

# Overview and Scrutiny

19<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## Member questions

### Agenda item 9: Physical activity and sports strategy

#### 1. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin

- I wonder how useful it might be to mention the merits of physical activity in relation to diseases like dementia, too?

*Thank you – yes there are multiple health benefits from being physically active in line with the published information on the NHS website:*

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits/>

*In the vision document that was agreed by Cabinet in July 2023 which created the framework for the action plan, we included the following information:*



#### The benefits of physical activity

Nationally, physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone).

Unfortunately, the UK population is around 20% less active than in the 1960s. If current trends continue, it will be 35% less active by 2030.

Being physically active has significant benefits for health, both physical and mental, and can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression.

In addition, physical activity, when undertaken outdoors, and with others, can help people:

- Improve their mood and feelings of self esteem
- increase ability to concentrate and be productive in both school and at work
- be sociable and make friends
- lower stress and anxiety
- improve their sleep

#### 2. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin

- In the action plan, there is a lot of emphasis on seeking external funding. I was pleased, therefore, to see mention of a proposed new Sports Development Officer post to support the action plan and wondered how this

would fit into the council's work and what would be the priority areas? I think it is probably one of the highest priorities to get this post in place in order to enable the other initiatives, e.g. seeking further funding and to motivate community groups to get involved to help achieve the initiatives on the action plan.

*As per the statements within the action plan there is a sense that the sports development officer will prioritise those areas facing the highest health inequalities.*

### **3. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin**

- The equality impact assessment suggests no impact on trans men or women. However, given recent court rulings, how might the need to provide more gender neutral changing facilities in sports venues be assessed?

*Thank you for raising this important issue. In the introduction to the action plan, the Cabinet Member sets out the importance of reducing barriers and creating an environment where everyone in Cheltenham can enjoy the benefits of sport and physical activity with a clear focus on inclusion.*

*In terms of more specific advice in regard to changing facilities, the Council will defer to guidance that is expected to be issued by sport governing bodies including Sport England, Football Association, Rugby Football Union etc.*