



Let's Get Moving Together

Conversation Starter

Scope

- Provide **insights** on the **key factors** under each S.T.E.E.P area
- To help focus our collective efforts on the **most important social issues**
- To align and connect with the relevant **local** and **national strategic landscape**
- Strong emphasis on observing societal issues through the lens of the **'most needy'** and **'most vulnerable'**
- To act as a **'conversation starter'** to help open up conversations and to learn about what others are **'hearing and seeing'** in their communities



Approach

To begin our consultation journey toward developing our new strategy for 2022, involving key internal and external partners from the start of this journey, we've conducted a 'S.T.E.E.P' analysis, using insight as a basis to:

- Build-up a picture of the local insight and need, highlighting both current macro and local challenges that face Merseyside
- Provide some narrative of the last 12-18 months to engage and collaborate with our local partners and stakeholders

#1 Pulse of Society

Widespread disruption to people's routines and behaviors.

Societal impact

- Removal of physical activity & sport (PAS) due to Coronavirus and the government restrictions has resulted in: **loss of identity, mistrust, vulnerability, anxiety, increased disconnectedness, isolation and loneliness** of the 'hardly reached'
- Most common coping strategies: **Under** and **over eating**, use of **alcohol** or **drugs** use and **self-harming**.

Feelings toward physical activity

- **58%** would like to do **more physical activity** once restrictions are lifted

- Reduced **headspace, mental bandwidth** and **motivation** to make choices to be active
- **Reduced fitness** is a key factor impacting people's **motivation**
- Some will **return** straight away, others will take longer (i.e. indoor settings)
- **Affordability** will be a concern for many, so **flexibility** will need to be a key consideration

Opportunities

Those that were able remain physically active, reported the following as key enablers of their habits:

- Access to **safe** and **supportive outdoor spaces**
- Leveraging **social support**
- **Discovering new activities**
- The tangible **benefits** reported were varied, including: **physical, mental** and **social health benefits**

The pandemic has caused big shifts in behavioural changes, not attitudinal ones.

Resilient trends

Globally speaking, amidst of all the sensational social commentary around change and upheaval, people's 'big picture' values remain unchanged or stronger in spite of the big disruptions:

- **Health consciousness** (domestic & work setup, awareness of mental health etc)
- **Brand authenticity** (value & principles alignment)
- **Need for comfort & security** (security through jobs, food and relationships)
- **Environmental emergency** (climate concern etc)
- **Localism** (interest in local area etc)



1. SOCIAL (1/2)

#2 Social Inequalities

Pre-existing health inequalities have been exacerbated.

Key priority groups

The following groups experience **multiple disadvantages** making them more likely experience poor health outcomes:

- **Young People** (inc young families)
- **Women & Girls**
- People with **Long-Term Health Conditions (LTHC)**
- **Low Socio-Economic Groups (LSEG)**
- People with **Limiting Disabilities**
- People from **Diverse Ethnic Backgrounds**

These audiences are also **less likely** to be physically active.



1. SOCIAL (2/2)

Income, activity & 'time freedom'

In terms of average minutes spent per day on fitness activities:

- **High-income** households (32mins) **increased** their time spent keeping fit during lockdown, while **low-income** households **didn't** (16mins)

#3 Deprivation

Merseyside has some of the most deprived communities nationwide.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

IMD is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation. The 7 domains are:

- **Income deprivation**

- **Employment deprivation**
- **Education, skills and training deprivation**
- **Health deprivation and disability**
- **Crime**
- Barriers to **housing and services**
- **Living environment** Deprivation

Health is closely linked to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and inequities in power, money and resources – these are the **social determinants of health**.

- Ultimately, **life expectancy** follows the social gradient – more deprived the area = shorter the life expectancy
- When nationally benchmarked, Liverpool (2nd) and Knowsley (3rd) both sit within the **top 10 most deprived** local authorities
- Halton, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral still fall within the **worst 20%**

Insight into Action

#1 Tackling Disconnectedness

As a nation, we've experienced significant **mental health** deterioration.

With rising feelings of loneliness due to isolation, concepts of: **community, connection** and **interaction** are becoming more important than ever.

Q1. What's the role of **physical activity** and **sport** as we recover from the pandemic?

#2 Reduce Health Inequalities

People are already talking about 'long term scarring' as more is learnt about how **existing inequalities** are widening.

Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by disruptions to their income and are more likely to suffer from **multiple disadvantages**.

Q2. How do we engage the **most at risk groups** and begin to 'level-up' for those most in need?

#3 Scaling What Works

Those of us that were able to keep active through lockdown felt empowered through: **safe outdoor spaces, social support networks, discovering new activities** and **motivation** through the physical, social and mental health benefits they experienced.

Q3. How can we use these **enabling factors** as a catalyst for change?

#1 Digital Innovation

Restrictions and social distancing have led people and organisations to adapt to the 'next normal'.

Pivot to online

- **Digital shift** in services led providers and trainers to provide a mix of online and offline offers

Efficiency drivers

- Organisations have to think about the most efficient ways to **keep contact** with individuals and **engage with audiences**
- The sport and physical activity **workforce** requires **support** to adapt to digital service provision

Digital adoption

- Increased **digital interaction** for: socialising, shopping, learning and work
- The convenience of **virtual online exercise** classes was valued by many
- **Fitness & wellness apps** helped people find communities and keep motivated on their fitness goals

Whilst tech has been effective for maintaining communication, '**digital fatigue**' may be setting in, with people missing face-to-face engagement.

It remains to be seen whether the convenience of these online platforms can maintain engagement levels.

#2 Digital Poverty

Digital technology may also be the new platform for exclusion.

The 'Digital Divide'

- **22%** of the population are digitally excluded and do not have the **digital skills** needed for everyday life
- Those that aren't connected to the internet, lack the: **means, skills, confidence** and **motivation**

Barriers to participation

- Transport, joining fees and equipment have long been the '**luxuries of participation**' for many on low incomes

The increasing digital shift risks posing **further barriers** to those from complex and challenging backgrounds.



2. TECHNOLOGICAL

Insight into Action

#1 Leverage Technology

The **pace of innovation** is increasing, not slowing down.

This opens up new ways to reach and engage specific groups whose **lifestyles** and **behaviours** and evolving to meet this 'next normal'.

Q1. How can we develop innovative ways to make being active **more accessible** to those without devices?

#2 Make Activity Accessible for Everyone

Vulnerable groups that are impacted by health inequalities are also the sections of society that are most likely suffer from being '**digitally excluded**'.

Increasingly **digitalised health** and **information** services risks leaving behind vulnerable groups.

Q2. How can we develop innovative ways to make being active **more accessible** to those without devices?

#1 Societal Impact

Economic hardship is highly linked to poor health.

Poverty gap

- Unprecedented disruption to lifestyles: **redundancy, reduced work, furlough, lack of income support, employment options, care responsibilities and child provision.**
- **Low earners** are 7 times as likely to work in a **'shut-down' sector** (higher in: women compared to men).
- **Increase in claimants** due to young people working in the hardest hit sectors (higher in: the less qualified and those from ethnic backgrounds).
- **3 in 5** of all **jobs lost** are 16-25 year olds. This is 3 times higher than the overall unemployment rate.

#2 Sector Health

Sport and recreation, one of the hardest hit sectors and most reliant on the furlough system.

Fitness & leisure

- **1 in every 4** local authority leisure centres at risk of closure.
- There was potentially **700m lost visits** over a year of lockdown.
- In a 6 month period, projected loss of **social value** would be **£21b** in wider societal benefits (health care, education, wellbeing and crime cost savings to local communities).

Voluntary clubs

- **71%** of clubs said **lack of income** and inability to pay **expenses** as their main challenge during lockdown.

- **35%** of clubs relied on **memberships for income** with just over half of clubs voicing concerns over members returning back to the club.

Shrinking workforce

- **Paid coaches** clubs were the hardest hit workforce with paid roles falling by **63%** last year.

#3 Economic Outlook

Rapid increases in cost of living putting squeeze on incomes

Macro Factors

- Interest rates / Inflation
- Rising cost of living
- Housing costs
- Low paid, insecure work
- Benefits freeze
- Affordable credit



3. ECONOMIC

Insight into Action

#1 Improve Outcomes for Young People

Young people have been some of the hardest hit from the coronavirus pandemic.

Women, people with lower qualifications and those from diverse ethnic backgrounds appear to be more vulnerable as a result of being unemployed.

Q1. What's the role of sport & physical activity in increasing the number of economically active young people?

#2 Support Community Assets

Organisations in the PAS sector have been challenged with decreasing memberships and workforce issues.

They've also grappled with: economic difficulty, repositioning and re-organisation in order to adapt and respond to this challenging landscape.

Q2. What support does the sport & physical activity sector need to begin to recover and reinvent from the pandemic?

#3 Economic Outlook

Rising costs and inadequate wages cause issues for millions in all aspects of life.

These issues are bringing reduced living standards even for families with both parents in full time employment.

Q3. What support can the sector provide to those that can't afford to spend on physical activity?

#1 Lockdown Habits

People have been nudged into interacting with familiar surroundings in new ways.

Relationship with nature

- Use of **parks** and public green **spaces** were up on previous years
- Strong consensus that natural spaces were **good for mental health & wellbeing** and coping with **anxiety**

Mobility behaviour

- Lower use of **public transport**
- **Fear** of **catching/spreading** the virus

Recreation time

- Transient increase in **walking** and **cycling** early on in lockdown

#2 Active Spaces

Consider that all spaces positively or negatively influence one's choices to be active or inactive.

Community Assets

Traditional and non-traditional spaces for PAS need to be **attractive, affordable** and **inclusive** for local people, especially the inactives:

- **Leisure facilities** (e.g. leisure centres, pools, courts etc)
- **Community spaces** (e.g. parks, open spaces, village and community halls)
- **Built environment** (e.g. streets, housing estates, pathways etc)

#3 Joining the Dots

Big opportunities for PAS to connect with the 'Green' agenda.

Climate emergency

- The UK has the most ambitious climate change target to **reduce emissions by 78% by 2035** (UK Net Zero)
- **Green recovery** plan with **£40m fund** committed for green solutions across sectors inc, transport

Signals of change

Businesses are increasingly supporting sustainable consumption:

- IKEA #BuyBackFriday
- Greg's with vegan sausage rolls

Public sentiment

- Of 36 values identified worldwide, '**climate emergency**' was the strongest,



4. ENVIRONMENTAL

Insight into Action

#1 A Place Based Approach

Initial increases **walking** and **cycling behaviour** during lockdown were observed but remains to be seen if this peak in interest will carry through 2021 and beyond.

A place-based systems approach requires effective collaboration between planners, organisations and agencies engaged with **local disenfranchised communities**.

Q1. What is needed to be able to build the: **capabilities, strengths** and **assets** in our communities to enable people to lead active lives?

#2 Riding the Environmentalism Wave

Interaction with our local parks and green spaces have given us a fresh **new perspective** on our **local environments**.

Environmentalism and **climate crisis** are firmly in the consciousness of people's minds, but more could be done to connect PAS and the role it has to play to tackling global warming.

Q2. What strategies are needed for us to create the conditions for a **low carbon, connected** and **accessible** Merseyside?

#1 Political Movements

Well documented issues with large political movements

Holiday Hunger

- Nationally more than **four out of ten (43%)** households in receipt of Universal Credit experience **high or very high levels of household food insecurity**.
- Government have commit **£220 million** to the [HAF programme](#).
- In the North West, **1 in 4 children** are **eligible for free school meals**.
- This issue has backing from Government, high profile people, The All Party Parliamentary Group and many social good organisations.

- **Feeding Britain** whose aim is to ensure no one goes hungry in the UK are **set up in 4/6 of our Local Authorities**.
- Outside of London, the North West received the **highest amount of Emergency Food Parcels (313,015)** from **food banks** in the Trussel Trust Network.
- Of the national 2.5 million parcels, 980,000 **(39.2%) went to children**.

Mental Health Agenda

- The government's **£500 million mental health recovery action plan** will support hundreds of thousands of people with mental health issues.
- **1 in 4 people** will **experience a mental health problem** of some kind **each year** in England.

- **1 in 6 people** report **experiencing a common mental health problem** (like anxiety and depression) in **any given week** in England.
- Some groups are **more likely** to experience a mental health problem than others, such as **LGBTIQ+** people, **black or black british** people, **young women aged 16-24** and 40% of people who have overlapping issues.
- **1 in 6** school-aged children has a mental health problem.
- Suicide is the **largest cause of mortality** for **young people** under 35
- **Children** from the **poorest 20%** of households are **4 times as likely** to have **serious mental health difficulties** by the **age of 11** as those from the wealthiest 20%.
- It is estimated that up to **40% of calls for assistance** to **Merseyside Police** are now **related to mental ill health**.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Prevalent Social Movements

Social movements often emerge and become more prevalent in moments of emergency, calamities, and of strong repression of individual and collective freedoms. Widening inequalities, social issues and crises have seen movements, protests and extensive news coverage of many issues, the largest of these issues are:

- Black Lives Matters
- LGBTQIA+ movement
- Women's rights
- Climate change
- Mental health crisis
- Workers rights
- Organisation protests
- Students v Universities

#2 Key Strategies

Importance of being aware and aligned to local and national strategies.

MSP Strategy Alignment Summary

Our collection of local and national strategies will aid our strategy development to best align with the most important part of our closest partners strategies. These are what we believe to be the current key strategies to align with:

- Sport England
- Health and Care Partnership
- The Liverpool City Region
- Our Local Authorities



5. POLITICAL (2/2)

Insight into Action

#1 Political Movements

Social movements have been a large talking point leading up to and during the pandemic.

These movements shed light on some of the **biggest issues** around **social inequality** where physical activity has a part to play.

Q1. What role can PAS play when **linking in** with these prevalent **political movements**?

#2 Strategy Alignment

Within our area and sector there are many organisations working towards the **same goals**.

By looking to align areas of our strategy with others, we should be able to more **easily engage** with these other organisations on **common goals**.

Q2. What strategies are **most important** to us and what areas of focus cross **multiple strategies** that we aim to align with?

Our Big Five Themes

#1 Mind the (big) gap

The pandemic has accelerated the disparity between the wealthy and the poor.

The lives of the poorest in our population were affected by nearly every facet of all the: social, technological, economic, environmental and political issues amplified by Coronavirus.

Every cumulative disadvantage they face, further compounds the complexity of their lives and their ability to make better, healthier choices.

#2 Women & children first

Positive opportunities for vulnerable women and young people need to be levelled up.

Women were disproportionately impacted, especially those women with children juggling home-life, work, and schooling.

For young people the disruption to their learning and education and those navigating the job market has left them at a significant disadvantage in life.

#3 Embrace diversity

How much do we really know about the needs of our diverse ethnic communities?

Lived experiences of people from diverse ethnic communities would tell us a lot about the conditions that make it easier to be sedentary and harder to move in their daily lives.

Recovery from the pandemic needs to have 'connection' at the heart of its efforts in order to have truly inclusive opportunities for all.

#4 Together is better

The value and importance of place & relationships are more important than ever.

This is true of our personal lives as it is for 'systems change' for all the partners and organisations looking to contribute to a cohesive and well-connected Merseyside PAS system.

Building back better and creating stronger, more resilient communities, will need collaboration in the face of greater economic hardship.

#5 Never walk alone (again)

Lockdown restrictions have exposed the true fragility of our mental health and wellbeing.

Prolonged periods of isolation have sharply increased feelings of disconnectedness. Poor mental health cuts across all demographics and is indiscriminate of any social/age group.

We must champion physical activity and talk about the benefits it has not only to our physical health but how positive it is for our minds.

Final Thoughts

This document has been developed with the MSP STEEP analysis. The importance using data and insight to drive and shape our work remains as important as ever.

- 1** Recovery from this 'black swan' event will be new territory for everyone. We expect **volatility** to be ongoing as try to come to terms with this 'next normal'.
- 2** Although our values remain stable, our behaviours were highly changeable over the course of the pandemic. There's a clear need for **'test and learn'** approaches to confirm what behaviours have stuck with us and observe any new emerging behaviours to inform our approach and enable us to adapt our delivery to these evolving needs.
- 3** The development of our **learning plan** will help to ensure all of our work aids the improvement of future work and techniques.
- 4** **Deprivation** in the LCR has remained a **prominent issue** that affects many aspects of life for the population.
- 5** Increased **effective partnership** working and **information sharing** will be key aspects of strategy development and working moving forward. Input from the **whole team and consultation** on what is seen and heard from our own locality will improve on the insights this document provides.





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