the first mass vaccine centres in the UK at the Manchester Tennis and Football Centre and repurposing of two further facilities as local vaccine centres delivering over 450,000 vaccines and 12,000 overseas document checks since opening in January 2021.
  - Establishing a Rest, Relaxation and Exercise centre at the National Squash Centre which offered free use of facilities to frontline NHS and primary care staff. The centre had over 7,000 visits from NHS & Key workers across Manchester.
- 2.4.2 As set out in section 2.2.9, with the lifting of restrictions regular adult participation in sport and physical activity has now recovered partially to 60.1%, this is still 3% behind pre-pandemic levels. The recovery was assisted by the implementation of COVID-19 secure leisure operational measures that

have enabled athletes, schools and the members of the public to access facilities when restrictions have permitted and offered free on-line classes, health and well-being tips, home activities and updates on government plans to various exercise restrictions throughout lockdowns to encourage residents to remain physically and mentally active.

2.4.3 The first wave of the pandemic thrust urban parks into the public spotlight in which residents were permitted to use parks for exercise. To maintain mental and physical health during periods of lockdown and quarantine, residents often engaged in outdoor, physically distanced activities such as visits to parks and green spaces. The importance of Manchester parks as natural spaces was especially noticeable during the lockdown in particular with increased walking, running and cycling. Parks Tennis was one of the first sports that was permitted to return under government and NGB guidelines. Using the new online booking system for Alexandra, Chorlton, Fletcher Moss, Fog Lane, Platt Fields, and Wythenshawe Parks, the Council recorded an increase from 5,906 court bookings from May to September 2019 to 15,241 court bookings for the same period of 2020, an increase of over 258%.

2.4.4 Manchester hosts seven free weekly park runs which take place across five Manchester Parks. These are:

- Alexandra Park Run
- Fletcher Moss Park Run
- Heaton Park Parkrun
- South Manchester Park Run
- Wythenshawe Park run
- Alexandra Park Junior Park run
- South Manchester Junior Park run

Park runs were one of the last sporting activities to return following the lifting of the restrictions initially with Adult Park Runs restarting from May 2021 and Juniors returning from July 2021. Since Park runs have returned the Manchester Park runs have seen over 80,000 attendees across them (up to July 2022) with 74,383 attendees across the adult runs and 5,646 across the junior runs. Work to extend the Parkrun offer has started with a new park run expected to go live at Clayton Vale in Autumn/Winter 2022.

2.4.5 MCRactive worked extensively to insulate sport clubs from the impact of the pandemic by redirecting resources to support sport and community clubs and organisations with financial hardship. This contributed to securing government grants and charity funds of circa £600k, which benefited over 70 groups. MCRactive also supported sports and community clubs with training and advice on how to adapt to deliver their sport with new modified rules and adapting delivery in COVID secure settings.

2.4.6 Leisure centre usage does appear to be recovering well which is positive for Manchester residents. Overall leisure centre patronage for 2021/22 financial year across the city was 2,535,882 compared to pre-pandemic patronage of 3,226,652 for 2019/20, which is 78.6% recovery - the national average was

68.1% 2021/22. Recovery has continued positively in to 2022, with memberships at East Manchester and Whalley Range now fully recovered with nearly all other centres hitting the 96% mark (vs. 2019).

2.4.7 The Council's leisure operators are continuing to be supported to engage with residents to widen access and ensure there is adequate provision for protected characteristic groups. It is important to ensure that targeted programmes continue and are constantly reviewed, to meet the needs of all residents. Current performance is as follows:

- Women & Girls - Across leisure centres there is positive membership balance with around 51% female and 49% male, however the overall usage by women is lower (39%) than male users (61%).
- Age – The number of users under 16 is higher than the population data for the city which shows there are varied opportunities for young people to participate in activity. Although usage is up on pre- pandemic figures for Over 60's this group is still under-represented
- BAME – Following a City wide equalities impact assessment, completed in June 2022, data showed that leisure centres usage from Black, Asian, and other Minority Ethnic backgrounds currently make up a combined membership of 42.2% of the overall membership. This is significant progress and reflects positively the cultural diversity of the Manchester's population.
- Disability - Around 3% of leisure centre members have declared that they have a disability. Whilst there are issues with under-reporting, the data does highlight that there is still more work to be done to include all residents.

## **2.5 Theme 4 - World Class Sport**

2.5.1 Positive progress continues to be made in cementing Manchester as a world class city for sport. The creation of the new 'House of Sport' is currently underway, due to launch in January 2023 and has already seen the relocation of the Rugby Football League headquarters to Manchester. The City is now home to 14 National Governing Bodies and Sport Federations, hosting national and regional performance centres that have strategic importance for the development of sport in the City. Athletes made and trained in Manchester are now dominating in national and international sport, including Athletics, Basketball, Cycling, Squash and Taekwondo. Each venue is open to the public to participate in a wide menu of sport and physical activity. Bringing local communities into iconic spaces enabling them to try different sports and inspires the next generation of home-grown Manchester talent.

2.5.2 In 2021, Manchester was announced as the leading city in the UK for cycling, ahead of Bristol, London, Newcastle, and Cardiff. Such an accolade underlines why Manchester is worthy of our reputation as a City that prioritises sport and physical activity and continues to lay claim as one of the great sporting cities in the world.

- 2.5.3 Prior to the pandemic and for the first time in 15-years, the Tour of Britain raced through the heart of Manchester. The success of the Tour of Britain demonstrated the strength of collaboration with partners - bringing all ten GM boroughs together to host a major sporting event for the first time.
- 2.5.4 During the height of the pandemic Manchester led the way on the delivery of several high profile COVID certified events. Ahead of the Tokyo Olympic Games, Manchester welcomed several international events (without spectators). Highlights included the Manchester Open International Swim Meet, the British Swimming Championships and for the second year running, the Para Powerlifting World Cup in March at Wythenshawe Forum. In addition, Manchester Thunder led the return of competitive Netball with the 'Netball Rises' tournament at Belle Vue Sports Village and British Cycling held competitive racing within the Velodrome. For every event, the planning and preparation involved was extensive, yet the rewards are plentiful, as witnessed at the Tokyo Games. Team GB once again defied the odds with their fantastic gold medal return, with the Northwest claiming half of those.
- 2.5.5 From an events perspective, Manchester's reputation as a world class sports city continues to be strengthened. Manchester venues are showcasing the very best events in track cycling, football, BMX, squash, speedway, taekwondo, athletics, tennis, and basketball amongst many more.
- 2.5.6 The globally renowned Great Manchester Run continues to see over 27,000 runners participate each year bringing the City Centre to life with runners, their families and supporters.
- 2.5.7 Alongside the Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell, the National Cycling Centre welcomed Dermot O'Leary to host World Book Day - the event saw over 1,000+ local children from 15 different schools attend.
- 2.5.8 MCRactive has played a critical part in the preparation of the 2022 Women's Euro Football tournament working with the Manchester based stadiums, fan zone creation and activation, alongside an extensive Legacy Programme, where the group secured investment of £100k+ to drive the women and girls' game. Success's included investment into a Women's Recreational Officer role, 9 female specific play centres established in Manchester (walking football flexi league and refugee specific), 8 new recreational teams established, a new summer league established, a Manchester Women's Flexy League established with 20 + teams registered, a placement programme to support the Women's Euros Legacy project was established with 8 HE students completing (one of which has secured full time employment with the Manchester FA), Female specific coaching & refereeing course established, a Football Festival delivered with over 500 women & girls participating. The unprecedented success of the Lionesses' will be a turning point in girls' football and MCRactive will continue to work to maximise the legacy of this fantastic achievement with local clubs creating a talent pathway to professional football.

## **2.6 Theme 5 - Creating Great Places**

2.6.1 Since the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was launched in 2018 over twenty capital projects have either been delivered or are in progress to create great places for residents to be active. Once this phase of investment has been completed, in the first five years of the strategy residents will have benefited from over £115m worth of capital improvements. This is a consequence of the unique partnership between Manchester City Council, Sport England, National, Governing Bodies of Sport and leisure providers. The projects include:

- Active Lifestyle Centre Pitch Programme (cost £0.198m, completed 2019),
- North City Gym Improvement (cost £0.515m, completed in 2019),
- Projects Skate Park (cost £0.79m, completed in 2019),
- Debdale Sports Centre Refurbishment (cost £0.084m, completed in 2020),
- Debdale Bowling Club Refurbishment (cost £0.056m, completed in 2020),
- Regional Athletics Refurbishment (cost £0.499m, completed in 2020),
- Whalley Range Sports Centre (cost £0.465m, completed in 2021),
- Ghyll Head Outdoor Centre (cost £1.277m, completed in 2021),
- House of Sport (cost c£6.8m, completion in 2022),
- Ladybarn Park Playzone (cost c£0.25m, completion in 2022),
- Manchester Institute Wind Tunnel (cost c£0.72m, completion in 2022),
- Tennis Court Refurbishment Programmes (cost c£0.550k, completed in 2022),
- Scotland Hall Road Playzone (cost c£0.25m, completion in 2022),
- Wythenshawe Park Cycle Trails (cost c£1.88m, completion in 2022),
- Outdoor Cricket Wickets (cost £0.25m, completed in 2022),
- Abraham Moss Library & Leisure Centre (cost c£26m, completion in 2023),
- Hough End Playing Fields (cost c£11.9m, completion in 2023),
- Manchester Aquatics Centre (cost c£31m, completion in 2024),
- National Cycling Centre (cost c£26m, completion in 2023),
- Our League Life Rugby League (cost c£6.1m, completion in 2023),

2.6.2 Cricket - As part of the legacy of the 2019 Cricket World Cup, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) invested £200k into Manchester parks and playing fields installing 17 Non-Turf Cricket Wickets into fourteen parks and playing fields. From Heaton Park in the north to Wythenshawe Park in the south, these wickets are ready for play whether its competitive team matches, casual friends and or families use. Artificial wickets extend the period of use you can continue to play and train well beyond the traditional summer season. In addition, £350k has been secured to construct Greater Manchester first ECB accredited indoor cricket hall as part of the Abraham Moss Leisure Centre scheme.

2.6.3 Tennis – A total of 23 parks in Manchester have tennis courts that research by the LTA (the UK's Tennis governing body) has shown are in areas of very high unmet demand. Currently five parks with tennis courts are considered to be in good condition with the remaining eighteen in need of refurbishment. An investment proposal to create a citywide quality parks tennis network seeks to

initially focus on two 4 court footprint sites and seven 2 court footprint sites to be improved. The remaining sites are then single court facilities which will aim to be upgraded in the next five years through a sinking fund generated by a sustainable operating model.

Wythenshawe Park, Alexandra Park and Fletcher Moss Gardens were upgraded between 2013 – 2017 with £650k combined investment from Manchester City Council and LTA Whole Sport Plan funding. Chorlton Park was refreshed with the brand 'Fred Perry' funding a makeover in 2019. In 2021, a further £300k of section 106 funds was invested into Debdale Park and Greenbank Park.

## **2.7 Theme 6 - Communicate and Engage**

- 2.7.1 Following engagement with residents in 2018, the strategy set out a commitment to establish a one stop shop for all information on sport and physical activity in Manchester. This has led to the development of a digital and data project securing over £550k of investment to transform the way the leisure industry communicates activities in Manchester. The aim is to create a place that provides opportunities, in a single digital location, to access and find inspiration on where to experience sport and physical activity. Following the launch of the new MCRactive.com website in 2021, the platform has undergone notable change and enhancement over the last year, with the number of local providers signing up to our Providers Portal more than doubling, and a new streamlined 'Activity Finder' that sits at the heart of the search platform has been introduced. With further developments planned to extend the offer to become a bookings platform in 2023, day to day focus continues to encourage more activity providers to join.
- 2.7.2 Within less than a week of the first national lockdown MCRactive digitally mobilised a revised communications approach and significantly increased social media presence and engagement. A Be Active at Home campaign was launched the following month resulting in an initial 20% uplift in engagement. Along with the wider sector, MCRactive accomplished the unique provision for sport, health and physical activity by offering a mix of diverse and engaging choice to suit all residents within the city and the challenges presented, finding new ways to offer support through online activity pushing remote provision into Manchester's front rooms, gardens and balconies.
- 2.7.3 MCRactive worked closely with existing partners whilst also establishing new relationships with key partners, instructors and coaches across the city to ramp up 'at home' fitness resources. In response to leisure centres and grassroots sports having to close their doors, providers offered free on-demand and live streamed events into Manchester's homes, and shared regular key updates across our established e-letters and channels targeting residents, clubs and health networks.
- 2.7.4 As lockdown and restrictions continued to change, MCRactive tailored communications messaging to properly reflect this position, through the 'We're Here' campaign offering assurance and guidance, followed by 'We're Back'

campaign offering advice on the 'what and how' to support and encourage residents to proactively manage both their return to sport and physical activity as well as their wellbeing and 'at home'.

- 2.7.5 Whilst the communications proposition is much improved, further work is planned over the next 12 months to further integrate websites / applications and functionality between MCRactive and the various sport and leisure providers. This will ensure the customer journey from activity search through to booking and payment online will be much simpler and more streamlined.

## **2.8 Theme 7 - Workforce**

- 2.8.1 As with many sectors, sport and physical activity providers have been impacted by workforce shortages, most notably roles such as lifeguards, cleaners, stewards and instructors have been a real challenge to recruit to. This has exacerbated challenges such as recruiting female lifeguards to undertake women only sessions. Manchester's Providers are widening their recruitment reach to create opportunities for residents, including the GLL Employability Programmes that includes working with the following partners:
- Bridge College – providing work placements for autistic students (initially two),
  - Princes Trust Leisure Programme – offering two weeks leisure training for young people with the potential offer of employment at end,
  - Key4Life Partnership – developing a partnership to offer ex-offenders training opportunities (goes live November 2022),
  - Funded Courses to support clubs and residents into employment – eighteen club members completed first aid training and four residents achieved Pool Lifeguard qualifications this quarter (Q1 2022) alone.
- 2.8.2 Prior to the pandemic, MCRactive ran Sports Leaders initiatives at both Level 1 and 2, this programme was delivered by the Active Communities Network (a sport for development) charity that uses sport as a pathway into education, training and employment and resulted in the upskilling of sixty-four 16 to 18 year-old young people giving them the necessary skills to work as Volunteers within their local clubs. The restrictions led to the suspension of this programme, however within the last 12 months this programme has been modified so that it provides opportunities for Young People to obtain casual coach employment within Manchester's Holiday Activity fund programme. To date within the last eighteen months, we have upskilled 94 young people from across Manchester. Within the last two years there has been a significant increase in the number of courses being made available for coaches and volunteers in the Voluntary Sports Sector. A year-round calendar is now available which includes Mental Health First Aid, Safeguarding and First Aid. Nineteen of these courses have been delivered within the last eighteen months with over 230 attendees.
- 2.8.3 Coach Education courses were suspended during the early phases of the pandemic. Many of the sports bodies adapted and tailored their courses throughout 2020 and switched where appropriate, to online teaching. Some of

this work has been highly beneficial and has been retained in part by some organisations since the restrictions have lifted. All face-to-face Coach Education courses are now back up and running throughout Manchester's leisure facilities and sports clubs.

### **3.0 Refresh of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to 2028**

- 3.1 Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2019–2028 set out the long-term vision for the future of sport and leisure following extensive consultation. It detailed the priorities that the whole city - public, private, voluntary and community organisations and they should work together with residents to establish Manchester in the top-flight of world class sporting cities, creating active lives for all, helping to transform their well-being. Over the first four years of the Strategy, as outlined in section 2, Manchester has made significant progress. However, some challenges remain, and the COVID-19 pandemic has put Manchester in a very different place. So, part way through the Strategy, it is proposed some of the priorities and actions are refreshed for the next six years to 2028. In doing so, it is proposed that organisations continue to respond to the outcomes from the consultation in 2017 on the priorities that are important to residents, but also to make sure the city responds to the changes in the landscape arising from the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency, the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, which exposed and exacerbate the inequalities that already existed across the city, the changing strategic priorities locally and nationally and rising inflation/ cost of living crisis.
- 3.2 Throughout the summer of 2020, the Council asked what Manchester's priorities should be as part of the Our Manchester Strategy reset; over 3,800 people responded with their views, and their priorities, along with those who were previously consulted on the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, are at the heart of the proposals. This refresh has been overseen by MCRactive – a partnership of stakeholders from across Health, Sport England, National Governing Bodies and the City Council who oversaw the creation of the original Strategy and have been monitoring its implementation ever since. The proposed changes are set out in Appendix 1 and are summarised below.
- 3.3 **Climate Change** - In response to the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency, a new Theme 8, 'Contributing to a Zero Carbon City' is being proposed.
- 3.3.1 Under this theme it is proposed that three new 'we wills'/ actions are added, all of which reflect the work that has been happening in recent years but wasn't sufficiently emphasised within the existing strategy or as in the case of 'Active Travel', sits across a number of themes. The new proposed 'we wills' are:
- to decarbonise the council owned sport and leisure facilities,
  - to Influence, educate and advocate other sporting bodies connected to Manchester helping them to rise to the challenge of climate change; and
  - to embed good active design principles and best practice into policy, practice, and governance.



3.3.2 Progress to date on decarbonisation of the Leisure Estate - £20.6million has been invested into eleven leisure centres through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme through capital borrowing. The scheme is estimated to save 2.675tonnes of CO2 per year across the estate and a further three centres are in flight and undergoing audits. A more detailed report describing the work that has been undertaken over the past 3 years to retrofit and improve the sustainability of the Councils leisure estate to deliver energy efficiency and carbon reduction was tabled at Communities and Equalities Scrutiny in January 2022.

3.3.3 Alignment with the Manchester Climate Change Partnership (MCCP) – The focus has been on facilities to date but is now including all areas of the business. By 2025, MCRactive will deliver action plans against MCCP's objectives by focusing in five areas:

- Decarbonise the leisure estate.
- Deliver efficient and effective products and services.
- Influence and educate partners.
- Create sustainable waste & recycling structure.
- Create sustainable travel plans.

3.4 **Cost of Living** - With rising inflation and a cost-of-living crisis impacting disposable income, it is imperative now, more than ever that localised free or low-cost provision such as walking, jogging, running, cycling and park-based activities are prioritised. A key focus on the messaging around the importance of movement, sport and physical activity will be a priority. Sport and physical activity can't be a 'nice to have' element of people's lives. It was important enough during the pandemic to be recognised and providers need to seize that momentum. Moreover, establishing stronger partnerships with GP networks to make better direct connections from surgeries into community provision is needed to ensure the messaging around activity is consistent and more focused on health improvement.

3.5 **Move More** – in the context of challenges ahead, it is proposed that Theme 1 is redefined from “Encourage residents who are currently inactive to become regularly active” to “Encourage residents to move more”. The rationale behind this change is to ensure the sector recognises the importance of ensuring all residents who fall below recommended activity levels are supported, not just those who are regularly active or completely inactive. Increasing regular activity for all people falling short of the recommended levels will contribute to health improvements. Under this theme it is proposed that three ‘we wills’/ actions are refined as follows:

- Develop a range of affordable place-based approaches to tackle inactivity with residents and communities, particularly those with poor health.
- Work with partners to improve, develop and prioritise the link between physical activity, sport and local health systems.

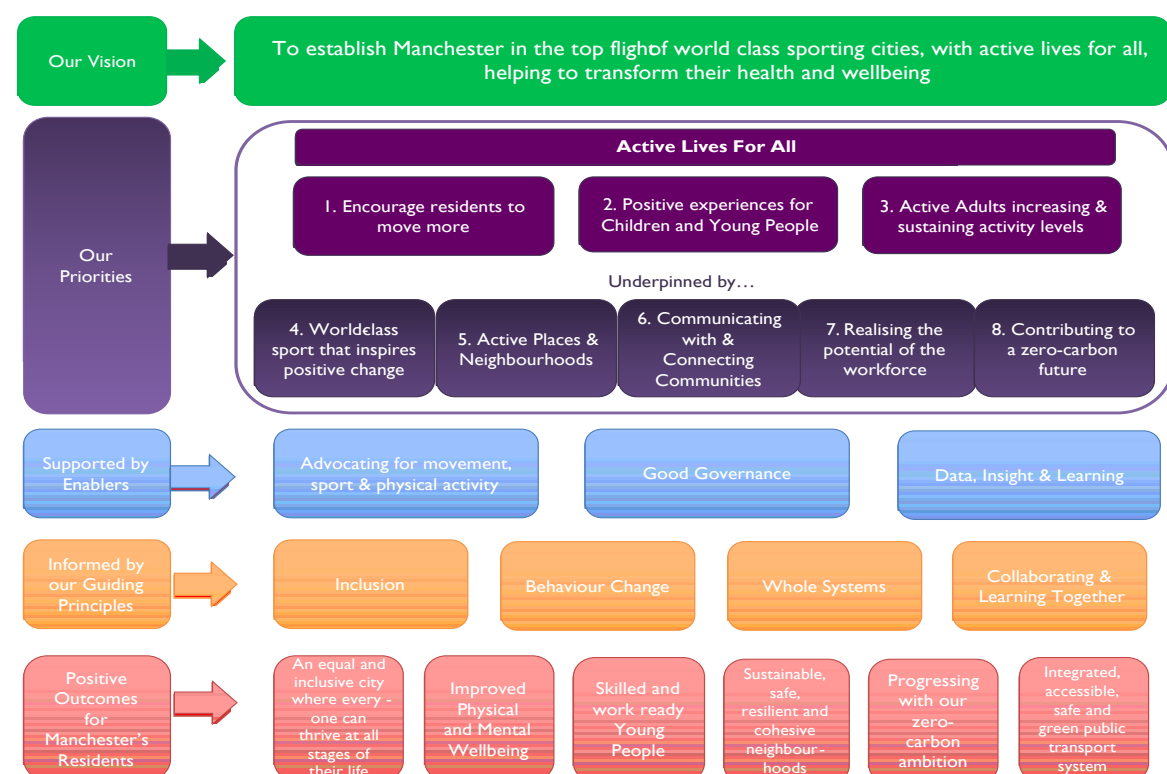
- Ensure the ways in which we encourage people to move more are inclusive providing opportunities and support for those who need new or different ways to take part, removing barriers and increasing access.

3.6 **World Class Sport** - the original 'We Will' was very broad, covering facilities, events, sporting headquarters and performance squads. It is now proposed to separate this commitment into two separate actions. As a result, a new 'We Will' now covers world class facilities and continuing to host major sports events, whilst another focusses on positioning Manchester as the home for GB Performance Squads.

3.7 **Workforce** - Recognising the need to have a more specific emphasis on equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workforce, the following 'We Will' has been proposed: "Champion an unrelenting emphasis on diversity, inclusion, skills, and behaviours, to open up and increase volunteering and employment opportunities for people from a broader range of backgrounds and experiences".

3.8 Alongside the more material changes, it is proposed that the titles of the strategic themes are reworded slightly for ease of presentation and relevance. The narrative descriptions of each theme have also been revised to ensure the language reflects the current and future strategic landscape. These amendments are designed to make it easier for partners to understand and engage. This was a specific objective for instance, with regards to engagement with the local health system.

3.9 Below is the updated proposed 'plan on a page' which provides a visual representation of the refreshed Strategy:



## **4.0 Conclusion and Next Steps**

4.1 Since the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was agreed in 2018 significant has been made in delivering the strategy, most notably in relation to investment into improved facilities, establishing physical activity interventions, attracting national organising and major events to Manchester and rebuilding from the impact of the global pandemic. The strategy refresh is timely in the context of the climate change emergency, building back fairer from the pandemic and responding to other strategies that have been refreshed during this unprecedented period.

4.2 The following next steps are proposed:

- Report presented to Communities and Equalities Scrutiny (6<sup>th</sup> September 2022).
- Decision to adopt at Executive (14<sup>th</sup> September 2022).
- Publication of Strategy (January 2023).
- 12-month review of progress (January 2024).

Appendix 1: Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Refresh.

Appendix 2: Manchester's Ten-Year Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2019-2028.