

York Physical Activity and Sport Strategy

2022-2032

Improving the mental and physical wellbeing of citizens and reducing inequalities in York through a culture of being physically active



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Introduction

It is our belief that it is a right of every citizen in York to be physically active and that there is a way for every citizen in York to realise greater health benefits from being physically active.

The more we move the greater we benefit. There is significant medical evidence that physical activity can play a vital role in preventing ill health, supporting mental wellbeing and contributes to people living healthier for longer. At the time of publication of this strategy, the country was facing a global Coronavirus pandemic requiring population wide lockdown measures and restrictions on social contact. Throughout the measures the government has advocated physical activity and elevated the importance of it alongside food shopping and seeking medical care.

This strategy is ambitious and broad in scope and recognises the positive benefits of physical activity and its potential role in the health and prosperity of the City. Being physically active can help realise these benefits and make a significant contribution as part of a wider approach. For this reason, the focus is on how we can collectively influence behaviour change in those who are not currently active, recognising that influencing behaviour change can be challenging, but is worth the collective efforts of the many partners and stakeholders in the City.

Whilst this strategy focuses on the domains of Active Recreation, Active Travel and Active Sport, there is recognition that this starts with reducing sedentary behaviour and encouraging active choices, for example taking the stairs instead of the lift, as well as how we can harness the power and potential of digital technology. Reducing sedentary behaviour can have a positive impact on a person's health and help build up to more physical activity.

It is right that we should celebrate the many assets in the City, the strong stock of public and private sports facilities, some wonderful open spaces and natural assets, a strong network of sports clubs and providers, an emerging culture of social action and localism, underpinned by Live Well York connecting opportunities to citizens. With the York Community Stadium open and the Rugby League World Cup coming in 2021, these are exciting times for the City.

York is starting from a strong base of physical activity and health. The City proudly boasts some of the highest levels of physical activity in the country and population health is generally good. But that is not the story for everyone, and these strong indicators often mask the whole picture, with some significant differences in health inequalities in areas of the City.

We would like to thank the many stakeholders who took part in the consultation to determine the priorities for York for the next 10 years and look forward to the continued energy and enthusiasm as we move into the delivery and action planning part of the strategy.

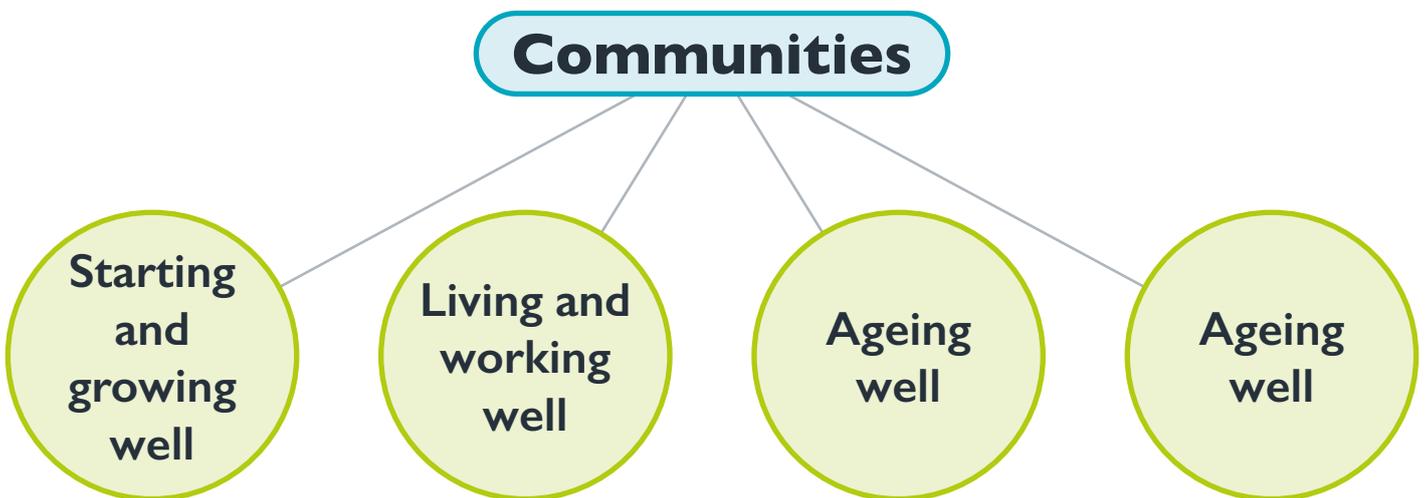


Strategy on a Page

Strategy ambition:

“Improving the mental and physical wellbeing of citizens and reducing inequalities in York through a culture of being physically active.”

Strategy focus: People and Communities



Resulting in:

- Reduced health inequalities
- Reduced inactivity



Covering 105 square miles, York is a city with a good quality of life for its 210,001¹ citizens, voted Sunday Times 'Best in the North' to live in 2019. The City is renowned for its cultural history but is determined to ensure that today's actions reflect that history and have a positive impact on future generations. York has a great built and natural environment, a strong reputation for heritage, culture and tourism. Income is generally high, and crime rates are improving. The City boasts two high performing universities and a well-connected travel network with a strong performing and mixed economy and continues to attract investment in major development opportunities.

At the heart of the York is its citizens and a belief that every person can make their mark, underpinned by values of fairness and compassion and welcoming communities creating conditions for social action to take place.

York's Health & Wellbeing Strategy² shows that on almost every indicator, health, wellbeing and happiness in York is well above the national average, however there are communities within the City for whom health and wellbeing outcomes are significantly below those of the majority. To highlight this the difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards in the City is 7.7 years for women and 5 years for men.

In setting out a 10 year strategy for physical activity it is important to note the forecasted changes in the population.

York's population is currently estimated to be around 210,000, however it is expected to rise by approximately 10,000 people in 10 years with a great number of the population being in the 0-19 and the 65+ age groups.

By 2025, it is estimated that:

- The 65+ population in York will have increased by 16%
- The 85+ population in York will have increased by 32%
- The 0-19 population will have risen by about 9%

1 (1) 2018 ONS mid year estimate

2 www.york.gov.uk/downloads/download/3683/joint_health_and_wellbeing_strategy_2017_to_2022



Levels of Physical Activity



York has consistently been one of the most active places within North Yorkshire and is amongst the most active cities in the country. Prior to the COVID 19 Pandemic there were 128,900 (72.8%) adults classed as 'active', which means meeting the Chief Medical Officer guidelines of 150 minutes physical activity per week. More recently in October 2021 the levels of active adults had decreased to 63% (112,400), largely as a result of the pandemic and restrictions and lockdowns.

Whilst these rates are higher than in other areas, there are still 46,200 adults (25.9%) who are classed as inactive¹. You are more likely to be inactive if you have a disability or long term health condition, are from an ethnically diverse community, or if you are female. Activity levels also decline with age.

Also prior to the pandemic the Active Lives Children and Young People (2018/19) survey indicates that 41% of young people in York are meeting the required levels of activity which falls slightly below national average of 46.8% of young people.

The results also show that 13,400 (almost 60%) of young people are not achieving the recommended levels of 60 minutes activity per day².

Participation levels have been quite resilient with the Active Lives Children and Young People survey results for 2020/21 showing that 41.8% (9600) children and meeting the minimum activity levels of 1 hour per day every week. This still leaves 13,300 (58.2%) young people not active enough.

Other indicators in the City, such as employment levels and health, are good. Behind these headline statistics there is a story of broad inequality, citizens who do not experience good health, who experience poverty, whose housing is not adequate.

This strategy will focus its energy on contributing to reducing those inequalities through physical activity and sport, supporting those who are inactive or failing to meet recommended activity guidelines by building from an asset based approach.



1 www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives

2 www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives#report_archiveaccess_the_data

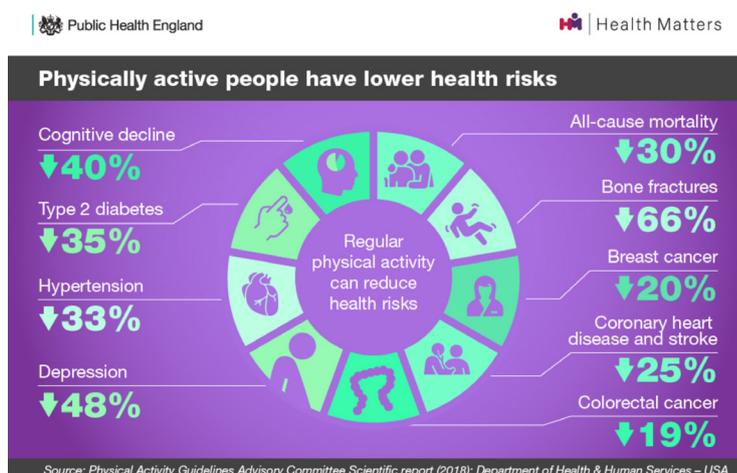
Health Benefits of Physical Activity

Encouraging inactive people to become more active could prevent one in ten cases of stroke and heart disease in the UK and one in six deaths from any cause.

Regular physical activity can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, many of which are on the rise and affecting people at an earlier age; 1 in 3 of the working age population have at least 1 long term condition and 1 in 7 have more than one¹.

Physical activity is considered as good as or better than treatment with drugs for many conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and lower back pain, and has a much lower risk of any harm.

Physical activity can also benefit those who have Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. However, many people with MSK conditions often mistakenly believe that physical activity will make their conditions worse.



2

The more conditions you have, the more you need to improve the core aspects of fitness:

- strength
- stamina
- balance

There are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health.

For example, it can help with:

- better sleep
- happier moods
- managing stress, anxiety or intrusive and racing thoughts
- better self esteem
- reducing the risk of depression
- connecting with People³

1 www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-getting-every-adult-active-every-day/health-matters-getting-every-adult-active-every-day

2 www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-physical-activity/health-matters-physical-activity-prevention-and-management-of-long-term-conditions

3 www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/physical-activity-and-your-mental-health/about-physical-activity/

Scope of the Strategy

In keeping with the Chief Medical Officer messaging¹, 'Some is good, more is better' this strategy will make a difference across the spectrum ranging from a reduction in sedentary behaviour through to organised sport. It will not seek to move the whole population towards sport but will seek to find a way for all citizens to become more active in the most suitable way for them.



Non-Sedentary Behaviour

Physical Activity

Sport

Active Day

Not sitting or lying down for extended periods of time

Active Travel

Walking, cycling, jogging

Active Recreation

Exercise, dance, walking, cycling, active play, swimming, gardening

Active Sport

Organised sport, structured competitive activity, unstructured sport

A reduction in sedentary behaviour across the whole population

More York citizens meeting Chief Medical Officer guidelines on levels of physical activity

A varied and accessible offer that supports people to participate in sport

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report

People - Starting and Growing Well

Physical Activity and Sport contributing to every child achieving, staying safe and developing resilience

Many children and young people in the City will experience good outcomes in their early years and through their education and transition to adulthood, but this is not the case for all.

Experiences in childhood shape our adult lives, for example 50% of mental health problems experienced by adults are established by the age 14 and 75% by the age of 24¹. Around one third of children will leave primary school overweight or obese and as a result are more likely to be obese adults with an increased risk of related medical conditions such as type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease.

Schools have an important role to play in encouraging our children to be active, not only through physical education and sport, but through active travel, playtime and through cross-curricular physically active learning. The benefits of a child being more active are evidenced through Sport England's Active Lives Children's Survey² which shows that more active children are happier, more resilient and more trusting of others.

This should be complimented by a strong offer in the community that appeals to families, or groups of young people who want to use their activity as a social outlet, as well as those that want to pursue sport through competitive structures.

Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>A reduction in inequalities</p> <p>A reduction in the number of children who are overweight or obese</p> <p>Improving emotional wellbeing</p> <p>Building life skills and improving attainment</p>	<p>Using the #Creatingactiveschools³ framework to provide a broad offer designed to engage all children and young people and embed physical activity within schools.</p> <p>Designing and targeting interventions with less active children and young people</p> <p>Harnessing the power of digital to engage children and young people 'on demand'</p> <p>Working towards all children and young people being capable swimmers and able to ride, and have access to, a bike.</p> <p>Harnessing the success of athletes to inspire children and young people</p> <p>Promoting all ages, family based social action</p>

1 Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders In the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593.

2 www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives#report_archiveaccess_the_data

3 ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-020-0917-z

People - Living and Working Well

Physical Activity and Sport contributing to active, healthy and productive citizens

Lifestyle risk factors, such as smoking and poor diet are often precursors for ill-health. Living a healthy life can increase life expectancy and improve quality of life, reduce the likelihood of premature death and suffering certain long term conditions.

National statistics suggest that people living in the most deprived areas are significantly more likely to smoke, be obese, be physically inactive and have poor nutrition compared to those from more affluent areas. They are therefore more likely to develop conditions including cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes and cancer as a consequence.

Integrating Physical Activity and/or Sport into a healthy lifestyle is proven to reduce risk factors associated with poor physical and mental health.

The economic prosperity of the City relies on a productive workforce. With employment levels high, physical activity can play a strong role in reducing sickness and keeping the population in work for longer.

Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>A reduction in health inequalities</p> <p>A reduction in the number of adults who are overweight or obese</p> <p>Improving emotional wellbeing</p> <p>An economically productive city and a healthy workforce</p>	<p>A whole systems approach to promoting healthy weight</p> <p>Prioritising people who are inactive</p> <p>Developing places (e.g. workplaces, clubs, facilities) and activities which are welcoming and supportive of people with mental health conditions</p> <p>Amplifying campaigns such as 'This Girl Can' and 'We are Undefeatables' and supporting facilities to be more accessible and welcoming.</p> <p>Promoting the wide range of opportunities for families to be active together.</p> <p>Engaging adults and families through digital platforms and innovations</p>



People - Ageing Well



Physical Activity and Sport will contribute towards every citizen having the opportunity to age well

York has an ageing population with a forecast that the 65+ demographic is set to increase from 36,000 in 2017 to 45,000 by the end of the life of this strategy.

The city is committed to being recognised as a great place to grow old with the population staying fit, healthy and independent for longer, and being physically active has a significant role to play in this.

The Chief Medical Officer advises over 65s to limit the amount of time spent sedentary and incorporate physical activity into daily life, complimented by strength and balance based activities¹.

Planning for retirement can have an impact on ageing well. Whilst many will plan for a financial pension, the concept of a social and physical pension should also be valued highly. This can also be beneficial for physical and emotional wellbeing and maintaining or developing social connections.

Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>Prevention and treatment of medical conditions</p> <p>Creating accessible 'age friendly' environments</p> <p>Connecting communities and reducing loneliness and isolation across the life course</p> <p>Supporting the transition through to retirement age</p>	<p>Making physical activity an integral part of the treatment of a number of conditions</p> <p>Developing places (e.g. clubs, facilities and open spaces) and activities which are welcoming and supportive of older people.</p> <p>Amplifying campaigns such as 'We are Undefeatable' and supporting facilities to be more accessible and welcoming.</p> <p>Harnessing the power of digital and supporting people to be active at home.</p> <p>Supporting York to become an 'Age Friendly City' supporting intergenerational activity and reducing social isolation.</p>

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report





Communities - Place



Physical Activity and Sport supporting the development of place

The built and natural environment can play a crucial role in helping citizens become and remain active. The design of where we live and work, access to open space and places to be active and awareness of what is available locally can all help make it easier for an individual to lead an active lifestyle.

Every day, citizens of York share their time and skills to help others in their community be physically active by volunteering, coaching or attending activities with friends & colleagues. Communities can play a significant role in improving activity levels in the City by building on the assets that are available, mobilising individuals and helping groups and associations come together to realise and develop their strengths.

Being physically active offers people the opportunity to connect and support each other, can help build a sense of belonging to a group, club or society and can help people achieve their potential.

Aligning physical activity and sport to wider arts, culture and creative initiatives offers people the opportunity to connect and support each other, this can help build a sense of belonging to a group, club or society and can help people achieve their potential.

Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>Improved quality and quantity of open spaces</p> <p>A reduction in inequalities across the city</p> <p>Improved community cohesion</p>	<p>Shaping the use of developer contributions for the benefit of physical activity and sport interventions</p> <p>Utilising the planning process to ensure that the principles of Active Design are incorporated¹.</p> <p>Following the principles and recommendations of 'Healthy Placemaking'²</p> <p>Incorporating the promotion of physical activity in to planning and development, and in parks and open spaces</p> <p>Working in a place-based approach to embed the promotion of physical activity</p> <p>Targeting physical activity interventions which will improve community cohesion (e.g. tackling anti-social behaviour)</p>

1 www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design

2 www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Healthy_Placemaking_Report.pdf



Communities - Active Travel

A green city that champions cycling and walking

With a climate change emergency declared by City of York Council in 2019 the opportunity exists for the city to be at the forefront of an active travel revolution, reimagining the transport networks and connectivity between places within the city.

In the early stages of the Coronavirus pandemic, the city reported a 30% improvement in air quality¹, achieved through a reduced number of cars on the road due to the lockdown restrictions. This enhances the aspirations around the city centre being a clean air zone and the planned investment in electric charging points around the city.

To help drive these measures, active travel needs to be at the forefront and become that attractive alternative to the car and the go to method of transport.

Clearly, safety and accessibility will be enablers along with a shift in culture, normalising the daily commute for adults and for school children.



Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>York becoming carbon neutral by 2030</p> <p>A reduction in inequalities across the city</p>	<p>Incorporating the promotion of active travel and movement on foot in to planning and development.</p> <p>Employers supporting active travel measures with employees.</p> <p>Driving the climate change agenda through active travel programmes and campaigns</p>

¹ www.energylivenews.com/2020/04/24/yorks-air-quality-improves-by-30-during-coronavirus-lockdown/

Communities - Community Health and Wellbeing

The Community and voluntary sector using physical activity and sport to improve physical and mental health

Building a sense of community goes a long way towards improving people's health and happiness, having physical activity and sport opportunities that are available in the community or can be done at home are as influential on health as traditional health 'care' services are.

With a strong national emphasis on prevention in the health service, the existing contribution of the community and voluntary sector to that prevention agenda should not be underestimated.

In York the adoption of an asset-based approach, where communities focus on their strengths and skills, has significantly helped to unlock the potential of the community and voluntary sector. Reinforced through York's membership of the 'Cities of Service' Coalition¹.

The Voluntary and community sector make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the people of York. 'People Helping People' – a volunteering strategy for York, harnesses the talent, energy and time of our volunteers and the impact they have on our city. Building on this will bring further positive change and benefits to the city.

Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>Prevention and treatment of medical conditions</p> <p>Improved mental health</p> <p>A reduction in loneliness and isolation</p>	<p>More citizens actively involved in social action and developing practical and softer skills</p> <p>Utilising business and employee supported volunteering to benefit physical activity and sport</p> <p>Build on the asset-based approach to create the conditions for social action to take place</p> <p>Promoting the use of informal and casual volunteering to support physical activity and sport</p> <p>Maintaining connection and community through an improved digital offer</p> <p>Harnessing the power of the voluntary sector to deliver health based interventions</p>

¹ citiesofservice.org/coalition/york-uk/

Communities - Sports Clubs and Providers

The sporting providers experience inclusive and sustainable growth, supported by a strong workforce

There are many citizens of York who are already active, supported by a strong infrastructure of organisations that provide the activity.

For these people, being active is a big part of their lives and identity. This is known as sport's core market.

There is under-representation in this core market – research shows those who are from lower socio-economic groups, women, people with a limiting disability and those aged 55 and over are less likely to have a regular habit. We also know these people tend to drop out more. Therefore, it is clear that the sector isn't meeting the needs of certain people.

It is important to:

- Keep active people active,
- Focus on life transitions and triggers,
- Help support those who are more prone to drop out, for example under-represented groups.

Outcomes that Physical Activity and sport will contribute towards:	It will do this by:
<p>A workforce that is capable, confident and skilled.</p> <p>A safe sports sector that supports mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Increased diversity in a sport sector that welcomes everyone, meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers</p> <p>Providers being recognised for their contribution to the community and to health of citizens</p>	<p>Clubs engaging in a comprehensive offer of training and guidance to clubs and new and existing volunteers</p> <p>Celebrating and recognising the success of clubs, coaches and volunteers who champion physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing and safeguarding.</p> <p>Supporting diversity and inclusion in the workforce</p>



Delivery of the Strategy



The strategy directly contributes to the outcomes and ambitions of the Health and Wellbeing Board and report's to the statutory Director of Public Health to ensure clear direction and progress against targets.

To drive and oversee the delivery of the strategic vision, the formation of a strategic governance structure complimenting this strategy is to be developed: The "Active York Strategic Partnership".

Active York Strategic Partnership will have strategic representation across the breadth of partners in the city and will drive the desired strategic outcomes. The strategic group will initially work to determine the structures, terms of reference and identify the range of operational and mainly existing sub groups that will support the delivery of the strategy.

Active York Strategic Partnership will have a pivotal role in developing and driving a city wide plan of action to address the key areas of the strategy. Building on and bringing together the work already undertaken by partners in sport, active travel, weight management and planning into strategic focus.

Measurement

The Active York Strategic Partnership will develop the city wide focus aimed at reducing inactivity, creating a baseline and understanding of the projected longer term impact across the physical activity landscape in York.

Delivery Phases

Year 1

- Establish structures,
- Undertake system mapping
- Produce delivery plans
- Design measurement framework

Year 2-4

- Action Plan 1 delivered

Year 4-6

- Action Plan 2 delivered
- Mid-Strategy Review

Year 6-9

- Action Plan 3 delivered

Year 10

- Evaluation
- Consultation on next strategy

Collaboration and Leadership

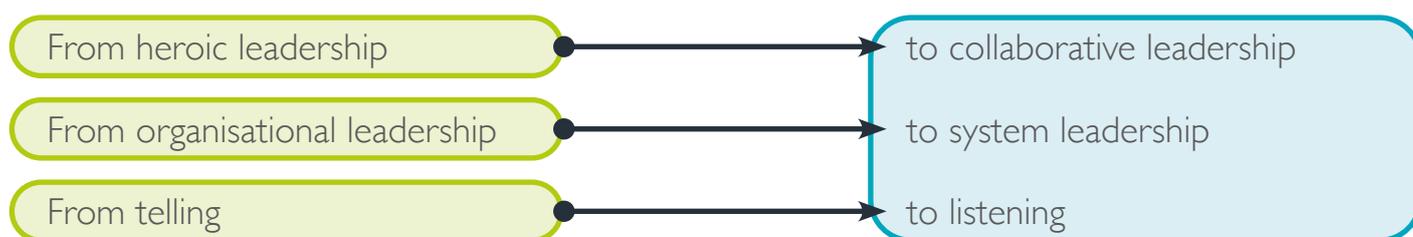
The strategy sets out the direction for physical activity and sport in York for the next 10 years. The approach, the actions and the projects will evolve and change over the lifetime of the strategy but the focus on tackling inactivity and contributing to wider outcomes will remain constant.

Achievement of the ambitions will require more than any single intervention, investment stream or organisation. It will require a strong culture of collaboration, driven by strong and dynamic leadership. These diagrams below are from Collaborate CIC who released their manifesto for collaboration in February 2020¹ and they illustrate the behaviour and attitudes that individuals and organisations will need to demonstrate.

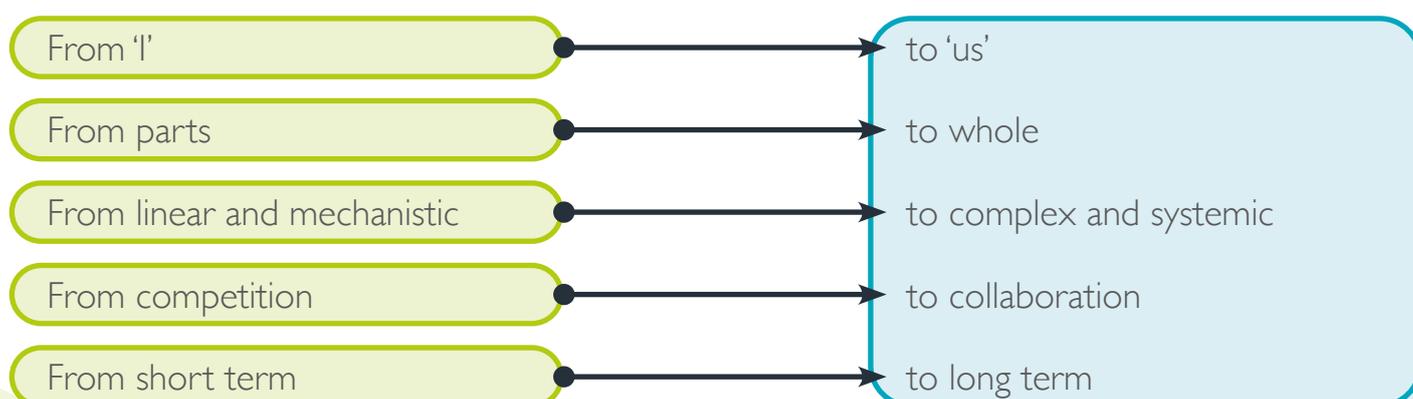
Shifts for collaborative organisations and organising



Shifts for collaborative leadership



Shifts for collaborative leadership



¹ collaboratecic.com/today-we-are-pleased-to-launch-collaborates-new-manifesto-for-a-collaborative-society-f898bd0f6886



The strategic group will galvanise partners around the common goals of this strategy to improve physical and mental wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

From there we would encourage a wide range of organisations, institutions and clubs from across the City will align their own action plans and priorities to the headline ambitions outlined in this strategy.

Collaboration is often difficult and is never ‘finished’, it requires ongoing effort and commitment. Many of the lessons of systems thinking and collaboration are already being learned through Sport England’s Local Delivery Pilots¹ and the city will continue to learn and share through these pilots.

One of the early ambitions to shape this work is for the strategic group to explore the viability of York seeking Global Active City status². This will occur when the collaborative conditions are deemed right.

1 www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/local-delivery

2 activewellbeing.org/global-active-city/

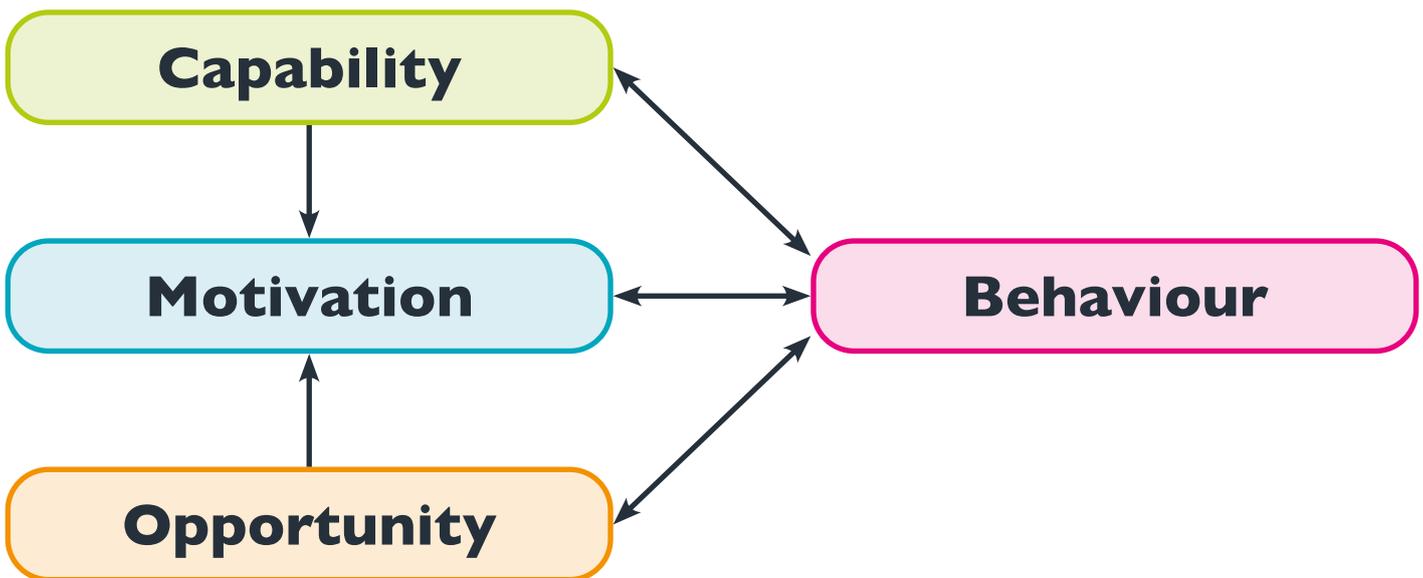
Behavior Change

At the heart of any strategy designed to achieve change, be it systematic or outcome based, are the citizens you are hoping to affect change upon.

There are different approaches and academic models of behaviour change. As an example the diagram below shows the COM-B behaviour change model¹.

The model shows that behaviour occurs as a result of the 3 conditions interacting;

- **Capability** is defined as the individual's psychological and physical capacity to engage in the activity concerned.
- **Motivation** is defined as all those brain processes that energise and direct behaviour, not just goals and conscious decision making.
- **Opportunity** is defined as all the factors that lie outside the individual that make the behaviour possible, or prompt it.



Approaching the strategy implementation through the lens of a behaviour change model and considering all aspects should be more successful in achieving a longer term change in behaviour.

It should be acknowledged that the COM-B model is presented as a default model, however different models may be used for different populations or demographics, or even campaigns where they are more suitable.

¹ [implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42](https://www.implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42)

