

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 7 February 2023

Subject: Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022 Annual Update

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

This report highlights the annual (January to December 2022) progress that has been made in the development and achievement of the Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (MSPAS) which includes an update on the strengthened governance arrangements of MCRactive and identified areas of focus for 2023. An update has been provided against the refreshed strategic themes of the strategy (Appendix 1) that were endorsed by Executive in September 2022; the amends were made to respond to the cost-of-living crisis and climate emergency and to ensure that the city builds back fairer from the impacts of the global pandemic and remain on target to deliver a sustained increase in participation levels.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Consider and note the progress made on delivering against Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy during 2022.
 - (2) Endorse plans for the Publication of the Refreshed Strategy in 2023.
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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

Theme 8 of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, '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 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.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
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 liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work.	MCRactive has made a strong commitment to environmental sustainability through investment to modernise the estate. This is embedded within the management of the existing estate and the plans for refurbishment. The recent inclusion of a new theme focussing on how the sector addresses the global climate emergency further embeds this in our work
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.

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 5th December 2019
- Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, 5th December 2019.
- Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Update and Proposed Refresh, 6th September 2022 and Report to Executive 14th September 2022.
- Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy Update Report, 11th October 2022 and Report to Executive, 16th November 2022.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In May 2018, the Council Executive approved the establishment of MCRactive and a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for the organisation to deliver against was launched in 2019. In addition, new arrangements were put in place to manage Manchester Indoor Leisure stock. A refresh of the Strategy was approved by Executive in September 2022, this reviewed the strategic priorities and themes to determine how best to adapt and respond to the challenges faced by the sector, including the climate emergency.
- 1.2 Over the past 12 months there has been significant progress in the development and achievement of the strategic themes of the strategy. Despite the many challenges, officers have worked to recover from the covid pandemic, have attracted new world-class sporting events to the city, forged new relationships with health partners, secured investment and progressed a number of capital schemes, and have further advanced a one stop digital platform for residents to find activity across the city.
- 1.3 This report summarises the annual (January to December 2022) progress that has been made in delivering to the Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (MSPAS). An update has been provided against the refreshed strategic themes of the strategy that were endorsed by Executive in September 2022.

2.0 Annual Report - Progress on Manchester Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

A summary against each strategic theme is set out below.

2.1 Theme 1 – Encourage Residents to Move More

- 2.1.1 Increasing regular activity for all people falling short of the recommended levels contributes to improved health outcomes. The remit of this theme is to encourage residents to move more, particularly those with poor health. A range of pilots and affordable place-based approaches to tackle inactivity with residents and communities have been delivered over the past 12 months. Collaborative partnerships have been forged and funding secured to deliver engagement programmes with a focus on addressing health inequalities in targeted neighbourhoods encouraging residents to move and have provided inclusive opportunities and support for those who need new or different ways to take part, removing barriers which has increased access.
- 2.1.2 MCRactive have worked closely with partners across Greater Manchester where collaborative work has resulted in increased investment and participation into walking and cycling – two priority focus areas identified during consultation when setting the strategy. With raising inflation and a cost-of-living crisis impacting on 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 have and will continue to be prioritised.

- 2.1.3 **Walking** - In partnership with the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT), MCRactive have provided walking workshops to Manchester groups to build their skills and knowledge and to support them to establish walking activities. Following the success further workshops are planned in future. The GM Walking Festival was held in May, approx. 30 walks were held in Manchester (provided by 25 groups and organisations). In addition, two VCSE groups have received Manchester Moving (Local Pilot) funding to deliver walks in Manchester. Wythenshawe Scout group delivered a six-week hiking challenge over the summer holidays which engaged families (396 people in total), the funding supported them to purchase walking boots and waterproofs which were loaned to families as this was a barrier identified to residents taking part. New Leaf Foundation delivered 14 weekly nature walks, attended by 45 adults in Manchester Parks including Debdale, Philips/ Clayton Vale, Crumpsall, Crowcroft, Platt Fields, Didsbury, Old Moat, Alexandra and Heaton Park.
- 2.1.4 **Cycling** - MCRactive works closely with Cycling UK, promoting their funding opportunities to our health and community contacts and co-investing into their evidence-based Big Bike Revival programme, which has funded groups in Manchester. A mixture of new and established groups have been funded including Bee Pedal Ready, Station South, Chit Chat Chai and Communities for All. MCRactive continues to challenge and influence our partners to look at more low cost, affordable activity at a local level. An example is a recent agreement with British Cycling to employ a new full time community cycling coach for the city, who will be able to undertake out-reach sessions in local communities, bringing all the equipment needed. ACES Europe (a not-for-profit organisation) have introduced an inaugural European Capital of Cycling Award 2024. In recognition of the importance of cycling not only as a way to be fit and active that is accessible for all, but also as a sustainable transport solution, Manchester has submitted an expression of interest to be awarded the new prestigious title as it offers lots of opportunities for the city and can be used as a catalyst to fast track our cycling ambitions.
- 2.1.5 The Physical Activity and Movement team has been testing new ways of working throughout the year. The team has worked alongside non-traditional partners such as GPs, link workers, and social prescribers to design targeted health and well-being interventions for small cohorts. The success of these interventions has been due to the multi-agency person-centred approach and the inclusion of community providers as equal stakeholders.
- 2.1.6 In December the TUPE of the PARS (Physical Activity Referral Service) was completed. This will bring together and expand the pathway to support for residents with long term conditions, thus improving their health outcomes.
- 2.1.7 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. The next data for Manchester will be released in the new financial year and the interventions above are hoped to contribute to an increased number of active residents.

- 2.1.8 A key focus on the messaging around the importance of movement, sport and physical activity continues to be a priority. MCRactive have been working closely with the council to ensure that physical activity features in Manchester's Building Back Fairer (Marmot) Framework to help build capacity and create the appropriate opportunities for residents to move more. MCRactive will continue to explore opportunities to create a pathway for Mancunians to move 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 Theme 2 – Positive Experiences for Young People

- 2.2.1 **Our Year** - 2022 saw 'Our Year' bring much closer focus to the MCRactive's work with Children and Young People in the City, with the teams ensuring that they were at the forefront of future programmes and planning. MCRactive have been providing staffing and funding resources to enhance the offer for children and young people across the city. With 2022 being just the start of Manchester's commitment to become a UNICEF child friendly city this work will continue to be a priority.
- 2.2.2 **Coaching and 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. There are currently 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 programmes including Tennis, Basketball, Gymnastics Squash and Athletics. There have been some challenges with coaching recruitment that is preventing the growth of some dry sport courses, however work is underway to address this.
- 2.2.3 **Education Swimming** – 148 schools are now receiving their regular swimming in leisure centres, 237 sessions a week have been delivered, supporting 10,989 pupils. Although the return to 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 multiple lockdowns, during which schools did not swim meaning 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. In response to the cost-of-living crisis and to further support COVID recovery GLL (BETTER) and Everyone Active in partnership with MCRactive have recently launched an

offering of a 50% discount on swimming lessons for children in receipt of free school meals at all the Council owned swimming pools across Manchester – initial sign up has been strong.

- 2.2.4 **16 and Under Free Swimming** - The partnership continues to offer free swimming throughout all holiday periods and specific times at weekends at all pools for all school children aged 16 and under. Over the course of the year there have been 20,344 usages across the city. It is fully recognised that the annual figures presented are below pre pandemic figures across the board. Whilst there is some mitigation with a pool programme squeeze on the existing offer following the capital programmes at Abraham Moss and Manchester Aquatics Centre along with the introduction of an expanded free activity across the city to include the Holiday Activity Fund Programme. It is recognised that the Free Swim Offer needs to be reinvigorated. Working with operators GLL and Everyone Active a combined marketing strategy has been in place across the city utilising council assets such as advertisement boards and the school's network. Previous booking restrictions have also been lifted which enables children to access the pools without an online booking, which was highlighted as a barrier earlier on in the year. All marketing collateral has been amended to promote this change. MCRactive will continue to work with the operators on the offer to ensure there are no barriers to access and once the capital programme is completed a city-wide approach is taken to programming all pools to maximise the availability for the free-swimming initiative to access the offer.
- 2.2.5 Manchester hosts two Junior parkruns in the city, at Alexandra Park and Platt Fields Park, which are weekly free to enter 2km runs. An average of 100 young people take part weekly across the two runs with a cumulative total of 4,795 in 2022. MCRactive are working with local volunteers to look at expanding the number of junior parkruns that take place across Manchester, with an initial focus of an offering in the north of the city to be explored in 2023.
- 2.2.6 **Holiday Activities** – Holiday Activity provision has growth significantly 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 140 providers to deliver the scheme and provided activities to in-excess-of 14,500 residents.
- 2.2.7 Discussions are ongoing to allow local Community organisations to use school facilities in the holidays for their Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) provision. Statistics for the October half term holidays are below (December figures are not available in time for this report).

	February HT 2022	Easter 2022	Spring HT 2022	Summer 2022	October HT 2022
Providers	21	74	16	115	33
Sessions	166	902	103	3,466	192
Engagements (visits)	4,954	20,621	2,588	81,847	7,555
Participants (unique)	1,765	5,925	1,092	14,572	2,780
Eligible for free school meals	-	86%	92%	86%	91%

2.2.8 The 'Active Streets' programme was restarted this year, bringing together 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 and evolve strengthening the offer and delivery with partners. After each event, all the relevant contact information in relation to the provision of support to local residents is provided as well as the loan of equipment to encourage regular engagement.

2.2.9 **Active Lives for Children and Young People** - The recent Active Lives for Children and Young People release, published in December 2022, shows that nationally there is a return to pre-pandemic levels in the proportion of children and young people meeting the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) guidelines (a recommended average of 60 minutes or more of sport and physical activity a day). Whilst data for Manchester is currently unavailable, the report, which covers the 21/22 academic year, shows that the proportion of children and young people who are active has increased by 2.6% compared to 12 months earlier. There is also a positive association between activity levels and mental wellbeing, with higher scores for those who are active than those who are less active. The data also shows those from the least affluent families have lower happiness levels and are the least likely to be active, with only 42% meeting the CMO guidelines compared to 52% of those from the most affluent families.

2.3 Theme 3 - Active Adults Increasing and Sustaining Activity Levels

2.3.1 Ensuring that adults continue to stay active has never been so important. Localised activity sessions are prioritised in wards that do not have sports facilities or where travel may present a barrier to participation. MCRactive will continue to work with partners to increase sport and physical activity participation opportunities in communities who have proportionally less activity. MCRactive continues to engage with sports clubs and community organisations within localities across the city, building relationships and providing tailored support to each individual organisation. These organisations are now starting to come together across the three areas North, Central and South Manchester to form Community Alliances. The Alliances are led by the Neighbourhood Sport Officers within each of these areas, with a strong emphasis on being driven by the organisations within them. The broad object is to bring sporting organisations together to share ideas, work collaboratively and improve the sporting/activity offer.

- 2.3.2 The city's sports clubs are facing unprecedented times with the energy cost increase and the cost-of-living crisis which is extremely challenging. MCRactive is working closely with the clubs to ensure they can continue to offer sport and physical activity to our residents at free or a low cost. MCRactive plan to launch the Neighbourhood Sports Fund in 2023, which will directly target the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on families by granting clubs funding to offer reduced fees / free membership to Manchester residents who may not be able to pay. Several clubs have been doing this already using up their own reserves to support residents, however with rising costs that's clubs are facing the Neighbourhoods Sports Fund with further strengthen or start clubs to offer this financial support. In addition, MCRactive will also relaunch Champions Charter which will fund talented young people in sport. Coaches will also be able to apply for grants towards the cost of coaching courses which should help with some of the coaching shortages across the city.
- 2.3.3 Leisure centre usage continues to recover well which is positive for Manchester residents. Recovery has continued confidently in 2022, with health and fitness memberships at Wythenshawe Forum, Moss Side Leisure Centre and Whalley Range Sports Stadium now exceeding pre-covid closure numbers in 2019, with all other centres hitting between the 84% and 97% mark. Overall leisure patronage across the city in 2022 was 2,732,068 which is 86% recovery and encouraging considering there are 3 centres on the contract which are either closed or providing a severely reduced service due to refurbishment and rebuild capital projects currently taking place there.
- 2.3.4 The council's leisure operators are continuing to be supported to engage with residents to widen access and ensure that there is adequate provision for protected characteristic groups. Targeted programmes continue and are constantly reviewed to meet the needs of all residents. Across the leisure facilities there is a positive membership balance with female 51% and male 49% however, the overall usage by women is lower (43%) than male users (57%). Equally, when looking at the number of memberships held by Black, Asian, and other Minority Ethnic backgrounds this currently stands at around 42.2% of the overall membership, with usage for the same group sitting at around 61% of 2022 visits. This is an encouraging figure; it shows significant progress and reflects positively the cultural diversity of Manchester's population. It is important to note, however, approximately 18% of the yearly visits the users do not disclose their ethnicity. Where possible, leisure operators will continue to source missing data to strengthen the accuracy of the leisure member base data. Similar challenges exist when looking at data collected on users with a 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.

It is also important to note that certain user groups will access the facilities and will book under a group name which will result in only the lead bookers details being collected for analysis. This is especially true for a variety of groups in all

under-represented groups, including women, people with disabilities and BAME user groups, and a difficult issue to address in the short term.

- 2.3.5 Manchester hosts five free weekly park runs which take place across five Manchester parks. MCRactive has been working closely with parkrun colleagues to support the further growth of these weekly 5km runs. A new parkrun will start at Phillips Park early in 2023 which will give even more residents opportunities to take part in free activity. From January 2022 to December 2022, 79,798 people took part in a Manchester parkrun.
- 2.3.6 The importance of Manchester parks as natural spaces was especially noticeable during the pandemic lockdown in particular with increased walking, running and cycling. Investment opportunities and legacy from events have been leveraged to increase opportunities for participation at a localised level, an example of this is the installation of seventeen non-turf cricket wickets at fourteen parks and playing fields as part of the legacy of the 2019 Cricket World Cup. Some wickets have already been activated and a community activation plan is being developed for the sites where additional activation is required. Plans will be shared with local members ahead of the start in the spring 2023. Park Tennis continued to grow using the online booking system for Alexandra, Chorlton, Fletcher Moss, Fog Lane, Platt Fields and Wythenshawe Parks, the council recorded 22,715 court bookings over the last 12 months and 2,765 newly registered players over the same period. (Note total court bookings in 2021 was 29,387 which was much higher than 2022 mainly due to the Covid pandemic and Tennis being one of the only sports available to play as lockdown restrictions were lifted).

2.4 Theme 4 - World Class Sport that inspires positive change

- 2.4.1 Positive progress continues to be made in cementing Manchester as a world class city for sport. The refurbishing of the 'House of Sport' at the Regional Arena on the Etihad Campus is nearing completion and is due to open in February 2023. Basketball England, British Taekwondo, England Lacrosse, England Netball (Regional Office), England Squash, Greater Sport and Manchester FA have all confirmed they will be taking up office space, joining the Rugby Football League in what we hope will become a world-renowned hub for sport administrative organisations, joining the likes of British Cycling and GB Taekwondo, who call Manchester their home. The city is now home to 14 National Governing Bodies and Sporting 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 and Taekwondo. Each venue is open to the public to participate in a wide range of sport and physical activity. Bringing local communities into iconic spaces enabling them to try different sports and inspire the next generation of home-grown Manchester talent.
- 2.4.2 From an events perspective, Manchester's reputation as a world class sports city continues to strengthen. Manchester's venues are showcasing the very best events in track cycling, football, BMX, squash, speedway, taekwondo,

netball, athletics and basketball amongst many more. MCRactive 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. Successes 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 with 8 HE student completing (one of which has secure full time employment with Manchester FA), delivery of a Female specific coaching and referring courses, a Football Festival delivered to over 500 women and 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.

- 2.4.3 Manchester was a host City for the Rugby League World Cup in October and November, with the Men's and Women's Finals taking place at Old Trafford and the Wheelchair Final at Manchester Central. The latter saw a record attendance of 4,500 spectators and live coverage on BBC TV, giving great exposure to one of the City's most iconic venues. For good measure, England claimed the World Cup title in what was lauded as one of the most inclusive sporting events in recent history.
- 2.4.4 In October, Belle Vue Sports Village hosted the two-day Inner-City World Cup Football tournament on its floodlit outdoor pitches. The event brought 24 amateur football teams from across Manchester, with players representing their country of origin in celebration of the rich diversity of the city. Expansion plans are in place for the event in Summer 2023 to engage even more communities.
- 2.4.5 The European Breaking (Breakdancing) Championships was also staged at Belle Vue, in November. The event saw the best breakers from across Europe come to Manchester and compete in what will be a new sport for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and was broadcast live by BBC Sport. In partnership with colleagues in the Youth Service, there were eight Breakdancing coaching sessions delivered at the Manchester and Hideout Youth Zones prior to the event and we hope to build on this in the future. In-School breaking sessions will also commence in February 2023 in four primary schools, with further roll out following that. Due to the interest and demand, the ambition is to create coach education opportunities for local young people, which will ultimately give us an instructor workforce,
- 2.4.6 Looking forward, Manchester will host the World Paralympic Swimming Championships in 2023 at the newly refurbished Manchester Aquatics Centre, where 1,000 athletes from across the globe will try to secure their place at the Paris Paralympics. Manchester is part of the bidding process to be a host City for the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025, with games potentially to be staged

at the AJ Bell Stadium. Working closely with colleagues at Manchester City, the Council is part of the UK and Ireland bid for the UEFA European Football Championships in 2028.

2.5 Theme 5 – Active Place and Neighbourhoods

- 2.5.1 MCRactive continue to oversee and progress the approved capital programme through the design stages, with 14 capital projects live and in development and 5 projects completed in year. In the last 12-month period, there has been significant progress in the journey to modernise the Cities Indoor Leisure Facilities as part of a long-term transformational renewal programme to secure a sustainable future for our world class assets and wider community leisure estate. The approved programme includes the refurbishment of Manchester Aquatics Centre and National Cycling Centre, demolition and construction of Abraham Moss Library and Leisure Centre new build, and upgrade of the National Squash Centre to host new House of Sport Facilities for our National and Local Sport Partners. Facilities will be opened in a phased manner and available for community use from summer 2023. The investment will protect much needed services across our communities and growth programme into Leisure Facilities that will continue to drive the city's growth agenda and delivery of national and local sport priorities.
- 2.5.2 In addition, British Cycling opened their state-of-the-art wind tunnel in October. Housed at the Manchester Institute of Health and Performance on the Etihad Campus. The new facilities will support British Cycling to remain at the forefront of global Track Cycling for the next period; and a further £350k external investment has been secured to construct Greater Manchester first English Cricket Board (ECB) accredited indoor cricket hall as part of the Abraham Moss Leisure Centre Build.
- 2.5.3 In the last 12-month period, MCRactive have led the refresh of Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy, in line with Manchester Local Plan. The Strategy aims to protect, provide, and enhance existing provision and will be used to guide future provision and management of outdoor sport facilities in Manchester City Council area. Manchester Play Pitch Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) report secured full sign off by Council Executive in December 2022 and is now a live Council document used to aid planning decision for development of playing field land; and to inform the need for developer contributions, and associated S106 funding to address local priorities. The Strategy will be delivered with partners with a vested interest in development and improvement of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. All short-term facility priorities are identified in the Council's Leisure's Capital Programme, or currently being brought forward with external partners as set out below. At the same time, MCRactive is working with partners to bring forward a long-term investment plan to deliver the sport specific recommendations for action over the strategy period.
- 2.5.4 The headline position is there is a sufficient supply of grass pitches to meet current demand for most sports, with some shortfalls in rugby, football, and Gaelic Sports. The future position is there is projected shortfalls in most sports

and pitch types citywide. Shortfalls can be addressed through qualitative improvements to existing sites and converting existing grass pitches where there is capacity to do so. There are also recommendations to secure long term community use at school sites to protect existing use and support future growth.

- 2.5.6 For Artificial Grass Pitches there is a current shortfall of 3G pitches identified in South and Wythenshawe area that is proposed to be addressed from Hough End and Wythenshawe Park site, with plans underway. There is sufficient supply of all other artificial pitch types citywide.
- 2.5.7 The city has made some significant strides to deliver the PPOSS priorities over the last 12-month period. This includes completion of a citywide Non-Turf Cricket Wicket programme that has seen the installation of seventeen non-turf cricket wickets at fourteen parks and playing fields as part of the legacy of the 2019 Cricket World Cup. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) invested £200k into this project for Manchester 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.
- 2.5.8 Good progress has been made in delivery of a citywide Tennis Court Improvement Programme. This has included the full court refurbishment at Greenbank and Debdale Park sites met from Section 106 Funding, and a further £294k of investment secured (made up of £164k Council Funding and £130k Lawn Tennis Association) to deliver citywide parks tennis upgrades across eleven sites. The investment will support to address unmet demand in tennis participation and move facilities to a more sustainable operating model in the long term.
- 2.5.9 MCRactive continues to work with partners to deliver Manchester Local Football Facility Plan. This includes delivery of The FA pitch Improvement pilot, a 10-year investment programme to deliver annual enhanced grass pitch maintenance in partnership with anchor clubs at key playing field sites. Current approved sites include Broadhurst Park, Cringle Playing Field, Merseybank, and Holly Hedge Park. This programme will support to address pitch quality issues and will increase capacity of use and provide long term tenure for community clubs to enable future growth. In addition, MCRactive is working with partners to develop a citywide PlayZone investment programme, an FA Local Authority Investment Programme targeted to increase sport participation in underrepresented groups in areas of most need. Manchester will shortly launch its first PlayZone Facilities at Scotland Hall Road and Ladybarn Park in partnership with City in the Community. The new PlayZone Facilities will provide new active spaces in our parks and will be supported by a community multi-sport activation plan. Facilities are targeted for completion in March 2023.
- 2.5.10 A 10-Year Cycling Facility Investment Plan has been developed in partnership with British Cycling to inform the priorities for investment across all cycling

disciplines, this includes the development of new recreational cycling hub facilities across our Park Sites. The joint investment plan saw the opening of Manchester's first Cycling Hub Facility at Wythenshawe Park. Since opening in September, the site has increased its footfall by over 20%, supporting more people to get active. The new infrastructure provides the City's first traffic free recreational cycle park, available for all ages and abilities to enjoy including over 3 miles of cycling trails, a mountain bike skills area, learn to ride area and BMX pump track offering a range of activities for the area.

2.5.11 The Capital Programme is currently funded through a mixture of external grants and contributions, capital receipts, Council borrowing and spend to save capital investment. The Capital Strategy will continue to be prioritise projects in line with the Council's investment prioritisation process where there is a clear and compelling business case and in a manner that is sustainable and supports long term growth both financial and local participation.

2.5.12 MCRactive continues to support development of new lease arrangements and alternative management models, empowering clubs and community organisations to secure and manage investment programmes to maintain and enhance Sport and Leisure assets. In the last 12-month period a new 25-year lease was agreed with Love Withington Baths to provide long term tenure and to continue to manage and operate the leisure centre on behalf of the Council, delivering key services such as school swimming in partnership with MCRactive. The new and extended management arrangements widen access to high quality sport and leisure facilities at a neighbourhood level and maintain much needed services and programmes for our Manchester residents.

2.5.13 In December, following an options appraisal, the council asked GLL to 'step in' and take on the management of Broadway Baths in the Moston ward as Broadway Community Development Group were no longer able to operate the facility. The transition of Broadway to GLL has been progressing at pace and has included the employment of 4 new starters recruited from the local community. GLL have been working hard to support the centre getting back on its feet and will enhance the delivery of community objectives for improving health outcomes in North Manchester and protect the council to fulfil its statutory obligations to provide primary school education swim provision for the 10 local primary schools that utilise the facility.

2.6 Theme 6 – Communicating with and Connecting Communities

2.6.1 The strategy sets 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 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. Over the past 12 months, the platform has undergone notable change and enhancement with several local providers signing up to the providers portal and the streamlined 'Activity Finder' that sits at the heart of the search platform has

been enhanced. In support of the roadmap, enhanced functionalities to the MCRactive Provider Go account have been introduced, a function which addresses digital exclusion / poverty by allowing approved organisations to register and book residents onto activities if they are unable to directly manage or access themselves. Whilst the communications proposition continues to improve, significant additional developments are still planned over the next 12 months to further integrate websites, applications, and functionality between MCRactive and various sport and leisure providers. This will ensure the customer journey from activity search through to booking and payment online will be simpler and streamlined.

- 2.6.2 It is recognised that there continues to be some challenges with the digital programme. Progress has been made in the delivery of phase one with both operators, however there are some acknowledged technical challenges with phases two and three, booking and membership strand of the project. MCRactive have formally written to GLL to ensure that emphasis is put on the delivery of phase two in an appropriate timeframe. With regards to Everyone Active, it is hoped that joint pressure with Westminster Sport and Leisure will progress the implementation of open bookings allowing progression in this area. MCRactive continue to meet with all project partners on a regular basis to ensure progress continues on the strategy, in addition the digital lead was recently successful in being appointed to the ODI and Sport England Open active board, which it is anticipated should help assert pressure from a more national strategic footing on our two leisure operators.
- 2.6.3 Following some concerns raised earlier in the year around bookings on the Better app, GLL have continued to develop their online booking system following a change in their leisure management system. This has brought about some transitional challenges that have caused some customer disruption; however these have deteriorated as the year has progressed and feedback from customers has been positive over the past few months including from mystery visits in QUEST assessments (External leisure quality assessments).
- 2.6.4 A series of posts have been shared throughout the year promoting opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity to include HAF provision which promoted and documented the fantastic work taking place across the city by local providers, offering free activities and hot meals to Manchester children through a series of highlight videos. In addition, the second edition of the Neighbourhood Sports Team's social media takeover day ran in August which followed the team throughout the day and visited a number of providers delivering HAF activities to children, featuring figures, images, and interviews.
- 2.6.5 Marcomms support of the HAF programme continued to deliver positive engagements, be that digitally on both the portal and website, establishing their own social platforms for the HAF team across the city or delivering, nutritionally balanced recipes to feed local families for less than £15 a week. Normality also returned to Manchester's events calendar with the Rugby League World Cup Wheelchair final at Manchester Central, the European

Breaking Championships at Belle Vue Sports Village and the World Taekwondo GP at Manchester Regional Arena, all helping drive communication, further enhancing our city of sport credentials and creating the legacies in our communities when bringing events to the city.

- 2.6.6 The wider Marcomms and Social Strategy has pivoted away from initially planned website campaign messages, to focus on promoting gateway activities of walking, swimming, cycling and running, delivering positive engagements across the board. Alongside this, a successful tender was undertaken to search and appoint a new social agency, one with outstanding non-profit credentials, who will start to manage the platforms in the new year.

2.7 Theme 7 – Realising the Potential of the Workforce

- 2.7.1 Earlier this year, work took place to improve the MCRVIP for Sport Volunteers, working with the developers and project lead MCRActive added specific questions for new users around the type of volunteering opportunities they are interested in and how they heard about MCRVIP. This allows us to look more specifically at the opportunities arising as well as how many new volunteers are utilising the system. Summer saw a significant increase in the number of young volunteers mainly as a result of the Women's Euros.
- 2.7.2 As with many sectors, sport and physical activity providers have been impacted by workforce shortages, most notable roles such as lifeguards, cleaners, stewards and instructors has been a real challenge to recruit to and has exacerbated challenges at various times in the year such as recruiting female lifeguards to undertake women only sessions.
- 2.7.3 Manchester's Providers have widening their recruitment reach to create opportunities for residents, including the GLL Employability Programme that works with partners such as Bridge College to provide work placement for autistic students, Princes Trust Leisure Programme offering two weeks of leisure training for young people with the potential offer of employment at the end, Ket4Life Partnership offering ex-offenders training opportunities and funding courses to support clubs and residents into employment.
- 2.7.4 During August and September, Learn to Ride sessions in Cheetham were provided and funded following on from the Cycle Nation community cycling research study (with British Cycling / University of Glasgow) as there was lots of interest from (mainly South Asian) women wanting to learn to ride. 38 women attended in total (126 attendances, not every woman attended every session, however it is above average attendance compared to TfGM's public courses). The training was very mixed in ability (from those who couldn't ride at all, to more confident riders) which provided some challenges for the instructors. Of these women one borrowed a bike and three purchased their own bikes with many of the women keen to join in discussions about future steps for community cycling in Cheetham.
- 2.7.5 The development of the Volunteer workforce in the VCSE has continued in the winter, courses in Paediatric First Aid and Safeguarding have been held with

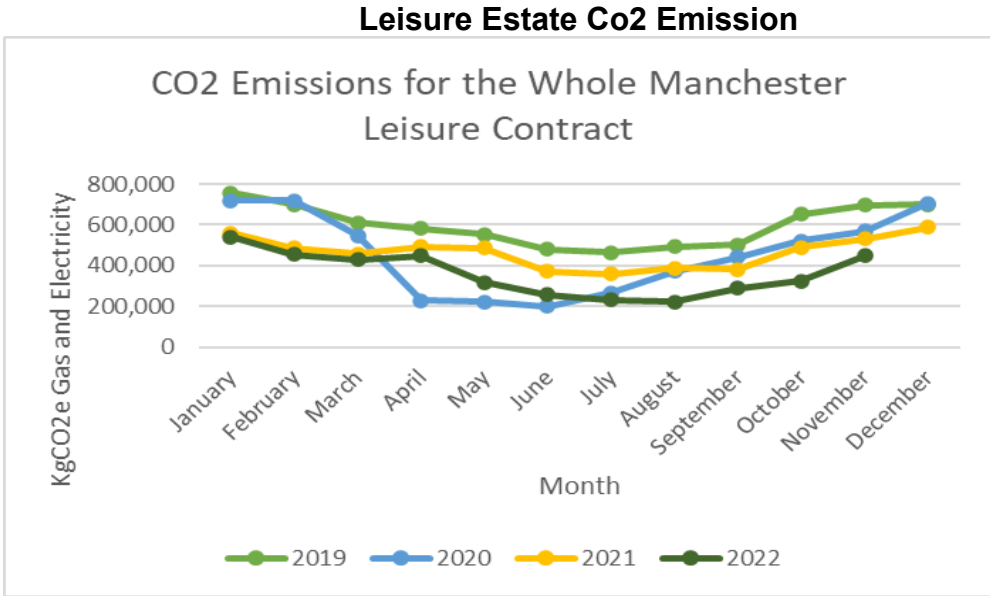
12 attendees at each. A level 2 Sports leaders course with 10 attendees has also taken place to improve the quality of delivery in the VCSE sector.

- 2.7.6 In early 2023, a Workforce survey will be going out to the VCSE sector and all Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) providers to ensure the courses offered meet the needs of the sector.
- 2.7.7 A number of workstreams aimed at strengthening MCRactive's governance were implemented in 2022 to include the establishment and recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive Officer with responsibility for providing strategic leadership for the day to day running of the organisation and driving forward the deliverables of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and the recruitment and appointment of an independent chair to the MCRactive Board.
- 2.7.8 Following an extensive recruitment process, MCRactive has appointed Andy King to the role of Chief Executive Officer, commencing on February 1st, 2023. Andy brings a wealth of experience from his roles as CEO at Your Trust in Rochdale and as a director at facility operators GLL and SERCO. He is currently Chair of GM Active, a collaborative organisation representing the interests of the 12 facility operators across Greater Manchester.
- 2.7.9 In parallel a new independent Chair has been recruited to guide the organisation through the next period. Following a competitive recruitment process, Chris Brindley MBE will be taking up the role in February. Chris brings experience from his executive roles with NatWest, British Gas and Metro Bank and most recently with Rugby League where he held the position as Chair of the widely lauded Rugby League World Cup.

2.8 Theme 8 – Contribution to a Zero Carbon City

- 2.8.1 In response to the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency, a new theme 8 was endorsed by Executive in September 2022. Three new 'we wills' actions were added all of which reflected the work that had been progressing but wasn't sufficiently emphasised within the existing strategy or sat across a number of themes.
- 2.8.2 A 5-year Sustainability Strategy has been developed, which sets out the strategic framework and key objectives that are aligned to the CCAP outcomes for zero carbon emissions by 2038. An overarching Leisure Facility Sustainability Action Plan has been developed with our leisure operators, which details the actions and the targets – this is underpinned by individual leisure centre Environmental Action Plans. The objectives for the Action Plans are as follows:
- Decarbonise Buildings
 - Efficient and Effective Supply Chain
 - Influence and Educate Partners
 - Sustainable Waste and Recycling
 - Sustainable Travel Plans

2.8.3 The Council’s decarbonisation programme has seen over £20m invested into carbon reduction technologies across the leisure estate such as solar PV’s, Ground & Air Source Heat pumps. Although the installation of the technologies has not provided 12 months data the graph below demonstrates there has been a significant impact on Co2 emissions across the leisure estate. This reduction is also supported by smarter operations across the estate.



2.8.4 Leisure Operators are operating at a much-improved waste and recycling system and recycling rates are up by 2% on 2021, this is supported by the introduction of a waste hierarchy that includes preventing waste through to how it is disposed of.

2.8.5 Focus for 2023 is around education of partners and behaviour change, in particular around events and how the objectives set out in the strategy can be achieved through pre-event planning.

3.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

3.1 Since the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was agreed in 2018 significant progress has been made in delivering the strategy most notably in relation to investment into improved facilities, establishing physical activity interventions, attracting national organisations and major events to Manchester, and rebuilding the impact of the global pandemic. The strategy refresh endorsed in September by the Executive was 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 an unprecedented period.

3.2 Following the approval of the refreshed strategy, MCRactive will be developing new assets to promote progress made against the strategy to date under the refreshed strategic themes which were designed to make it easier for partners and residents to understand and engage. Plans are underway to relaunch the refreshed publication of the strategy in March 2023.

3.3 The development of affordable place-based approaches to tackle inactivity with residents and communities, particularly those with poor health will continue to be a priority and MCRactive will further strengthen its partnership with key health and sport organisations to prioritise the link between physical activity, sports and local health systems to encourage more people to move.

3.4 The following next steps are proposed:

- Publication of Refreshed Strategy (March 2023).
- 12-month review of progress (February 2024).