NATIONAL EVALUATION & LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

System Maturity Matrix: Anchor examples of conditions in practice
October 2026

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About this document

This document is a working draft which we will continue to refine. The purpose is to support Place representatives and partners in assessing the level of maturity within their Place in relation to the NELP System Maturity Matrix (SMM), and it is recommended that the guidance provided with the SMM is used alongside this document too.

This document draws primarily on the evaluation data provided by partners involved in delivering Place-based systemic approaches to physical activity inequalities, as part of the NELP evaluation programme, along with a few examples drawn from elsewhere. We are grateful for the openness of Place partners in describing the work taking place and the challenges encountered, and we have anonymised the extracts used in order to respect their confidence.

Note: we have identified some examples that help to illustrate how a particular point on the SMM scale for a condition might be seen in practice. These are not definitive, and there may be quite different examples in the Place you are working that represent a similar level of maturity. We have aligned these examples as illustrative of a particular level, but in practice there could be examples of differing maturity levels within a Place. We advise considering the range of examples in a Place, to take an overall view of the maturity level. Therefore, the citing of an example of practice at the specified level does not necessarily mean the overall system maturity for that Place was assessed to be at the same level.

If you have any questions, please visit the Evaluating Complexity website where you will find a range of information and guidance. We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement on this and our other resources. If you have further questions or comments, please contact us at NELP@shu.ac.uk

System Maturity scale

No change	Emerging in practice		Establishing in practice		Embedded in practice	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Data sources note: The numbers or letters in brackets enables the NELP team to identify Place and year from which the anonymised example is sourced.

1. Processes for identifying the barriers and enablers of physical activity				
There is process for developing a deep understanding and (shared) knowledge of what supports and/or prevents people being physically active, within the local context.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) *Data and insight*: Effective capture and use of data and insight**	1	People **do not gather, share, and use information** on what supports or prevents people being physically active *in the local context*. Demographic data identifying personal characteristics *is not collected*.	
		2-3	There are **isolated examples of gathering and sharing information**, data and insight on the practical, social and cultural factors that support or prevent people being physically active within the local context. Data on inequalities is **sometimes collected and analysed** to inform policy and practice. Some people may be **starting to build this understanding,** but **these insights are not widely valued or used** to inform policy and/or practice.	**Example of 2** (53)[1] There are pockets of this work happening, but the next Phase of our work aims to address partners' understanding of the barriers and enablers as part of shifting from individual behaviour change to a whole system approach. We feel there is more of a willingness in this space now than at any time in the last few years to gather, share and use information regarding the barriers and enablers. For example, as partners are brought together, there will be an opportunity to share information. The [project] is also demonstrating deeper understanding of communities, though the engagement methodologies (Including how 'who to talk to' was established) feels less clear. Example of a 2 (72: 2025) All members of the Partnership contributed data that informed the development of [Place]'s 10 year strategy, with data sharing between partners forming the foundation of the current strategic direction. Local insight gathered through the Development Award has supported the creation of a Physical Activity Needs Assessment, with contributions from [name], Public Health, Active Travel, the HAF Programme, and Active Through Football. **These datasets have collectively demonstrated the need for action** in the city and underpinned the full award application. An example of gathering and sharing

[1] The numbers or letters attached to each example are used in our case reference system to enable the NELP team to identify the source of the anonymised examples

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				information is the recent Children and Young People's (CYP) survey, which [...] was also recognised as a key data source informing the city's CYP Plan. During the System Maturity Matrix workshop, it was noted that while data is collected at ward level and through individual projects, there is **no suitable mechanism for sharing findings across sectors**. **Data collection was described as piecemeal and disconnected from wider partnership efforts**, with overlapping datasets but no integration. [...]. The lack of qualitative data, especially from underrepresented communities, was attributed to limited capacity and resources. Additionally, concerns were raised about the absence of processes to transfer learning from previous projects into new initiatives. While many organisations within the system are data rich, their insights often reflect only those already engaging with services. This creates a **risk of overlooking the experiences of people who face the greatest barriers** to being active. There is a **recognised need** to strengthen mechanisms for sharing data and insight across sectors, and to prioritise the collection and use of qualitative data to ensure that future strategies are inclusive, representative, and responsive to local needs. 2025
		4-5	Information, data and insight on the practical, social and cultural factors that support or prevent people being physically active within the local context is **often gathered and interpreted,** using existing evidence and relevant theories to understand what is working and why.	**Example of 4** (82) Information is gathered across the sector in many ways at a place-based level. Across the borough there are a range of activities/ sessions that take place to gather insight, data and asset mapping such as 'Planning for Real' sessions, active lives data sessions, community council meetings. This is at different stages on the journey across our different ward/ districts currently, so gaps are still being recognised across the areas. **This is highlighting that we have key pockets in which we are sharing learning to support this long term across the full system**.

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Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			Data on inequalities is **routinely collected and analysed**. However, **there are gaps in the data and/or in terms of who is involved and/or how it is used** to inform policy and/or practice. Data and insight are only shared between partners and interested parties occasionally.	**Example of 5** (56) The Annual Local Active Lives survey produces data and insight that can be analysed and provide real time analytics for peoples PA levels. **This is focussed at unearthing the insight into inequalities, the enhanced local fieldwork is delivered in the 20 LSOAs with the highest inactivity levels within [place]**. We have the 'Wellbeing [place]' model - our **frontline team of Community Builders and Community Physical Activity Organisers are provided constant feedback loop**s into the operations team and the evaluation team highlighting the barriers and potential solutions to overcoming inactivity in everyday life. These tools/programmes are generating a deeper understanding of the barriers to being active in the communities suffering the poorest health outcomes, which is demonstrating that choice to be active is integral to big system knotty issues
		6-7	Information, data and insight on the practical, social and cultural factors that support or prevent people being physically active within the local context are **routinely gathered and interpreted,** using existing evidence and relevant theories to understand what is working and why. This highlights **diverse perspectives and is interpreted** to inform policy and/or practice.	**Example of a 6** (5) We have an expansive evidence base of PA barriers, enablers & assets that is published on [programme] site. Our evidence is **readily shared, e.g. at [programme] events** and we are **constantly adding to it** via Appreciative Inquiry; Community Engagement; Well [place] Community Profiles; COM-B. **[name] website is a growing resource of community assets**. [Programme] focus is on tackling the stubborn inequalities in participation guides decision-making. **Example of a 6 (21: 2024)** We use our **data to determine where to focus our work** using intelligence team data, as well as Active Lives and [subregional schools survey] data, which provides detailed information on young people's wellbeing, on multiple dimensions. **Used this in targeting** five ways to wellbeing work with schools – really on its way to being embedded in curriculum now across [Place]. Our

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			This **data and insight are regularly shared** between partners and interested parties **in meaningful and relevant ways**.	focus is how we're using this on the ground, and also **capturing live data from meeting people face to face** – put out ways of collecting data through registers, forms, consultations too. Been doing work around new leisure contract, drawing on usage date but also **qualitative and in-depth understanding on people's feelings, behaviours and barriers**. Using insight to shape next contract.
Strengthening community & individual capacities	**b) *Community perspectives:* Community perspectives on challenges, strengths and priorities are valued and underpin place-based working on PA**	1	Barriers and enablers of physical activity and strengths that support physical activity in the local context, are defined by organisations and are incongruous with community perceptions of assets and barriers.	
		2-3	There are **isolated examples of working with local people*** and/or organisations and networks that represent those with lived experience of inequality, to develop a deep understanding of what supports or prevents people being physically active. This is not widely valued or used to inform policy and/or practice.	**Example of 3** (9) Officers across the local place are working in an asset-based way, but there is **restricted** engagement with this often restricted to the "usual suspects". **Some decisions around facilities or activities, are impacted by political decision making rather than insight which has been captured and demonstrated. Some of this is due to apathy amongst place due to lack of action historically**. Example of a 3 (68: 2025) Systemically **community perspectives on challenges, strengths, and priorities are becoming increasingly influential** in shaping place-based working on physical activity. The language and approach have shifted from consultation to co-understanding, with partners now viewing insight as something developed with communities rather than about them. However, there **remains variation in how partners understand what insight actually is and how to use it effectively**. Many now reference insight with confidence, yet often as evidence to **validate an existing idea** rather than as a guide for

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				decision-making. This is particularly visible within some Neighbourhood Health Partnerships, where local knowledge and experience exist in abundance but are **not always recognised or shared as insight**. Partners continue to find it **challenging to share what they know** about their place, [...].. There are also positive examples of partners coming together to develop joint funding bids **informed by resident, partner, and organisational insight data**, signalling a gradual shift towards shared, evidence-based decision-making across the system. Within communities, **community insight** continues to reveal a more complex picture of what enables or prevents activity, highlighting **emotional and social factors** such as loneliness, low confidence, and mental-health stigma. Residents and local groups are sharing their experiences of how everyday realities, from cost-of-living pressures to transport and childcare, influence their ability to be active. In [Place], young people have raised issues around affordability and access to safe travel, while in [Place], residents emphasise the importance of social connection and encouragement. Insight is still too often gathered as part of **short-term projects** rather than embedded into continuous learning and decision-making.
		4-5	There is **some engagement with local people** and/or organisations and networks that represent those with lived experience of inequality in processes for developing and sharing understanding of what supports or prevents people being physically active.	**Example of a 4 (65: 2025)** Data capture tools for residents more in depth and frequent than previous years. Strong networks with local voluntary and community organisations which enable regular conversations and sharing of experiences. Increasingly shared understanding between residents, BP and GP's about the importance of PA but a gap in terms of signposting and also what they actually want. PA questions integrated into resident surveys, but recognise lack of coordination leading to multiple consultation processes. Identified through surveys that people are less likely to provide their level of PA more than other key demo data. Consistency of data capture would allow further capture of community voices.

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			These may be only partially representative of the diversity of experiences of inequalities. **This is gaining support and beginning to inform policy or practice.**	**Example of a 5** (56) On the ground our frontline team of Community Builders and Community Physical Activity Organisers are providing **constant feedback loops** into the [name] team and the [name] evaluation team highlighting the barriers and potential solutions to overcoming inactivity in everyday life. These tools/programmes are generating a **deeper understanding of the barriers** to being active in the communities suffering the poorest health outcomes, which is demonstrating that choice to be active is integral to big system knotty issues.
		6-7	**Common understandings** of local strengths, challenges and priorities emerge from **regular communication and strong relationships between local people and/or organisations and networks** which represent those with lived experience of inequalities. This insight is r**outinely used to shape the work** of all sectors to promote PA and wellbeing.	**Example of a 6 [73: 2025 E&L]** In [Place], local engagement emphasised the importance of **lived experience in reshaping institutional perspectives**. Parish councillors noted that "through direct engagement with community members… such was the powerful testimony from [name] at the [Place] Parish South [Place] Protection Group meeting in February, Councillors I feel now better understand the real-life barriers to activity faced by inactive or underrepresented groups." These insights filled previous gaps "from a lack of public participation in our meetings," prompting reflection and "a more empathetic, person-centred approach." **Deep listening** "helped the council develop a more **nuanced understanding** of how physical activity must be accessible physically, emotionally and socially." This has encouraged councillors to "critically question where and how activities are delivered… and who may be excluded unintentionally." The partnership's "bottom-up intelligence should now feed into council priorities, helping shift the focus from 'programmes' to 'people'." Tools like "Community Connectors video journeys… along with data mapping have stimulated richer conversations among councillors about where investment is most needed, and how to ensure inclusivity." **Example of a 6 (95: 2024)**

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				Connect a lot with existing groups in the area, we get involved in community events. As a team we are always building **connections** and building **strong relationships**. We set up our own events (women's weekender event) 100 women across our areas have come along and the event is about conversations on barriers. Everything we do, we take a step back to ensure the **community are on the journey with us**. Community panel/toolkit and other projects that are coproduced. The insight from the community is genuinely **actioned**. E.g. the toolkit came from community panel, their perspective around resources. All of their ideas have been fed in. The core focus of this project is about us taking a co-productive approach, this is why we feel there is a strength here. Other sectors we work with are now talking about co-production, there is a direction of travel for this project.
Tackling structural inequalities	**c) *Understanding root causes:* Consistent understanding of how social, cultural, and economic constraints may affect physical activity levels**	1	Limited understanding that choices are constrained. Little or no consideration of power dynamics, and discrimination that contribute to poor working and living conditions.	
		2-3	**Emerging understanding that choices are constrained by social, cultural and economic processes.** Those in charge recognise that policies and processes should consider how power dynamics and discrimination contribute to poor working and living conditions.	**Example of a 2 (72:2025)** There is an **emerging understanding** among members of the partnership that policies and practices must be informed by an exploration of the factors that disadvantage people with particular characteristics, identities and lived experiences. These include poverty, low car ownership, language barriers, and digital exclusion, all of which can significantly shape how individuals and communities engage with physical activity. While this awareness is developing, it is **not yet consistently applied** across all organisations or embedded into planning and delivery. There is recognition that physical activity is often perceived as something requiring time, money, or confidence,

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				resources that are not equally distributed. These perceptions are frequently reinforced by systemic inequalities. [...] Survey responses from the SMM process revealed that while some organisations are actively using insight to shape their work, others **struggle to reach people** who are less likely to engage through traditional methods. There is a **recognised need to amplify the voices of those experiencing the greatest inequalities** and to ensure their experiences inform both strategic and operational decisions.
		4-5	**Growing understanding** of how choices are constrained by social, cultural and economic processes. Organisations can demonstrate how they consider and explore power dynamics and discrimination with some disadvantaged groups.	**Example of a 5 (**90) The programme has maintained the opportunity to invest in community insight and engagement, alongside the programme and evaluation teams from the start. **Focus has remained on developing an understanding of lived experience, and the barriers and enablers of physical activity, to shape programme delivery.** Through outreach and hosting a regular weekly drop in, regular feedback has been received from local people - including themes around community safety, the importance of green spaces, health concerns linked to being active, the significant impact of caring responsibilities and over the last year, significant concerns around debt, mental health and housing issues linked to the cost of living. This feedback has helped the [programme] to influence work beyond the remit of the LDP with the aim of addressing specific issues.
		6-7	**Widespread and consistent understanding** of how choices are constrained by social, cultural and economic processes. This includes consistent attention to power relations and discrimination, across policy areas.	**Example of a 6** (**73:2025 E&L)** Critical thinking around inequality has "sharpened," with discussions in [Place] Protection Group meetings showing that **councillors "reinforced the need to understand layered disadvantage, including health, transport, gender, age, and income**." One councillor reflected that this represents "a marked change from earlier approaches which may have treated physical activity as a standalone issue." Councillors are now "**increasingly aware that addressing inequality means listening differently, analysing differently, and planning**

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			This is routinely used to inform wider responses to the underlying causes of inequalities.	**differently**." For example, conversations about transport access to [name] Hub led to recognition that "venue location can itself exclude many residents," influencing future planning decisions. The [name] Place project, supported by the LGA Training Days, has "encouraged the Parish and partner organisations to question why we take the approaches we have in the past" and "encouraged deeper thinking about approaches we should take in the future." This marks "a move away from seeing physical activity/inactivity as a standalone issue," towards one understood as "layered as a result of health, transport, gender, age and income."

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes effectively enable and encourage place-based ways of working to address inequalities.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) *Processes & practices:* Partners implement practices, policies, and organisational structures to enable shared decision-making and flexible collaborative working, shaped by the needs and aspirations of communities**	1	Organisational structures, policies, decision-making and administrative processes drive **siloed, transactional working.** Processes are rigid and often exclude partners who could support the work. Risk aversion leads to widespread reluctance to try new ways of working.	**Example of a 1** (52) [Project] was experiencing administrative issues, due to difficulties in the NHS host organisation's finance procedures and staff turnover resulting in some slow payment of commissioned organisations and providers. One LTO remarked that they had considered applying directly to deliver [project], but instead partnered with [voluntary organisation] as they felt this would provide them with more financial stability. However, in practice, [voluntary organisation] did not pay LTOs until they had been paid by [project] which resulted in financial difficulties for the LTOs. Challenges with payment of contracts resulted in one organisation having to make difficult decisions regarding their finances, essentially being forced to choose between paying themselves, or paying the young leaders.
		2-3	There is **growing understanding** of how organisational structures, policies, decision-making and administrative processes affect implementation of a PBSA. People are **beginning to highlight** unhelpful or restrictive processes and/or to challenge risk averse ways of working, where they are disproportionate. Some short-term 'workarounds' are established to support place-based working, within and across organisations but with limited line of sight to longer term change.	**Example of a 2** (90) [Place] Council has **levers of power** that it can use to change rules and processes. It has the **capacity to convene the local system** and can access funding (if local stakeholders are willing to engage). At the same time – in a programme about changing the system, **having to operate within the existing structures** of local government can make it **hard to quickly change the existing power dynamics and perceptions** that exist within the community and local organisations. In [programme]'s case, this dynamic was baked into the way the programme was developed. For example, there can be challenges around meaningfully sharing power as the council is still the accountable body, and may default to existing governance and ways of working, typically linked (without devolving funding decisions to the community) to traditional risk and financial management processes. **Example of a 3** (84:2025) Some short-term workarounds have been implemented to support place-based working; however, **progress is often slowed by red tape and unclear governance**. For example, the lack of a formally signed-off action plan has limited accountability in certain initiatives, and the rebranding of health improvement and sport/physical

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				activity [...] has highlighted **challenges in governance and organisational alignment**. These issues reflect wider frustrations with **restrictive or risk-averse processes that can impede longer-term, systemic change**. Despite these challenges, there are examples of organisational processes successfully supporting systemic, place-based approaches. PACC training has been rolled out across 80–90% of GP surgeries, embedding physical activity into routine primary care practice and demonstrating how **structures can be adapted to integrate PA into everyday professional activity.** [...] Overall, while current processes sometimes constrain agency and slow change, there is emerging momentum to identify unhelpful practices, **challenge risk-averse approaches, and reconfigure systems to better support sustainable, place-based physical activity initiatives.**
		4-5	Some new organisational structures, policies, decision-making and administrative processes (including team structures, job descriptions, commissioning & funding) are being **adopted to promote equitable and collaborative ways of working**. These may be limited to certain elements of the work in the Place. Some funders and partner organisations can demonstrate how they address barriers and restrictive processes, to enable collaborative ways of working,	**Example of a 5** (B) In 2019, as Primary Care Networks (PCNs) were given funding towards additional workforce capacity. They built on the common purpose and vision by **significant investment into nonclinical roles**. To get the most out of these additional community-focused roles, we **integrated health, the volunteer sector, and Leisure** to really good effect by embedding health coaching in the Leisure service and social prescribers in the voluntary service. This wasn't easy, and at first, we didn't get the most out of this new team. We spent a year building relationships, sharing information, communicating the opportunity and the benefits, and educating patients. It created **relationships and connections** between health coaches and health activators, meaning we could improve service design and provide wraparound support to patients throughout their journey. This has acted as **a consistent bridge** between PCN and Leisure that's continued to flourish in shared work and further investment. It has created greater **flexibility** about how we deploy staff in **shared roles** as well as how we **coordinated projects with the community and surfaced learning** that would not have been possible if employed directly with the NHS.

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			and take a proportionate attitude to risk.	Over time, we've been able to **build trust, awareness, and the strength of relationships** across all of our local GP practices. Referrals started to come through thick and fast. [...] **Example of a 5** (C) Observations highlighted that **a lack of explicit targets was liberating**. Importantly, it encouraged many of the locality leads, central team and (backbone organisation] staff to think more clearly about how they could **work differently with communities and partners, for more sustainable changes in culture and structure**, without the immediate pressure of having to 'deliver' sport and physical activity events. Observations over the years highlight a **transition** from competitive behaviour between stakeholders coming from different boroughs in [sub-region] where only good news would be shared, to more **honest discussion and collective problem solving**, where **relationships were built organically**.
		6-7	Organisational structures, policies, and administrative processes have been **redesigned throughout the Place.** This facilitates collaboration, including equitable and flexible decision-making, responsive to individual and community circumstances**,** e.g., team structures, job roles, information flow, sharing of resources. Redesigned commissioning and funding processes are grounded in values and practices of equitable collaboration, shared	**Example of a 6 (8:2025)** [name]'s position as a unitary authority has allowed the council and its partners to **re-shape internal structures and decision-making processes** to better **enable systemic, place-based working on physical activity**. Over the last two years, the authority has deliberately moved from programme-led delivery toward a whole-system, partnership-based model, **embedding collaboration into team design, governance, and everyday practice**. A visible structural shift has taken place within the Health and Wellbeing Service, which now functions as an integrator rather than a deliverer. The team reorganised around system convening, communications, and partnership activation—**creating roles that join up health, leisure, and voluntary-sector actors**. [name]'s communications role, initially administrative, evolved into an embedded systems-enabler post. His function now connects over 200 partners through the [name] Network, monthly "comms and insight" meetings [...]. This internal investment demonstrates how the council has **redesigned workforce roles and information flow to support place-based coordination.**

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
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			purpose and learning rather than targets. They are designed to build sustainable long-term capacity and collaborative ways of working. Attitudes to risk are proportionate.	Across the council, **procurement and commissioning processes have been simplified and devolved** to accelerate the movement of resources into place. As Head of Service describes, "delegated funding thresholds and bespoke frameworks" now allow quicker, proportionate decision-making, reducing bureaucratic friction and giving local **teams permission to test and adapt**. Partners meet under a shared "[Name]" umbrella, with agreed roles, decision rights, and data-sharing responsibilities—an explicit redesign of administrative processes to sustain systemic working beyond leisure or health silos. Culturally, the system has embraced the principle of "power with, not power over." Shared-role models and co-production structures—like [...]demonstrate how decision-making has become more distributed. Partners report that this shift has rebalanced relationships between council officers, PCNs, and voluntary groups, **replacing transactional commissioning with collaboration grounded in mutual learning and respect**. Despite strong progress, gaps remain. While flexible procurement and integrated comms are embedded within the unitary authority, not all partner organisations have mirrored these adaptations. [....] Sustaining the systemic model will require continuing to align HR, finance, and performance frameworks with place-based priorities and ensuring every partner's structure enables the same agility that now characterises the council's own operations.
Sector integration of physical activity	**b) *Inclusive comms practices*: Partner organisations adapt communications**	1	Strategies, practices, and communications **are not responsive** to traditions, values, beliefs, language, and accessibility needs of groups who are less likely to be active.	

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	to align and engage with diverse cultural needs		Assumptions or stereotypes held by local people or staff are not challenged.	
		2-3	There are **some examples** of strategies, practices, and communications which seek to understand and respond to traditions, values, beliefs, language, and accessibility needs, of groups who are less likely to be active. Some people in the partnership are noticing and challenging commonly held assumptions or stereotypes.	**Example of a 2** (19) It has been important to recognise the **differences in community needs** across locations [..]. For instance, the community needs at one location [name] mean that staff ensure they had additional signposting information to emergency financial support. Demographics of the local community can also influence the equipment that is displayed to engage local people. **Example of a 2** (56) In order to increase awareness of the project within hard-to-reach communities, Inclusive [Place]/ Communities had a presence at several public and community events including [places and events]. It was hoped that through this kind of promotion, these activities would be able to **reach more residents** – not only those from a BAME community – and help to **build more inclusive and cohesive communities** across [Place].
		4-5	Many people working on the PBSA recognise how their own and the organisations' framing and implicit assumptions about physical activity and inequalities may produce ways of communicating that fail to connect with some less active people or groups. There are examples of changes in practice in communications and	**Example of a 5** (8:2025) Strategically, the authority has adopted integrated communications and shared narrative **approaches that reflect local traditions, languages, and values**. Campaigns like [name] used ward-level data and community gatekeepers to tailor messages to South Asian women, Deaf residents, and people with long-term conditions. Materials were **translated, subtitled, and distributed through trusted cultural and faith channels** such as [name] and community magazines. These practices illustrate how **accessibility and language needs are proactively addressed** and how c**ommunications now operate as infrastructure for inclusion rather than marketing**. **Staff assumptions about who engages in physical activity are regularly challenged through reflective sessions, lived-**

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			engagement, including around evaluation. Partners are proactively **engaging in a two-way dialogue** with communities to understand the traditions, values, beliefs, language, and accessibility needs of groups who are less likely to be active. Language and accessibility needs are usually addressed.	**experience storytelling, and cross-sector learning events such as [name] Club and Ripple Effect Mapping**. **Example of a 5 (13:2025)** Outside of the VCSE sector, several broader strategies and cross-council initiatives demonstrate how partners are adapting communications and approaches to better align with diverse cultures across [Place]. Across [Council], there has been an increasing emphasis on **culturally sensitive communication**, particularly through the work of the Cultural Partnership Board, which provides strategic leadership on how **culture, identity and heritage are reflected in borough-wide engagement**. This has encouraged a shift in practice across larger organisations that have traditionally adapted more slowly. A number of [Council] departments and statutory partners have also taken active steps to strengthen cultural competency. For example, Strengths-Based Practice training has been delivered widely across council teams, supporting staff to communicate in ways that **recognise cultural values, lived experience and individual identity**. Alongside this, Active Bystander training has been made available across partner organisations, **enabling staff to respond constructively to discriminatory behaviour and promote safe, culturally inclusive environments**. [Council]'s ongoing work with neighbourhood teams has also strengthened engagement in areas with high cultural diversity, ensuring that consultation materials, events, and **community conversations are planned with consideration for language needs, religious events, and cultural practices.** Recent council-supported events have included translation of communications into multiple languages, not only for VCSE partners but also for broader, cross-sector engagement activities.

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes effectively enable and encourage place-based ways of working to address inequalities.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Overall, while the VCSE sector continues to lead the way, wider partners—including [Council], neighbourhood services, and statutory organisations—are **increasingly adopting culturally responsive communication practices**. These efforts are becoming more consistent and embedded, supporting a more inclusive system-wide approach to engaging [Place]'s diverse communities.
		6-7	Across the partnership, most people working in the PBSA recognise how their own and their organisations' past framing and implicit assumptions about physical activity and inequalities may have produced ways of communicating that failed to connect with some less active people or groups. Strategies, practices, and communications, including evaluation-related work, **consistently consider, differing traditions, values, beliefs, language, and accessibility needs, of groups who are less likely to be active.** This enables, and is shaped by, two-way dialogues with communities. Language and accessibility needs are consistently and proactively addressed.	

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes effectively enable and encourage place-based ways of working to address inequalities.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Tackling structural inequalities	**c) *Processes address causes:* Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes enable more equitable sharing of power and resources to address inequalities and their underlying drivers**	1	Decision-making and administrative processes reflect and reproduce inequalities. The distribution of resources tends not to take account of inequalities.	
		2-3	**Emerging understanding** that administrative processes maintain inequalities and fail to address discrimination. Some administrative approaches are being adopted to enable distribution of resources to disadvantaged groups.	**Example of a 3** (68:2025) **Systemically addressing structural inequality within organisational systems has become a more explicit area of discussion** across [Place]. **Partners increasingly acknowledge that commissioning frameworks, risk policies and performance measures can unintentionally reinforce** disadvantage by favouring larger or more established providers. In response, several departments are **beginning to test equity-based allocation models**, directing a greater proportion of resource towards areas of deprivation and under-represented communities. **Funding processes now more frequently consider social value and lived experience, with community representatives contributing to assessment and review panels.** Despite this progress, m**ainstream administrative systems continue to prioritise compliance and risk management,** which can limit flexibility. Staff at operational level often **lack the discretion** or confidence to adapt established procedures, and **awareness of equity objectives varies** between departments. **Alignment between policy intent and internal mechanisms remains a work in progress**. Engagement between planning, regeneration, leisure and health teams has improved, particularly in early design stages, but collaboration is still largely dependent on individual relationships rather than embedded structure. There is also recognition that smaller community organisations often lack the knowledge or capacity to navigate **complex funding processes**, meaning opportunities for investment are **not equitably distributed**. Practical examples illustrate both progress and limitation. Individual requests,

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes effectively enable and encourage place-based ways of working to address inequalities.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				such as the [Name] sessions initiated through a local resident's contact with the Council, demonstrate **responsiveness at a local level** but **lack the systemic support** needed to achieve wider outreach or sustainability. The system is **increasingly aware** that equity cannot rely on isolated acts of goodwill; it requires **deliberate structural change**. From a local perspective, community partners note **incremental improvements** in how funding and decision-making processes recognise smaller groups. In some towns, simplified application processes and early engagement with Council officers have helped emerging organisations [while] community networks provide informal guidance and peer support, which has helped increase participation in smaller-scale grant schemes. Yet the c**omplexity of larger commissioning processes continues to limit equitable access**. **Enabler Examples** • Equity-based resource allocation tested through community grant schemes. • Funding decisions increasingly include lived-experience representation • Public Health and ICB exploring shared accountability for inclusion. • Recognition that internal processes can perpetuate inequity prompted review of HR and procurement policies. • Planning and Regeneration Engagement: Improved collaboration with leisure and health teams, though still dependent on individual relationships. • [Name] Example: Individual request led to session creation but lacked broader outreach or systemic support. **Blocker examples** • Formal equality frameworks not yet embedded within all departments. • Mainstream funding streams still favour established organisations. • Operational staff often lack discretion to apply equitable flexibility. • Lack of consistent data to evidence distributional fairness. • Competing reporting requirements from funders dilute shared purpose.

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes effectively enable and encourage place-based ways of working to address inequalities.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				• Disability Group Negotiations: Initial expectation for free access led to compromise on discounted rates, highlighting tension between equity and commerciality. • Smart Card/Show Card Schemes: Means-tested discount programmes exist but are not widely advertised or understood. • Data Sharing Gaps: Insight from departments like regeneration and children's services not consistently shared or used to inform inclusive programming.
		4-5	**New administrative processes** are being adopted to enable sharing of power and resources with disadvantaged groups to tackle structural inequalities. Significant resources are directed to disadvantaged groups.	**Example of a 4** (45:2025) In [Place], there is a clear focus on dedicating resources to those communities with the greatest need and the greatest opportunity to create meaningful and sustainable change. Progress has been made across the system in recognising and addressing the wider determinants of physical activity, including housing, transport, and education, and understanding their interdependencies with health and activity levels. **Practical steps are being taken to devolve and share power with communities**. For example, the [Name] Active Neighbourhoods project has trialled new approaches to **community-led decision-making**, and this model is now being considered for wider scaling as part of the city's place-based expansion. The **allocation of resources** for place-based work is deliberately centred on **addressing inequalities and their underlying drivers**. This is supported by the use of geographical mapping and a matrix of combined need and strength, which helps to identify priority areas and align resources effectively. A particular focus has been placed on health pathways where there is both high prevalence and strong potential for the integration of physical activity to deliver positive outcomes. While these approaches demonstrate growing maturity, **further work is needed to embed equitable power-sharing and resource allocation consistently across the system**. Strengthening the formalisation of these practices will help ensure that they are sustainable, scalable, and fully embedded in organisational policies and structures.

2. Organisational processes, policies, structures and governance				
Administrative systems, policies, structures and processes effectively enable and encourage place-based ways of working to address inequalities.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
		6-7	**New administrative processes have become embedded**. These enable sharing of power and resources with disadvantaged groups to tackle structural inequalities. Mainstream resources are deliberately and fairly directed to disadvantaged groups.	

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) Partner capacity & capability: Partners are investing in building capacity and capability for place-based systemic working**	1	There are **no capacity and capability building strategies** in planning for place-based systemic working. There is no agreed/or supported, dedicated time, for employees to work in a place-based systemic way.	**Example of a 1** (5) There are no active capacity or capability strategies that are felt to be effective where staff don't feel equipped to tackle physical inactivity in their work, indicating some challenges operationalising the capacity building remit of the network meetings.
		2-3	Partner organisations are developing ***plans to invest resources (including employees' time)*** in capacity and **capability building** for place-based systemic working. This may include recruiting for the skills, knowledge, and attributes required. *OR* There is a recognition that some employees' time is needed to support this way of working but existing capacity and capability building strategies have ***limited or low uptake*****.**	**Example of a 3** (90) **[Place] deliver capability building sessions to build skills and knowledge for community partners.** Whilst sessions have been offered to a range of community partners across place, uptake has varied depending on sessions with community partner lacking capacity to attend leading to **limited or low uptake.** **Example of a 3** (11) [Place] have set up initiatives such as **recruiting and training** [PA Champions] and setting up Community Panels are enabling individuals in the community to increase capacity and capability to support the physical activity agenda across localities … However, there are limitations on organisational capacity to work on this within the public sector which presents difficulties for projects that aim to working in a place-based systemic way.
		4-5	Partner ***organisations are investing resources (including employees' time)*** in capacity and	**Example of a 4** (C:2025 E&L) In [AP], Place Partnerships invested in partner capacity by supporting organisations to make the approach their own. [Local football community

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			capability building strategies and/or recruiting for the skills, knowledge, and attributes for place-based systemic working. Training, development and support for networks to share best practice is offered widely and has strong uptake. There are some employees with **dedicated time** to work in a **place-based, systemic**, and collaborative way with a focus on addressing inequalities.	programme] "focused heavily on **integrating the strengths-based approach into everyday team meetings and performance reviews**, with a strong focus on personal coaching for staff at all levels" and creating a "culture of strengths" through consistent reflection and ongoing team exercises. In contrast, "[Place] Council took a more structured, top-down approach, initially targeting leadership and middle management to drive the strengths-based culture", with a phased rollout allowing "more focused engagement with key decision-makers," although **scaling across the council was limited by resources**. At the system level, the Middle Leaders Programme aligned with the [AP] model of change, investing in individuals within the system to build "capabilities, confidence, and capacity" through **skill development and protected time** to engage with existing data. Middle leaders identified how best to use data to embed physical activity through practice and policy changes, leading initiatives that enabled more young people to be active during the school day. The impact of these initiatives was captured through "stories of significant change" and ripple effect mapping, providing evidence of how strengthened collaboration and networking builds skills, confidence, and a shared sense of purpose across partner organisations. **Example of a 4 (28: 2025)** Partners are **intentionally investing in people and infrastructure to embed collaborative, place-based ways of working**. The Local Authority, Leisure sector, and Active Partnership have seconded staff into dedicated Place Partnership **funded roles focused on system change, insight translation, and network coordination**. These roles act as connectors between policy, delivery, and community insight. **Structured learning and reflection** are built into operations: the Place Partnership team meets weekly for shared learning, attends all learning and sensemaking opportunities, and will complete Systems Leadership training in

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				September 2025. Integration of PCN Health Coaches and partnership with Primary Care Networks demonstrate investment in cross-sector skill sharing and capacity. This approach has professionalised place-based work: s**taff now have clear time and remit to work collaboratively, address inequalities, and broker across systems** rather than deliver in silos. Gap: While training and collaboration time are prioritized, there is **limited evidence of this wider than the immediate place partnership**. Succession planning and continuity funding for seconded posts remain uncertain beyond the Place partnership funding, which risks losing key system knowledge if not absorbed into host organisations. **Example of a 5** (9:2025E&L)). In [Place] the [PP] highlighted the importance of building senior-level advocacy to support sustainable system change. Historically, gaining advocates and influencers at a senior level "hasn't been as effective as hoped," with "a lack of understanding around the four key foundations for sustainable change [...] Although these foundations are "starting to be used more broadly," inconsistencies in knowledge and application were perceived to negatively impact implementation. To address this, [PP] developed a learning journey, Agility in Complexity, designed to support senior leaders to "**develop their understanding and knowledge** of the four f**oundations for sustainable system change**," "change mindsets," and "use additional tools." By building these capabilities, [PP] expects to create a "**growing, supportive network of senior leaders working individually and collectively in complexity-informed ways**," enhancing connectivity, collaboration, and capacity across the system. This network is

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				intended to inspire leaders to create sustainable system change with a clear line of sight to [PP] vision.
		6-7	There is **an established and *growing workforce*** of people with the skills, knowledge, and attributes for systemic, place-based and collaborative working. This is **embedded** in job descriptions and priorities across the partnership organisations. Recruitment and continuous professional development policies prioritise these skills, knowledge, and capacities. Training, development and support for networks is embedded in mainstream practice, such as PDR and induction policies.	
Strengthening community & individual capacities	**b) VCFSE capacity & capability: Working with communities and voluntary organisations to build**	1	There are **no plans or strategies** for capacity and capability building with local people* to work together to tackle problems of inactivity. Local community organisations **do not share skills** or ways of working, with each other.	

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
	capacity and capability	2-3	**Plans or strategies are being co-designed with VCFSE partners,** to work with local people to build the skills and knowledge to work together to tackle problems of inactivity. Community organisations are **beginning to recognise** they can support each other to build skills and local knowledge.	Example of a 3 (90). **Plans are in development for a [place] physical activity network** to engage key partners across the [place]. **Plans for this network aim to achieve wider systems change**, build capacity for physical activity, and offer a space for engagement between partners and local authorities. **Example of a 3** (52) Organisations that do not specialise in sport or physical activity are recognised to need support to facilitate increased physical activity opportunities. Some organisations have been identified and steps are being taken by [Place Partnership] to provide support to tackle challenges faced.
		4-5	There are coherent, **proactive partnership strategies, resources and actions** in place, which work with local people to build skills and knowledge to work together to tackle problems of inactivity. These are offered widely and have broad uptake across diverse communities. There are short term fixes to mitigate poor working and living conditions to enable participation. Community organisations are starting to support each other, to share skills, or building each other's capacity to work in this way.	**Example of a 4** (**97:2025 E&L**) In, [Place] Partnerships invested in the skills and confidence of the VCSE sector and communities. Initial challenges included frustrations from long-standing members that "the pace of the work isn't meeting their expectations," reflecting the need to build shared understanding and confidence. Training and support helped address this. A new panel member reflected that after the second Leadership Training Day, they now "feel more knowledgeable and that this work links to what they do." Appointing two Community Coordinators further enhanced capacity. **Example of a 5 (90:2024)** In 2022, [Place partnership] developed a new funding framework to strengthen community organisations' capacity and foster collaboration. The framework, grounded in asset-based community development, included the Partnership, Learning and Development (PLD) grant, offering up to £20k for projects and £10k for organisational development, alongside smaller [names] grants. The aim was to support organisations "at whatever stage of their organisational development" to build skills, improve practice, and sustain physical activity offers.

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Example of a 5 (82:2024) Increasing skills across the whole sector – **supporting each other and sharing knowledge and experience**, not just training– person-centred, active listening - more desire to upskill internally as its more sustainable than bringing in external support – if external funding needed, then looking at how to make sustainable – mentoring is big aspect of this - catch-ups, sharing experience and learning – more face to face meetings with lots of information being shared in conversations. More information being shared than ever across VCSE and other organisations - [organisation] [name] meetings bring together VCSE organisations, sharing good practice on the ground – training up residents - doing it in the community – in their spaces – people who wouldn't have previously come to an exercise class now leading it.
		6-7	A broad and representative range of local people **demonstrate and continue to build the skills, strengths, and capacities** to solve collective problems of inactivity and inequalities on an ongoing basis. This work includes proactive engagement to involve the people and communities who face barriers to participation. People are fairly rewarded for participation in capacity and capability development work. A **network of community partners** is evolving, from which	

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
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Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			collaborative work emerges (e.g. joint funding bids).	
Tackling structural inequalities	**c) Community capacity – causes: Support and resources for communities to build the capacities and capabilities to advocate and act on the causes of inequalities**	1	There is a high level of **insecurity, poverty, poor working and living conditions and mental stress**. People living in these conditions feel powerless.	
		2-3	Plans being co-designed with communities and/or emerging examples of support that **build capacity and capability** for local people to define and act on aspects of their lives which foster dignity and control.	**Example of a 3 (43) 2025.** The creation of a specific Disability Sport & Physical Activity forum aimed to identify gaps and increase activity for people with disabilities. This led to a **dedicated community connector role** and new inclusive sessions, **building specific capacity within a marginalised community**. [Place] previously highlighted that partners and community organisations have a good understanding of the root causes and barriers to physical activity but still hold a traditional view of traditional physical activity solutions. The community development officers and connectors are holding conversations formally through the better health partnerships and informally through individuals and community groups to help align the understanding of inequalities and shift perceptions of physical activity to help address inequality. The change we want to see isn't done through formalised training, but via conversations and taking people along on the journey.
		4-5	**Initiatives are in place** that build capacity and capability for local people to define and act on aspects of their lives which may foster dignity and control in their lives.	**Example of a 5 (19: 2024)** When staff have specialist knowledge, they can provide meaningful and responsive support. For example, the LDP Community Connect workers understood how to support participants in their challenges with alcohol, while instructors with another partner organisation who understood the needs and challenges of disabled people were able to provide adapted equipment for

3. Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities				
Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				sessions. **Having these skills and knowledge in-house can help build trust** and provide meaningful and necessary solutions for many. Through the delivery of [project] as part of the LDP, we have learnt the importance of staff having the skills and training to handle **difficult conversations with community members who may be facing a range of challenges**, and for whom the [project] may be the only touch point of support e.g., housing and addiction issues. As a result, [project] staff have received de-escalation training, suicide awareness training, and have taken part in a series of reflective practice sessions led by the organisation's Mental Health Services Advanced Practitioner. Through place-based projects to tackle inequalities, across the city we are seeing more examples of funding and organisations **supporting community groups to build skills and capacity to become community researchers, and in turn be able to work with their communities to discover, and amplify their voices through research, and advocate and inform strategies and policies to tackle inequalities.** Across the [Place] there are many examples from the years where local trusted organisations have worked with their communities to increase their confidence and be front and centre of decisions made about them, as well as front and centre of their own stories, to motivate, promote and advocate for change.
		6-7	Initiatives that build capacity and capability for local people to define and act on what matters most to them are **widely embedded and sustained.** Evidence of increasing experiences of dignity and control in their lives.	

4. Cycles of learning and action				
There are appropriate methods in place to learn from experience and, over time, improve place-based working to address physical inactivity.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
GENERAL 1	**a) Learning culture: Systemic learning culture and behaviours**	1	Learning culture, (that is an environment of asking questions, seeking new knowledge and exploring different ways of doing things), is **not valued**. Evaluation may be seen as a 'nice idea' and in competition with time for delivery or conceived as a way to validate existing practice or manage performance. People want or expect certainty in relation to the outcomes of their actions. Simple solutions to complex problems are sought. There is a lack of safety in sharing information. Problems or 'failures' tend not to be spoken about – with no constructive learning taken from them. There is limited belief in the possibility of change.	
		2-3	**Some** people /teams working within the place **recognise the value of learning.** They encourage others to be curious, to ask questions, to think about how and why change is or isn't happening, and to explore different ways of doing things. Some people and organisations recognise that simple solutions, alone,	**Example of a 2** (68) While many organisations are engaged together there is not yet a widespread willingness to share failures and to learn from them. **Example of a 3** (80) Senior Council colleagues and the [Place] Board were identified as areas for improvement, with overstretched Council staff facing pressures that made engagement difficult. In contrast, ICB and health partners were described as "very open to new approaches and learning" and actively joining the partnership's

			will not be enough to solve complex problems. While some recognise them as opportunities to learn, fear of airing unsuccessful initiatives remains the norm. There is a belief in the possibility of change within some individuals and teams.	journey, alongside the Chamber of Commerce. The partnership also identified a need for a senior influencer within the Council.
		4-5	**Many teams/partners within the Place show curiosity about the how and why change is or isn't happening,** drawing on a range of different people, sources and settings. Continuous learning is often, but not always, recognised by partners as a key element of a PBSA. There is increasing use of reflective practice, and awareness of the different kinds of value that such learning can bring to this work, including building trust and confidence to try different approaches. There are some shared **'learning spaces', in which people feel safe to be open and honest** in talking about their experiences, including unsuccessful initiatives, which are seen by many as opportunities for learning and growth.	**Example of a 4** (90) In the right environment and with select audiences, there is **openness to engaging with learning cycles and the uncertainty of working on complex challenges**. Partners with a clearer focus on physical activity and greater alignment with the programme's aims have been more positive about engaging in learning cycles. **While a culture of learning is building, it is not yet continuous or embedded**. There is uncertainty about whether informal learning spaces can be maintained, with organisations reporting that **limited capacity may restrict opportunities for ongoing reflection and learning**. Example of a 4 (90) (SMM 2025) Place 90 demonstrates emerging opportunities for **collective reflection**, learning and action through the Place Partnership and wider structures, including the Communities Group and neighbourhood-based Target Operating Model. Learning is beginning to **influence wider approaches and ways of working**, although consistent cycles of learning and action are not yet embedded. The discontinuation of the Conditions for Change group, due to organisational and staffing changes, highlights ongoing challenges in sustaining these processes. **Example of a 5** (82025) Learning has become a recognised part of daily practice, although it remains more reactive than strategic. **Teams routinely pause to review and adjust delivery.** For

				example, one team paused services for two weeks to map provision, interrogate data and review its approach, leading to a shift from direct delivery towards facilitation and brokerage roles. A local network of 150 partners meets quarterly to showcase work, test ideas and act as "critical friends". **These discussions often prompt adaptations**, including changes to communications, training offers and micro-grant allocations. Learning is continuous but remains largely dependent on personal relationships and facilitated reflection rather than embedded feedback systems. Methods including Stories of Change, Ripple Effect Mapping and ad-hoc reflective meetings are used regularly, but are not yet fully owned by individual partner organisations.
		6-7	Continuous learning culture is **embedded** as **a core part of the place-based systemic approach**, shaping decision-making and practice across the Place Evaluative ways of thinking and working are made accessible and widely seen as something everyone can engage in. The different kinds of value that learning processes bring are widely recognised and understood. Space is created across the system for regular reflection and high levels of trust between individuals and organisations enable openness and constructive criticism. **A culture of curiosity prevails** over fear of failure, enabling people to feel safe as they openly explore how and why change is or is not happening,	**Example of a 6 (63:2025)** Continuous learning is **embedded as a shared habit that shapes how partners work and make decisions**. Uncertainty is recognised as a normal part of change, with **curiosity and experimentation encouraged**. When things do not go to plan, partners pause to reflect, share insights and adapt their approach, guided by a 'Probe → Sense → Respond' learning cycle. This culture is supported through **regular learning spaces**, including Curiosity Clubs, Team Time, Ripple-Effect Mapping and Stories of Change, where **partners reflect together, challenge assumptions and explore what works, why and for whom**. In one locality, weekly team meetings and participatory learning activities bring residents' experiences into reflection and subsequent action, creating an ongoing cycle of learning and adaptation.

			drawing on a variety of people, sources and settings. Feeling 'uncomfortable' and accepting uncertainty is commonly accepted.	
GENERAL 2	**b) Embedded learning: Embedded learning capacity and processes**	1	There is a **lack of policies, processes, training and resources** to support continuous learning (for example to reflect on practice and share ideas, knowledge, or evaluation data about effective or ineffective initiatives). Actions are disconnected from the learning processes.	
		2-3	There are a few examples of teams or organisations are developing policies, **processes, training and resources** to support learning in the contexts of complex systems. This may be dependent on external facilitation or communities of practice. There are a few examples of learning process within partner organisations or local networks where learning informs decisions and continuous improvement.	**Example of a 2** (96) Learning from the [Place Investment] process suggests that learning processes remain limited at local level, although the investment programme provides a positive example of emerging practice. Progress towards more flexible, learning-based approaches remains fragile, constrained by external accountability frameworks and historical competition between partners that prioritise reporting successes and delivery outputs. **Example of a 3 (4:2025)** Learning processes within partner organisations and networks are increasingly informing decisions and continuous improvement, although evaluation is not yet consistently embedded. One partnership uses local data and community feedback to adjust priorities, including targeting resources towards areas with the highest inactivity rates. Community projects use evaluation reports to inform more flexible funding approaches, while a health network adapts referral pathways based on patient feedback.

				However, partners acknowledge that evaluation is sometimes reactive rather than planned, with limited time and capacity affecting their ability to embed learning processes.
		4-5	Several teams and organisations have put in place the **processes, training, capacity, and resources** to support evaluative thinking and ways of working. These are designed to be accessible and engage a wide range of people. These learning practices inform action and decision-making, drawing on findings from other place-based systemic approaches, as well as locally captured insight from a variety of sources. This way of working is increasingly adopted within local networks and collaborations, in which insights and learning are shared, but transfer of learning into action may be inconsistent.	**Example of a 4 (63:2025)** Partners adapted their approach to volunteer training after finding that online training was not attracting volunteers, moving towards practical, in-person shadowing. However, learning and data collection remain fragmented, with learning loops not yet routine across all sectors. Collaboration and learning are often dependent on specific projects and individuals rather than established processes across the wider system. **Example of a 5** The team has developed a light-touch learning process involving fortnightly paired reflections on the impact of staff members' work. Insights feed into team meetings to identify where action needs adapting. A monthly team survey and quarterly events bring together different workstreams and partners to reflect and learn. Partner organisations have also adopted this approach to develop regular habits of learning and reflection. Accessible summaries are shared with partners, and initial steps have been taken to encourage reflection and learning in local physical activity networks.
		6-7	Learning policies, processes, training, capacity and resources to support evaluative thinking and ways of working are **consistently supported and prioritised across the system**. These processes and practices are developed and adapted to be engaging and accessible to enable everyone with an interest in this work to	**Example of a 6** (B:2025 E&L)) Structured learning processes are embedded across partnerships, including **regular formal and informal check-ins, steering groups and feedback sessions** to reflect on progress and make adjustments. Partners, including healthcare professionals and local leaders, are involved in developing solutions. The partnership draws on Ripple Effect Mapping, qualitative content analysis, local health data and campaign engagement data to identify enablers of physical activity

			participate. Organisations and networks are committed to maintaining the capacity and capabilities to develop and to engage in evaluative practices. **Inclusive learning processes** are embedded and shared across partnerships and individual organisations and recognised as a key aspect of collaborative place-based working. These pay attention to local people's experiences and wider evidence, in a continuous cycle of learning and action Evaluation data and findings are shared in accessible formats and in welcoming spaces so that people can engage with and understand the process, learning, and implications for community-led and partner action. This includes permission to stop doing things that are not working.	and inform adaptations. Stakeholders describe ongoing reflection, learning and adaptation as important for responding to changing circumstances and maintaining momentum.
GENERAL 3	**c) Appropriate methods: Appropriate methods for evaluation and learning in place-based working**	1	Evaluation methods used are not appropriate for place-based working. For example, use of simple 'before and after' evaluation of interventions, seeking to 'prove' their impact, with little attention to the influence of local context. Evaluation processes are narrowly focussed on quantifiable outcomes or targets defined in advance and with no regard to local definitions of what is valued. They may be regarded as a	**Example of a 1** (11) Not all partners value evaluation, some still see it as hassle **Example of a 1** (43) The partnership is beginning to recognise complexity but has not yet developed an understanding of complexity-sensitive evaluation across partners. Network mapping has been discussed, but the partnership reports limited capacity to develop its evaluation approaches at present.

			reporting/monitoring requirement of funders, to be complied with rather than as a way of working. People tend to have fixed or expert mindsets and distrust or disregard lived experience insights.	
		2-3	Those leading this work recognise that that place-based systemic working needs appropriate evaluation methods, but strategies and resources are not yet established to address this comprehensively. Some complexity sensitive evaluation methods (e.g. those that account for context, consider multiple 'impacts', including unintended outcomes, explore changes over time and seek to explain changes etc.) are being used in some parts of the system. There are some examples of processes for capturing and valuing local partners and local people's experience about how things are working/changing (or not).	**Example of a 2** (11:2024) The lived experience of people implementing systemic changes is captured, particularly staff in local organisations. However, the partnership recognises that more insight is needed from service users and residents. **Example of a 3 (80) – SMM 2025-26 Data** Those leading the work recognise the need for appropriate evaluation methods for place-based systemic working, but strategies and resources are not yet fully established. The partnership is developing its monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan and is seeking an external MEL partner. There is interest in using methods such as Ripple Effect Mapping and network mapping to evaluate its work, with Ripple Effect Mapping already being used in one programme.
		4-5	A range of complexity sensitive evaluation methods have been adopted in some aspects of the PBSA. These are understood and valued by people and organisations involved, and help develop understandings of how	**Example of a 4 (90:–2025)** The Place Partnership is supporting several workstreams to develop **evaluation approaches that are non-extractive and enable participants to co-design and actively contribute to evaluation**. One working group is reviewing existing service

			and why change is or is not taking place. Local people with lived experience of physical inactivity, those implementing PA activities or involved in agencies locally are often engaged in evaluation/learning processes and providing insights into what makes a difference locally.	data alongside what else needs to be collected to understand local ways of working and learning priorities. The partnership also plans to co-design evaluation measures and approaches to sharing and reflecting on learning with partner organisations. In another workstream, partners are exploring how young people can be actively involved in evaluating improvements to local spaces for physical activity. **Example of a 4 (97) - SMM 25-26 data** Partners are being supported to use new research and evaluation techniques, including Ripple Effect Mapping, to capture learning from work in complex systems. **Several initiatives are developing approaches to capturing and valuing learning, including using a variety of techniques to gather insights and sharing findings through an annual learning event**. Other workstreams are exploring ways to capture children and young people's experiences and stories. A trauma-informed network is also seeking to **reflect and adapt based on learning shaped by people with lived experience**, supported by a **cross-sector learning hub that shares insights through workforce development, resources and guest speaker sessions**. **Example of a 5 (21:2025)** The partnership has worked with an external learning partner for three years to support **ongoing reflection and test-and-learn approaches,** rather than evaluating only at the end of programmes. Learning from work on the conditions for change has informed the development of a locally adapted Theory of Change. The partnership is now developing its use of Ripple Effect Mapping, with partners across the system discussing what they want to measure and capture. Local people are involved in this work, and a resource hub is being developed to support practitioners in using the method and sharing their findings. **Example of a 5** (9)

				Local residents' and delivery partners' experiences are captured through storytelling approaches. An evaluation framework was co-designed with those delivering the work to incorporate their insights and build ownership of the process. The partnership is also exploring ways to identify the wider value of systems working, beyond outputs, including the relationships formed and maintained.
		6-7	A range of evaluation methods and tools appropriate for whole-system place-based approaches are widely understood and consistently adopted. This enables learning and adaption in collaborative spaces, which informs and shapes the ongoing work across the Place. These methods use a variety of information sources, consider dynamic relationships and contexts, to explore how and why change is or is not taking place. They avoid reliance on narrowly defined measures and outcomes. Local people with lived experience of physical inactivity, those implementing PA activities or involved in agencies locally are actively contributing to the framing, design, and implementation of evaluation and learning processes and providing insights into what makes a difference locally.	**Example of a 6** (52:2024) The partnership has invested in a research and evaluation team and developed an evaluation approach for whole-system place-based working, with input from professional stakeholders and community members. P**articipatory methods include citizen science and Ripple Effect Mapping**. In one citizen science project, four girls developed their own evaluation questions and methods, including walking interviews, workshops and surveys, before sharing their findings in formats of their choice. **Community involvement also informs how evaluation is conducted and communicated**. For example, feedback about local language preferences has led to greater use of face-to-face communication rather than written outputs. Findings from Ripple Effect Mapping are also shared back with communities to explore priorities for local action.

5. Collaboration				
There is productive partnership working around a common purpose.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) Cross-sector collaboration: Collaborative practice within and across sectors**	1	Organisations **work in silos** to tackle physical activity inequalities. There is a lack of mutual understanding and shared value of physical activity within and across organisations, and PA inequalities are widely seen as the responsibility of the PA sector alone. Departments or organisations **compete for resources** to the detriment of tackling the underlying causes of physical inactivity. Decision-making is not shared. Contradictions in policy and practice inhibit productive working partnerships to encourage PA (for example economic policies to encourage people to drive into city centres, at the cost of active travel solutions).	**Example of a 1** (21) "…there is a **culture of self-preservation**…particularly in relation to funding…" (21)
		2-3	Potential partners **identify the benefits of working together** to tackle systemic barriers to enable people to be more active. There is effective work taking place to build relationships within and across organisations.	**Example of a 2** (37) There are pockets of examples where sectors have collaborated, however this is not commonplace and although there is a readiness, it is **very early stages of trust being built between partners.**

5. Collaboration				
There is productive partnership working around a common purpose.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			There **is growing honesty and trust** between people, and ideas around sharing resources. There is an acceptance that collaboration may involve compromises or lead to innovative solutions. There is recognition that decision-making should be shared between partners. There is recognition of where policy/practice can inhibit productive working and plans to work more in partnership.	**Example of a 3** (68) Relationships with key partners (leisure trust, school, town council) have **transformed from competitive and damaging to constructive and jointly purposeful**. Exemplified in steering group behaviours and shared projects. **Example of a 3** (43) Some collaborative work takes place in the borough, but at this particular moment of time, **projects and activities are more organisational led than partnership led**. A number of sub-groups exist in different spheres involving various partners including the Active Schools Group and Sport and Physical Activity Forum. The... development of the Sport and Physical Activity Forum has **led to more partners across the town agreeing to support its promotion**. The ... plan recently pitched to the 2030 board ... who **agreed with the proposed concept** via ... to try and encourage them to adopt a physical activity target across all council departments, boards and groups.
		4-5	There are **some examples of people in organisations working together across the local place,** within and across policy areas and ideas to tackle systemic barriers and/or create more comprehensive physical activity opportunities. **Organisations have developed a shared purpose**, based on effective communication and growing trust among people and partners. Many partners agree on how to make resources and assets work more effectively to tackle	**Example of 4 (68:2024)** Collaboration across [Place] has within the last year developed, with a **noticeable shift from partnerships attending as a tick box exercise to the partnerships having more of a shared purpose.** There is a growing awareness by multiple services and community groups that there has been too much siloed working — 'everyone doing their own thing' — and these organisations have begun to demonstrate a willingness to link together more often. **Strategic relationships between (partners) have evolved into trusted working arrangements** that encourage **honest reflection and joint planning**. Partners describe this as a move from working alongside each other to building something together. An example of this is seen within the Youth Working Group, where there was an **agreement and shift from focusing on assumptive-based insight to data-driven decision making**. Collaboration between members has developed to support work being done to understand youth voices within the area and to inform future funding bids designed to serve the community. The Place Partner has also strengthened system collaboration, with partners identifying **collective outcomes rather than**

5. Collaboration				
There is productive partnership working around a common purpose.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			physical activity inequalities, and this often drives collective decisions. There are **examples of changes in behaviours, practice and policy** which demonstrate shifts away from destructive competition and contradictions.	**isolated targets**. In (68), years of relational work mean collaboration feels intuitive, whereas in other areas, connection remains more sporadic. Across the system, there is growing understanding that collaboration must be designed for longevity — with embedded processes and data-sharing arrangements that outlive specific projects or people. **Example of a 5** (5) Our Social Network Analysis of the …Network demonstrates the growing collaboration across sectors, including the VCSF. Quarterly …events reinforce the shared purpose… [supplier] has led the **development of Locality Plans and Ward budgets** to **financially support specific local issues and priorities**. New…model should help to direct resources and assets to tackle PA inequalities. [Parks] programme an exemplar of **improving cross-organisational collaboration** (new… Investment Policy) and using Sport England funding to **leverage extra resources**.
		6-7	**Organisations are consistently working together throughout the local place,** within and across policy areas and ideas to tackle systemic barriers and/or create more comprehensive physical activity opportunities. The **shared purpose is widely owned and embedded in organisations' plans and practices across key place-based partners.** High levels of trust enable routine shared and equitable decision-making even in cases where partners may have differences of opinions.	**Example of a 6** (81) …The **model of the backbone support** team is comprised of team members who work collaboratively and are funded partially from [research centre] and partly from partner organisations – [active partnership, hospital trust, university partner, integrated care board]… we have the **formal networks** (learning subgroups, coordination group, board) and **informal ways of working together**…We can mobilise widely across the city and know who to speak with to **create PA opportunities** in the city - [numerous projects at different scales given as evidence] all show this. But we have also **built on wider work** to look at how different areas can contribute to reducing PA inequalities through active travel/health/sport and education groups. [evidence given regarding public health and VCSE sector and co-location of health and physical activity infrastructure]. Within these groups conversations often vary between operational **PA opportunities** but there are also **strategic discussions** [evidence given re: depth and breadth of involvement]. **Example of a 6 (91:2024)**

5. Collaboration				
There is productive partnership working around a common purpose.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			Collaborative practice across and within organisations is the norm and persists beyond individual relationships. Contradictions in policy and practice are routinely unravelled and resolved and competition is supported only when it drives innovation.	This has a strong presence based on the governance structure within [Place]. Longer term impact is integrated into the borough's strategic plans outlined in the Active Communities Strategy Implementation Plan – a plan now 'owned' by over 30 statutory, charity, voluntary & commercial organisations and groups. This integrates a restructured governance and 'ownership' structure that encompasses both strategic and operational elements in a coordinated way. Strong shared purpose in strategy - lot of examples provided of how this is embedded in practice, such as the implementation report to H&WB Board.
Strengthening community & individual capacities	**b) VCFSE collaboration: Thriving community sector that works together on physical activity**	1	**Limited attention** is given to physical activity as part of usual work for Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations in the place. VCFSE organisations are precarious (i.e. live 'hand to mouth') and/or competitive which **inhibits collaboration**.	
		2-3	**Some** VCFSE organisations **recognise how PA can align with their aims** and are willing to work with others to incorporate physical activity into their work and widen reach to those who may be inactive. These efforts tend to be **time limited and/or are bound to**	**Example of a 2** (53) As an active partnership, we are seeing relationships grow across the LA, VCSFE and other public sector partners, but much of this is **'ad hoc'** or by chance, rather than systematic, and is often driven by passionate individuals rather than through strategic level planning. It can therefore mean that people have good, positive conversations on what work would like to be done, but are **unable to commit the time/resource to that work due to competing priorities.** **Example of a 3** (90)

5. Collaboration				
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Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			external funding. (i.e. Efforts to incorporate physical activity is intermittent / sporadic).	Fostered through a (supported network), VCSE organisations have increasingly been **encouraged to work together** [evidence given regarding partner feedback]… The most recent funding grants programme has **encouraged many organisations to pivot towards PA** [examples as well as challenges given]. The majority had not offered PA prior to receiving the grant…the **challenge remains** how far, once funding end, these programmes will be able to continue incorporating PA delivery alongside their own programmes…many highlighted **capacity challenges**
		4-5	**Many** VCFSE organisations recognise **how PA can align with their aims**. They are collaborating with others to incorporate physical activity into their ongoing work with individuals and communities and to widen reach to those who may be inactive. Physical activity is becoming part of **usual practice** for some VCSFE organisations as a way of contributing to their core objectives.	**Example of 4 (22:2024)** There are a **good network of VCFSE organisation across the borough** ranging from a diverse range of community vol sector sports clubs, and community organisations providing local opportunities, an integrated network of faith groups, and a small but growing range of social enterprise organisations delivering community wellbeing services, through small externally funded grant opportunities. Voluntary and Community Sector are **represented on strategic groups that have a fundamental role in tackling inequality**. These community organisations were engaged as part of the socialization of the **Physical Activity Framework** with an aim to **understand existing system connections – key development priorities** leading to wider opportunities to connect themselves with the system and deliver against local community need. This year saw the development and offer of a range of community grants to community organisations within [Place], to apply for and co-design programmes within their own local communities. [several examples given] **Example of a 4** (97) VCFSE, Leisure, NGB's are working collaboratively and **focused on building physical activity into usual work to reach those who are inactive**, [several examples given] relating to place-based partnerships, in health and community trusts, outdoor partnerships and refugee services. **Example of a 5 (90:2024)**

5. Collaboration				
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Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Funding was complemented by the Delivery Partner Network (DPN), a bi-monthly forum providing "training, peer support, and space for bilateral learning." The DPN encouraged collaboration, shared learning, and innovation, while enabling "regular communication…supporting collaborative space-sharing." For instance, the [organisation] became a hub for other groups […], promoting intergenerational use and wider engagement. Early feedback highlighted that many organisations "lacked internal systems for monitoring and evaluating delivery" and required hands-on support to embed physical activity into their core offer. The DPN, and its successor, the Physical Activity Network, provided this structured support while fostering **trust and shared ownership**, including with the Council. Reflections from [Place partnership] noted "**increased collaboration, mutual support, and an emerging sense of reciprocity amongst partners**."
		6-7	A **network** of VCFSE organisations are working together, with a **common purpose**, and with other place-based agencies to build physical activity into their work with individuals and communities. This includes, widening reach to those who are underserved and pooling resources. This way of working is sustainable and not dependent on short-term funding. For example, faith-based organisations work with community development charities and local sports clubs to encourage young people to maintain their education.	**Example of a 6 (28:2024)** The community sector in [Place] has become both thriving and self-organising, with [Place] Connected acting as the core platform linking voluntary groups, small businesses, clubs, and formal agencies. Through Connected, the VCFSE network has developed a **shared identity and mutual trust that extends beyond project funding.** Organisations **no longer compete for visibility;** instead, they **align offers, pool resources, and refer participants across programmes.** [Several examples given] Many of these relationships are maintained entirely through Connected rather than contracts. The group's inclusive, non-hierarchical structure ("no logos, no ToRs") means **partners act because the work feels proportionate and shared**. This relational culture now **persists beyond individuals and formal projects, sustained by the monthly rhythm and open communication channels.**

5. Collaboration				
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Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
T**ackling structural inequalities**	**c) Collective action on inequalities: Collaborative strategy for addressing structural inequalities**	1	Little interest or an absence of attention from multiple partners to tackle structural inequalities Partners feel powerless to change this	
		2-3	Recognition of the need to collaborate across and within organisations to tackle Structural Inequalities effectively. Roles and responsibilities for addressing these are unclear.	**Example of 2 (29:2024)** Partners are aware of harms of structural inequalities and some action to address them but with **limited collaboration**. There is work underway in some areas. Overall city council vision is around Connecting [Place] which is built on economic development to try and address the lack of higher skilled jobs in [Place]. **Local people do not feel connected to this work**. **People can suggest opportunities for change but nowhere to take them.** **Example of a 3** (80) As a diverse place, **everyone knows the inequalities** (geographies, demographics) and work hard in these areas. We have an inequalities statement, we have **strategies** and programmes and many people working in this area (champions, cohesion officers, programmes on the ground…**it's the policy change that isn't there yet.**
		4-5	Unified and integrated strategy for addressing structural inequalities is developing / developed collaboratively across policy areas, with cross-sector ownership.	**Example of 4 (61:2024)** Our approach to tackling inequalities is embedded within its overarching Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which prioritises reducing health inequalities through strong partnership working. **Collaboration** with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) underpins this approach through the Health Inequalities Plan, which sets out c**lear commitments to co-design services** with communities and **improve equitable access to health and wellbeing opportunities across the area.** Framework for Active Lifestyles reinforces this collective ambition, placing inequality reduction at its core. It promotes a **system-wide, collaborative approach** to enabling active,

5. Collaboration				
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			In some areas, roles and responsibilities for addressing these are clear.	healthy lives for people of all ages and backgrounds. While **multiple structures and workstreams exist across the system**, the next stage will involve strengthening alignment, coordination, and shared accountability to ensure these collective efforts translate into measurable, sustained impact. **Example of a 5** (9) […] Research Centre has built on our approach and **embedding a research culture** in the LAs by building **common purpose and joining policy areas up…**The development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) by public health is utilising a **mission and goals approach** which is engaging a wider range of partners and developing a **collaborative approach to both identification of priorities and implementation.** **Example of a 5** (13) Prevention health inequalities strategies - partners involved in this - NHS trust, ICB, HWB. **Multi-tiered action plan** - tackle health inequalities across every level…. Dashboard of monitoring inequalities - **this is taken seriously**. Health led space with public health rather than council - significant focus for them. **Commitment on how to measure, monitor across partners.**
		6-7	Unified and integrated strategy for addressing structural inequalities is effectively implemented, leading to change in policy and practice within and across sectors. Roles and responsibilities for delivery of the strategy are clear throughout the partnership.	**Example of a 6** (5) Locality Plans and Ward budgets to financially support specific local issues and priorities…[Locality] **Strategy** has a **focus on tackling structural inequalities**, supported by several high-profile strategic programmes e.g. [strategic Commission]. **Example of a 6 (91:2024)** Physical activity must not exist as an isolated sector but a fundamental element of improving lives across multiple sectors, which is where impact is improved. This supports why we follow a whole systems approach and engage with key partners to co-produce provision and programmes. Links to governance – see **implementation plan** link and outcomes framework – not seen yet in outcomes, because need to

5. Collaboration				
There is productive partnership working around a common purpose.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				build trend over time, but outcomes framework is how we will monitor impact on inequalities. See also neighbourhoods and prevention work to address inequalities, in which the Active Communities strategy is embedded

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector Integration of Physical Activity	**a) Strategic leadership: Strategic leaders, across sectors, promote place-based systemic approaches to tackle physical activity inequalities**	1	There is **a lack of sustained, visible leadership**, within the place, for tackling physical activity inequalities. Leadership for tackling physical activity inequalities is limited to the sport and leisure sector.	**Example of 1** (53) While the council are increasing their engagement with residents and specific communities there is a distinct need to join this up with other strategic levers including Collaborative strategy group, ICS and the local Trust. More sectors are interested in being involved, but there is a lack of a strategic steer to support distributed leadership. Reporting into the HWB Board will provide a mandate for increasing distributed leadership.
		2-3	There is **emerging visible leadership**, within the place, for **place-based systemic approaches to tackle physical activity inequalities.** There are emerging leaders across multiple sectors, within the place, beyond sport and leisure, who are beginning to address the breadth of influences on physical activity.	**Example of 2** (9) There is **leadership emerging**…A **key barrier** to this in our place is leaders seeking **short-term fixes to complex situations** which require systems thinking e.g. engaging with multiple perspectives, developing an understanding of context and environment, and ensuring that they have buy-in at different levels of the system. **Example of a 2** (72) The [Active Partnership] has played a central role in bringing together **strategic leaders from across sectors** including public health, leisure, planning, education and the VCSFE sector towards developing a shared vision and approach to tackling physical activity inequalities. The existence of this partnership is an example of **emerging visible leadership**, helping to raise the profile of physical activity as a strategic priority and creating a platform for joint planning, learning and action, Leaders across the system have demonstrated a **willingness to work differently, embracing more collaborative and community-focused approaches**. Partners acknowledged that leadership in this area still feels very senior and **not yet rooted in communities**. There is a need to build leadership capacity from the bottom up, ensuring residents, volunteers and frontline staff are **empowered** to lead change in their own contexts. There are also concerns that leadership is **not yet disrupting practices and processes that may be counterproductive to physical activity. F**or example, while physical activity is discussed within sectors such as transport, it is not consistently used as a primary justification for decision-making. Similarly, some

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				sectors have yet to fully incorporate physical activity into their delivery practices, which **limits its strategic influence**. **Example of 3 (90)** Organisations have been supported to emerge as leaders, **not only 'championing the cause'** but using their unique positionality and influence within the ward to tackle PA inequalities. Although the community project team are **influencing ways of working** at a **borough level**, a recent report … **highlighted the need for visible and strategic leadership at the most senior level** of the Council in order to achieve the transformation and systems change needed to reduce physical activity inequalities in place. This also recognises the need to **move the work beyond a small programme team**, with the aim of more collective ownership, responsibility and leadership. **Example of a 3** (88) Collaboration across [Place] Council is not yet universal, with s**ome departments still operating in silos**. The Sport and Leisure team in particular is under-resourced for the scale of the partnership area, and their absence from certain meetings is often noted. Public Health also plays an important role in leading or commissioning physical activity programmes, such as Falls Prevention exercise classes, and in ensuring that physical activity is embedded within planning policy and the design of active environments. However, **limited capacity and resource constrains in some areas continue to hinder progress and the ability to achieve long term outcomes**. The Active Partnership provides **influential and strategic leadership across the partnership area**, coordinating and guiding multiple workstreams, networks and forums. Through initiatives such as the [Place] Physical Activity Network and the Healthy Active Ageing Group, it brings together key partners from the Council, health sector and VCFSE organisations to strengthen collaboration and drive a shared agenda for change.

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
		4-5	There is **sustained visible leadership**, **across multiple sectors,** within the place, for place-based systemic approaches to tackle physical activity inequalities leading to changes in policy and practice. Leaders use their influence to **facilitate diverse contribution to decision making and enable others to act.** Leaders are starting to recognise, challenge and change **practices and processes** which are counterproductive to physical activity (e.g. economic policy to welcome cars into city centres may contradict active travel policies.)	**Example of a 4** (5) **Work is aligned to policies** in the Local Plan for the Council for example: Active Travel, Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014 – 2028. However, there is a need for a **stronger cascade into supporting strategies** e.g. Health & Wellbeing strategy. **Physical Activity Advisory Board** – is chaired by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Communities, Leisure and Culture and has a small number of strategic representatives from leisure, health, sport and parks. However, we recognise that more needs to be done to diversify representation across demographics, sectors and perspectives; a governance refresh is happening. The **backbone support group is embedded within Public Health, with the Director of Public Health as Senior Responsible Officer for physical activity and sport championing the value and contribution of PA** to deliver broader social outcomes. **Example of a 5 (97)** There are a **range of decision maker**s involved in physical activity in place, primarily **via an alliance**. Leadership is dispersed across a range of organisations as the **plan is [place]' owned**, rather than driven by council. Within place there are parts of multiple sectors collaborating beyond sport and physical activity including schools/education, health, criminal justice, transport. There is more work to do to ensure the value is understood and prioritised across the full sector and not limited to parts of the sector. **Policies and practice have changed to create the conditions for physical activity and inclusive decisions** are made to further the aims of this agenda. Public Health collaborates with other departments across the council to **prioritise the conditions for physical activity.** **Example of a 5** (28) In [Place], senior leaders [,,,] and partners are v**isibly backing a place-based, systems approach**. Physical activity now features in the council's yearly plan; the Health Plan, Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, and Playing Pitch Strategy are jointly owned and monitored, with decisions aligning planning, parks and health. Leaders

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				describe a move from "plans on a shelf" to policy following practice, with multi-level ties enabling quick problem-solving and onward routes beyond single schemes.
		6-7	There is widespread, sustained visible leadership **and long-term commitment**, within the place, for place-based systemic approaches to tackle physical activity inequalities. **Policy and practice** supports commitments to prioritise physical activity. Leaders use their influence and **facilitate diverse contribution to decision making and enable others to act.** **Leaders use their positions to effectively challenge contradictory policies and practices.**	**Illustrative example of 6** The board are representative of many areas of people's lives – health, schools, housing, and VCSE sector. **Physical activity is now included within many key policies and agendas in different spaces**, and we have seen this **create a widespread sense of ownership** by managers to facilitate changes in ways of working to embed physical activity - and work more with local people to **transfer decision-making/leading** around enabling physical activity whilst offering support. **Senior leaders have responded to ideas of ways to work differently** from both the health and community sectors and are pooling some resources and **changing processes for distribution of contracts** to enable community organisations to lead on work with primary care to tackle health inequalities through physical activity. **Example of a 6** (12:2025) **Place leaders have adopted the approach in key transformation strategy** including recognising the learnings and working with [Place Team] more closely on how to embed the work. The NHS Leadership is working closely with Public Health on **sustaining progress of the movement and to embed the work** within local GPs. [Place] teams have a 3-strand development programme under way to support the [Place] movement and proposed new areas. Residents continue their ongoing support and commitment in terms of time and resources to build on their capacity and continuously improve how they work. [Place] is also on a leadership journey through the [Initiative], where the CEO is behind the approach, discussing deepening with [Place] SLT. There is **commitment** from strategic leaders that [Place] will be written into all plans. New leadership is understanding that community work includes listening to those who are seldom heard.
General	**b) Shared leadership: People across**	1	People at different layers* within and across the place are **unable or unwilling** to make decisions or	**e.g.** people are briefly consulted on their thoughts, this may be a topic of work which is already agreed, decisions are not shared and the work is completed more centrally, people don't lead on any area of the work.

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
	sectors and at all levels take on roles and responsibility to tackle physical activity inequalities and can act autonomously		take effective action to address physical activity inequalities.	OR e.g. there is a lack of trust between local people and organisations and people are not currently engaged in making decisions. **Example of a 1** (29) There is willingness to progress, but the rate is limited due to processes. For example, in a project to get park tennis underway, getting engagement from Parks teams was difficult due to their own limited capacity. Liaising with the LA Estates team to get buildings transferred over to community groups has been slow moving because they have limited capacity and can only handle one at a time. This means that community clubs miss out on opportunities for funding to help them do up or maintain buildings, or they run out of time.
		2-3	There is **limited distribution of decision making.** Some people take on responsibility and initiate action, but this may be compromised by context (e.g. time restrictions or lack of strategic influence).	**Example of a 2** (PR*) *Example of cross-sector influencing - good example but isolated*. We asked the PCN and Practice Leads to give permission to our Active Practice Champions to consult with staff and develop ideas. The day after the Practitioner from the Surgery contacted us to say that they had a good idea – to turn a clinical room into a gym. **Staff were involved in developing the idea and leading on it.** We are continuing to look at ways in which we can encourage the practice to keep moving forward, such as our Active Practice Springboard, and comms support to share the work they are doing and the impact it is having. The Practice is a **great champion of the Active Practice programme sharing their progress and inspiring others to follow their lead**. **Activating local champions is essential to progressing change.** **Example of a 3** (9) There are local examples of people and organisations making decisions to create the conditions for people to be physically active. The [theory of change] underpins the natural evolution of backbone support group. For example, we are building shared purpose throughout the local system by building a learning culture where insight is utilised and shared (so that people can build a greater **understanding of the issues and complexity, and make informed**

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				decisions and avoid 'quick fixes'). It also focuses on collaboration, so that people can learn from others' perspectives from different levels of the system, develop an **appreciation for different worldviews while reflecting on their own, and reach a point of consent and collaborative action.**
		4-5	There is **some distribution of decision making** to people at all layers within organisations to take decisions and actions, aligned with the shared vision to address physical activity inequalities. Representatives of less active communities are enabled to participate in partnership decision-making and convene collective action to address needs and opportunities. People without formal leadership positions take on some roles and responsibilities within their sphere of influence (i.e. policy makers can influence workforce, residents can influence neighbours and community organisations they are engaged with).	**Example of 4** (90) **An example of collective decision making** **A cross-departmental working group** involving council officers from Area Regeneration, Strategic Property, Policy and Strategic Delivery, Resident Participation has been working together over the past year to develop community assets in this Park as accessible community spaces to improve resident wellbeing, which includes activation for PA. **Engaging people across different sectors and relevant expertise.** The [name] Club development is a key aspect of this work. Development in direct and continuous collaboration with the Club staff and the Club working group. A particular strength of this approach has been the collaboration (at every stage) between Sport England, several departments at the Council and The Club. By working together in this way and **distributing the process of decision making (as far as possible) trust and a more detailed understanding of processes** has developed across partners. Across the programme organisations have been supported to emerge as leaders, not only 'championing the cause' but using their u**nique positionality and influence within the ward to tackle PA inequalities.** **Example of a 5** (60) **People over several sectors are working together and making decisions.** At the root, the **high trust environment gave everyone involved a greater sense of their own agency**. With more people able to each do more in the knowledge **decisions they made would be supported** had the effect of multiplying the capacity of the team. "Understand the importance of the empathy gap and work with as many people as possible who have a close empathy with the people you are trying to reach." **Example of a 5** (84:2025)

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Communities are increasingly developing and delivering a diverse range of physical activity initiatives in which people with lived experience of physical activity inequalities are more meaningfully involved. Many of these initiatives are supported by local partners and agencies who offer practical support such as through access to venues, equipment, bid writing and marketing. **This is enabling grassroots groups to trial new ideas and build confidence, creating a culture for local people to be able to be involved and sustain their own participation**. Through the use of small community investment pots and wider funds, trial initiatives are being funded across physical activity and wider sectors to foster innovation and experimentation at the neighbourhood level. Legacy investment from community pots is being signposted to new opportunities, which is helping to maintain continuity in community-led activity and supporting longer term sustainability. **Collaboration across sectors on joint grant applications and projects is allowing community-led initiatives to access systemic support, enhance reach and ensure sustainability.** There is a collaborative network of partners across all levels currently led by core place leads, **but there is ambition to gradually transfer leadership to network members to enable local organisations to shape agendas and lead meetings**.
		6-7	There are **multiple people at all layers** within organisations and across sectors, including representatives of less active communities, who take informed decisions and actions, aligned with the shared vision to address physical activity inequalities. People without formal leadership positions take on roles and responsibility and feel in control of what they do and empowered to	**Example of a 6 (91:2024)** The approaches have been through both organisational and community levels, where the aim is to influence, accept that change is needed in some situations, build capacity, establish trusted relationships, use existing resources and assets more effectively, facilitate community leadership and operate in an environment without fear of failure. This "new way of thinking" has been facilitated through **all levels** of employees, from strategic leads to operational deliverers, further developing and highlighting the importance of the collective work. This continues to be **our responsibility as a collective** to address where we can influence positive change and adopt our approaches to community engagement and organisational progressions when supporting communities. **Example of a 6** (52:2025)

6. Leadership				
Policymakers, workforce, volunteers and residents act together to build on strengths and remove barriers for tackling physical activity inequalities				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			convene or contribute to collective decision-making and initiate action. They highlight things that are not working and there are effective ways to influence upwards/more widely to resolve systemic challenges.	Leadership and responsibility for tackling physical activity inequalities are increasingly distributed across the system. The nine thematic areas of the Every Move Counts strategy continue to provide structure and ownership, with strong officer-level collaboration and skills development across teams. The PA Strategy Group remains a key driver of progress, and improved coordination between [Place Partnership] and Living Well, such as through shared communications planning, strengthening alignment. This group **links people well, creating connection across levels**. Major campaigns such as 20-Minute Movement and Join Us: Move Play demonstrate how partners are working collectively to reach diverse communities. Senior level leadership and opportunities like [...] could have provided stronger visibility, but there is growing shared understanding and confidence across sectors, with **more organisations and community partners actively championing the vision** for an active [Place]. Also in place are quarterly comprehensive evaluation meetings, guided at the officer level, rather than being guided by top-level management. This has **spread power** across officer level.

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) Lived experience in PA initiatives: Meaningful involvement of people with lived experience in developing sector-led PA initiatives**	1	Local people have **limited influence** over decisions about local programmes and resource allocation for physical activity, even if they are occasionally consulted and/or community engagement is not equitable and inclusive of diverse perspectives. There may be historical mistrust and lack of communication between communities and local agencies.	
		2-3	There are isolated examples in which local people who are directly affected have **some involvement** in development and design of **sector-led programmes** and physical activity initiatives (e.g. patients of a cancer pathway can input into the development of an activity programme to support them during treatment). Efforts are made to ensure this is done equitably and respond to diverse perspectives within communities. Historic mistrust and communication challenges are recognised and worked on.	**Example of a 2** (43) Some local communities and people led initiatives do exist, but are either **specific to certain projects, or ad-hoc**. Examples include community walks, some of which are led by volunteers from local communities trained via the Local Authority through walk leaders. **Example of a 2** (89) The Leisure team in the Council is investing in several initiatives which evidence **meaningful involvement of people with lived experience**. For example, they have a post dedicated to community engagement, they have been working with Your Voice Counts and SEND Youth forums to develop an inclusive user's guide for accessing their facilities and they are consulting with their member base about how to improve the leisure app to best suit their needs. **Example of a 3** (37) There has been a historic consult culture over a co-design culture. This has started to shift with the [c*onversation*] approach and the development of the [*community wellbeing]* approach, both led by public health but involving a broad spectrum of partners, community organisations and community members…

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Example of a 3:2025 (32) The importance of actively involving residents in planning, designing, and delivering physical activity initiatives, so that they are accessible and inclusive, is well recognised by the system in [Place] and a priority for most stakeholders. Initiatives prioritise **local knowledge and existing community assets** rather than imposing pre-determined programmes, a strength based, bottom-up approach. Example projects demonstrate strong local consultation to inform programming. Short term activities are used to understand residents long term needs.
		4-5	Local people who are directly affected, often have **some involvement in designing, producing and evaluating** sector-led programmes and physical activity initiatives. This happens across multiple sectors. There is evidence of progress in addressing historic mistrust and communication challenges, and disadvantaged people and communities are increasingly and equitably included in these processes.	**Example of a 4: 2025 (6)** **People with lived experience now play a visible role in shaping** [Place] physical-activity system. Residents, families, and local faith leaders were **directly involved** in developing the Active Environment Strategy and [Place PA initiative], through consultation workshops and park events where community priorities on safety, affordability, and accessibility informed design. Youth input led to marked football pitches, and families co-created ideas for inclusive park hubs. At the [Place]Community Centre, local people with lived experience of social isolation and poor health **designed and now maintain** the community garden, shaping how the space supports wellbeing. This was described as "people finding purpose again – it's theirs now." However, engagement remains **stronger where existing relationships exist** (e.g., faith networks, resident groups) and **less visible** among disabled residents, young women, and some minority communities. Sustaining meaningful involvement will require formal feedback and representation channels beyond project cycles. **Example of a 5** (90) There has been clear **acknowledgment of historic mistrust and communication challenges** which have driven ways of working. Noting the challenging journey to get [club] leaders to trust the council, the [programme] team and council

7. Community-led action				
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Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				colleagues have highlighted how **agile ways of working and new processes** were required with **significant time and effort going into establishing rapport and building mechanisms for collaborative working.** Initiatives to harness community power and prioritise co-production principles have remained at the heart of [place partnership] work. Collaboration with community organisations and stakeholders from across the system has been **ingrained into all areas of [programme] delivery**, with **decisions taken based on engagement and learning** rather than on instinct of the programme team. **Example of a 5 (52: 2025 E&L)** In [Place], the [Name] programme demonstrates how involving local people with lived experience can shape physical activity provision. Between September 2022 and September 2023, [programme] commissioned StreetGames to deliver the "'[programme] Leads' young leaders programme," working with "four Local Trusted Organisations to recruit 20 young people from the local area." Participants received "formal training (multi-skills, first aid, safeguarding, youth mental health) alongside mentorship," while being supported to "deliver physical activity opportunities in their communities." This approach increased "the **agency and ownership** of young people, ensuring sessions were **culturally and practically relevant** to the local context." By involving leaders who were "representative of the community," the programme encouraged greater **inclusion and participation**, particularly among underrepresented groups. It highlights how co-production with those who "experience physical activity inequalities" can produce locally tailored initiatives that are sustainable, responsive, and more likely to reduce inactivity.
		6-7	Local people who are directly affected, including those seldom heard and experiencing disadvantage **are routinely actively involved in designing,**	**Example of a 6:2025** (5) Community voice and influence in decision making is embedded across [Place Partnership] themes, where there is **a diverse group of people who contribute to decision making** such as Active Travel, Future Parks, Community-led Programmes, Communications and Engagement. In place, there are **community-led**

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			producing and evaluating local programmes and physical activity initiatives, through various sectors. This practice is rooted in shared values and practices, embedded in the cultures of the whole system of organisations working in equitable, transparent and accountable ways. This leads to increasing levels of understanding and trust between disadvantaged communities and partner agencies.	**masterplans** for walking, wheeling and cycling. These capture insights on how and where residents travel, helping to secure investment and guide the implementation of the improvements identified. The approach will be to co-design further plans to help secure investment and guide the implementation of the identified improvements. A panel of residents with impaired vision and/or other physical disabilities, and carers, was brought together to influence improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling facilities through lived experience.
Strengthening community & individual capacities	**b) Community-led action: Community-led action supported by agencies**	1	There is **limited resident or community-led physical activity**. This may be due to living and working conditions working against the development of community-led initiatives or lack of responsivity of local agencies to community needs.	
		2-3	There are **a few community-led initiatives** for physical activity, with some support where needed from local agencies/partners. Some local people are confident to get involved in physical activity, due to familiarity and reputation of	**Example of a 2** (37) There are **some community-led initiatives**, but in the main, most activities in [place]'s deprived communities are instigated by paid workers or established VCSE organisations. **Example of a 2** (43) [Name] is another example of a specific programme that involves communities in the decision-making process, NHS mental health and physical activity service **considers people's views in the decision-making process**

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			local groups/organisations and/or the individual leading them. Tensions between local people and communities may limit access, in some cases.	**Example of a 3: (29: 2025)** Local community-organisation led activities happening such as: walks from a local community shop, a Club for Young People gym they have built, allotment growing opportunities. Wider examples across [Place] includes a local CIC who lead walks, all the amateur sports teams in the city. Local partners often support these pieces of work, but only possible because the organisations have the right infrastructure e.g. they are a community interest company or charity. **Local people get involved in these groups and have trust and confidence in the people who run them**. However, there are strong **tensions between communities** that limit access. This has escalated recently with the raising of St Georges flags and escalation of racial tensions, with **some people now not attending sessions as they are frightened to walk through certain areas**.
		4-5	**Communities are developing and delivering a range of initiatives** for physical activity with some involvement of people with lived experience of PA inequalities. These are **often supported** by local agencies and partners where needed (for example with support for equipment, venues, bid writing/marketing etc). Many local people are confident to get involved. They can move between initiatives and opportunities due to positive relations between groups.	**Example of a 4: (46: 2025)** **Communities are increasingly taking the lead** in creating change within their local areas, developing and growing physical activity opportunities that are tailored to the needs of their peers. This demonstrates a **positive shift** towards community-led action, where residents are not only participants but also **drivers of activity design and delivery.** **Support** is often required to help develop and connect these opportunities, ensuring that community-led initiatives are sustainable and can link effectively with wider system priorities. Partners are working to provide **advice, resources, and connections to strengthen the impact of these initiatives.** However, there **remain barriers** to fully embedding this way of working. Challenges such as land ownership, navigating local systems, and understanding what knowledge, support, and guidance is needed can limit the ability of communities to act autonomously. Addressing these barriers will be key to enabling more consistent and confident community leadership in shaping physical activity opportunities.

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Example of a 5 (90) Community Partner Networks –These face-to-face meetings will provide an opportunity for [place-based community sector) organisations which have an interest in Physical Activity, to get together on a quarterly basis. In time, the aim is for this to become a **partner-led network, where the agenda and meeting format is the responsibility of network members,** but initially (and for the foreseeable future), the planning and organisation will be done (in partnership with the network) by colleagues from **[Place Partnership, youth voice and public health]**. The sessions will offer organisations the opportunity to share, learn and network with others involved in **supporting physical activity in the borough** (and possibly beyond) and facilitate opportunities for collaborations to develop. Interviews with stakeholders on various sides of delivery have **identified positive feelings** towards the working relationship with decision making taking place evenly across multiple groups. Fieldwork has also highlighted time and energy spent on working with this group is allowing it to be developed as a model for collaborative working that can be adapted and applied to other similar contexts across the Borough. **Example of a 5 (84: 2025)** Communities across [Place] are increasingly **developing and delivering** a diverse range of physical activity initiatives, with **meaningful involvement from people with lived experience of PA inequalities**. Many of these initiatives are supported by local partners and agencies, offering **practical support** such as access to venues, equipment, bid writing, and marketing. This support has enabled grassroots groups to **trial new ideas and build confidence, creating a culture where local people feel able to get involved and sustain their participation over time**. Small community investment pots provide seed funding to trial initiatives across physical activity, arts, culture, and early years, fostering innovation and experimentation at the neighbourhood level. Legacy investment from older community pots is strategically signposted to new opportunities, helping maintain continuity in community-led activity and supporting **longer-term sustainability**. In addition, [Project] 1:1 volunteer meetings capture volunteers' needs and

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				motivations, feeding directly into the co-design of volunteering pathways and strengthening local delivery capacity. Collaboration across partners is a key enabler of these efforts. VCSE organisations and [Organisation] work together on joint grant applications and projects, allowing community-led initiatives to access systemic support, enhance reach, and ensure sustainability. [Place] CVS has invested additional capacity to engage local groups, provide **wrap-around support**, and help organisations navigate funding and sustainability processes. This approach has fostered **strong, positive relationships between local people and groups**, enabling knowledge sharing, peer support, and a resilient, community-led physical activity ecosystem across the city.
		6-7	**Communities are regularly working together** to develop and deliver a wide range of initiatives for physical activity. These are made accessible and promoted accordingly with active involvement of people with lived experience of PA inequalities. Systemic action by local agencies and partners ensures community-led initiatives are **routinely and responsively supported** where needed. Local people and/or community-led initiatives for physical activity build confidence and connections in communities, leading to greater innovation, investment and independence from sector-led initiatives.	

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Tackling structural inequalities	**c) Community influence: Local people's influence on decisions about things that affect their lives**	1	Local people have few, if any, opportunities to share ideas, influence decision-making and solve problems together.	
		2-3	Emerging networks of friends, family or community members share ideas and solve problems together. These voices are increasingly heard by managers and policymakers in local agencies.	**Example of a 2:2025 (14)** [Place] **recognises the importance** of consultation and adaptation, with examples highlighting how community feedback shaped scheduling, content, and delivery models. For instance, the [Project] free family sessions in the park were **redesigned** to align with participant preferences for day, time, and activity type, while also integrating social and signposting opportunities. The Mothers [targeted] programme also **demonstrates the ripple effect of community input**, where pilot data was used to successfully apply for funding, enabling programme expansion and adaptation to local needs. [Martial arts] project has completely changed based on input from the people attending – through delivery and also marketing. 'LTOs that we're working with in place, are they speaking to communities and understanding really what they need and responding and changing ' One of the biggest positives for [Place) is through development phase, many of the test and learns have evolved based on community need/feedback. Those not taken forward to the full award have found alternative sources of funding so the provision is still there for the community. **Example of a 3:2025 (72)** There are emerging opportunities for local people in [Place] to **influence decisions** that affect their lives, particularly in relation to physical activity. However, engagement is often **limited to specific projects or consultation exercises**, and there is a risk that the voices of those who are less confident, less connected, or more marginalised are **not being heard**. Partners acknowledged that traditional decision-making structures can sometimes feel inaccessible or unresponsive to communities. Examples of influence were shared where a member of the public raised concerns about a proposed price increase for the Over 65's membership at

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				[Place] Culture and Leisure through their elected councillor. As a result, despite the financial case for the increase, the board decided to maintain the current pricing to avoid creating barriers to physical activity. This demonstrates how individual voices, when channelled through appropriate mechanisms, can lead to change. Despite these efforts, it was recognised that there will always be unheard voices, and that more needs to be done to move beyond engagement towards genuine co-production and shared decision-making. Our local SMM survey noted that **mistrust in institutions**, particularly the local authority, can act as a barrier to deeper involvement, and that **more time and resource is needed to build relationships and create safe, inclusive spaces for dialogue.**
		4-5	Established networks of friends, family or community members share ideas and take collective action to advocate for change, influence the decisions of local agencies and solve problems together. Trust within communities and with agencies is increasing in some places.	**Example of a 4:2025 (31)** Community power is steadily growing across the local authority footprint, with partners actively involving residents in setting priorities and shaping decisions. The third sector is now playing a much more prominent role in these developments, particularly through **community panels, where priorities are directly informed by engagement with local people.** Organisations are increasingly open to exploring new and meaningful ways of capturing community insight. There is a clear intent to ensure consultation is purposeful, considering whether the timing and setting are right, and whether the conditions have been created to enable broad and honest participation. There is a shared recognition that traditional drop-in consultations can often feel tokenistic, and may not truly reflect community voice. Ongoing discussions within partner groups are focused on improving how communities are engaged, ensuring that feedback genuinely informs and shapes decisions. The collective aim is to move beyond consultation as a tick-box exercise, and toward authentic involvement where local people feel heard, valued, and empowered to influence the things that matter most to them.

7. Community-led action				
Action is shaped and led by communities and supported by community-focused strategies.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Example of a 5 (56: 2024) [Programme] is not a PA initiative, we are embedding PA into a community development social prescribing and health and wellbeing movement. The work is about **local individual and local people making change for themselves**. Inclusive [Place] and the individuals within this lead the change themselves, this is cultural and social and create a **voice for the communities they represent**. 3 years of resources to grow their cultural offer. [assessed as] 5 [on SMM] because local people are **not routinely influencing things about the conditions that affect their lives**. [.... Our examples are strong but not across the board and 'routinely influencing decisions'.
		6-7	Disadvantaged communities are acting together to bring about meaningful change in their lives, by acting and advocating for themselves. Decision-makers in local agencies consistently engage in dialogue with communities to understand their issues and co-produce action. Diverse needs and perspectives are equitably represented in this. Community connections, trust, health and wellbeing of the whole community are growing stronger.	No examples yet seen.

8. Physically active cultures in local settings				
Active cultures create a social environment for physical activity, encouraging people to move more in ways that suit them.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) Active organisational settings: Organisational cultures normalise PA and everyday movement in local institutional settings and workplaces**	1	Physical activity and wellbeing is **not widely considered** as relevant for paid employees and volunteers, or other participants in institutional settings, such as education or health and care services provision.	
		2-3	There are **some examples** of policies and practices that promote physical activity for paid employees, volunteers or people they work with in institutional settings. These respond to diverse individual characteristics but may be limited to a few organisations or settings or not effectively implemented.	**Example of a 2** (9) There is a widely adopted programme, [name], which implements wellbeing programmes into the workplace. However, this programme is **not effective at implementing a workplace whole system approach** to supporting the workforce. For example, the Cycle to Work Scheme is widely implemented but cycle storage and culture isn't changed. There are plans to evolve the model but these are **currently not being actioned due to local authority financial situations**. **Example of a 3** (68) ...the Hybrid Teacher was supported by the [organisation] the High School and Active [Place] to serve several purposes including **bridge the gap between the school and the community**. [...] "I developed good relationships with the [Hybrid Teacher] in the secondary school and this carried on with the school. I enjoyed it and spoke with others about it. [The Hybrid Teacher] is like a blueprint and I could see that as a way to connect schools and community in other areas" Active Communities Team Leader.
		4-5	Policies and practices which promote physical activity in the everyday practices of paid employees, volunteers and people they work with are being **implemented in many settings**. In some settings physical activity or movement is increasingly	**Example of a 4** (53) [project] is run through the PH department and so seeks to support the designated team of **health advocates** within organisations to **ensure the workforce is supported** in all aspects of health and wellbeing - this work will be strengthened from light touch to meaningful, insights driven support through the Active Workplaces workstream [...]. MECC training for volunteers to support them to start **conversations about the wider benefits of PA in a way that is culturally**

8. Physically active cultures in local settings				
Active cultures create a social environment for physical activity, encouraging people to move more in ways that suit them.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			becoming established as the norm. These policies and practices are **increasingly adaptive and responsive to the individual characteristics** of their employees and volunteers, and people they work with, but some barriers remain.	**appropriate**, this is reinforced through the Connected Voices cultural awareness training which is free to access [...]. **Example of a 5(2025 E&L)** In [Place], organisational practices are shifting to make **physical activity part of everyday culture**. [Programme] has **extended its community-based learning into workplaces**, helping organisations "address health, well-being, and employee retention through physical activity" by "listening, building trust, and co-producing solutions." Through targeted initiatives - such as training "20 Mental Health Champions... on physical activity, mental health, and what's available to them" and workplace wellbeing walks—organisations are **beginning to treat movement as part of everyday culture**. These efforts are supported by communications that model active lifestyles, with "social proofing videos... a key tool for inspiring others, sharing success stories, and engaging partners." A notable example is the collaboration with a "factory on the edge of a [Place partnership] area," where conversations with employees during shifts are informing tailored PA opportunities, reflecting a genuine understanding of workplace barriers. Similarly, co-production with residents and developers in a "high-end apartment development" integrates PA into living and working environments through "monthly meetings with residents and employees," and by responding to safety concerns, for example introducing a "structured group run... with a dedicated run leader."
		6-7	Policies and practices which embed physical activity in everyday practices are **widely and effectively implemented**, making regular movement **the norm**, and leading to increased wellbeing for paid employees, volunteers and people they work with.	No examples yet seen

8. Physically active cultures in local settings				
Active cultures create a social environment for physical activity, encouraging people to move more in ways that suit them.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			These policies and practices are adaptive and **responsive to individual characteristics,** leading to inclusive active cultures in workplaces and institutional settings. Most people in most settings are moving more during the day and long periods of sedentary activity are unusual.	
Strengthening community & individual capacities	**b) Inclusive cultures for PA: Physically active cultures in communities facilitate inclusive participation in movement / physical activity**	1	Values and beliefs within many communities **inhibit participation** in physical activity, including concern about/experience of negative social / cultural consequences. PA is seen as exclusive and only for certain kinds of people, while some people may feel unsafe or that that they don't belong in PA settings and activities.	
		2-3	Within some less active communities, individuals are beginning to challenge existing negative attitudes towards PA, and to promote more positive values and beliefs about the role of being active in happy, healthy, connected lives. There are **some examples** of local people who have experienced	**Example of a 2** (90) **Nine out of ten** [place] residents say that [place] is a place where **people from different backgrounds get on well together**. [place]'s diversity and multiculturalism are the main factors contributing to residents feeling proud of the borough. Whilst work is being done to test best practice and build new strategies, **persistent disparities remain** between PA participation dependent on socioeconomic and sociodemographic status of groups. **Example of a 3** (11) Targeting organisations who work with specific communities is about **changing the cultural and social environment**. We try to get people connected, using local orgs

8. Physically active cultures in local settings				
Active cultures create a social environment for physical activity, encouraging people to move more in ways that suit them.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
			barriers to participation feeling more confident and able to be active in ways that suit them.	to reach local people and promote **inclusive opportunities** for PA. We **still have work to do** for a culturally inclusive environment. We produce regular blogs/stories that showcase peoples' journeys. We have a unique park hub through our CLA, support community organizations, and [VCSE organisation] are targeting 20 organisations who support our target demographics with a strong influence.
		4-5	There is evidence that in many areas and communities, people who have previously been inactive, increasingly value physical activity, and regard it as something 'normal' for people like themselves. Increasing numbers of people are moving more because of more active travel choices, or within existing social settings, or participating in organised activities. There are **multiple examples** of local people who have experienced barriers to participation increasingly feeling confident and able to be active in ways that suit them.	**Example of a 4** (51) Due to demand and requests from local residents, carers and partners, additional PA sessions are being delivered. LP funding has enabled time to be spent **communicating with participants before attending** to ensure the session is prepared in advance **to meet their needs** and that participants with learning disabilities have sufficient space, without pressure on numbers. It has also given [leisure trust] time to **build relationships** with new organisations. As a result of this, the sessions are now extremely popular and [leisure trust] are constantly told by carers and partnership organisations how **accommodating** the sessions are, how staff are **trained and specialist** to support the participants and how much the **participants and carers benefit**. **Example of a 5(5:2024)** Overall positive direction of travel [indicated by Sport England's Active Lives Surveys: [...] {Place partnership]'s latest 'Impact in Communities' report has many examples of physical activity being increasingly valued/enjoyed across [Place] and barriers to participation being removed: - Community Connectors working in areas of high inactivity and high deprivation supporting a range of activities and events, including community walks, sequence dancing, sports days, 'have a go' sessions and festivals. - 28 regular walking groups supported by [Place partnership]. - 'Dance on' programme - over 21,000 total attendances since 1/1/2020 - [Place Partnership] supporting the growth of community-led sports, including Walking football, Tennis, Pickleball and Pétanque. - [Community project] - providing free community support to those affected by or

8. Physically active cultures in local settings				
Active cultures create a social environment for physical activity, encouraging people to move more in ways that suit them.				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				experiencing the menopause transition, which includes a programme of physical activity. Initially set up in [locality] to provide a supportive group for women experiencing menopausal symptoms, the group offers physical activity opportunities alongside social activities. Through providing the supportive community, participants are supported to try being active, e.g. yoga, walking. The group has expanded to provide groups and activities across different areas of [Place] and regular social and physical activity opportunities (e.g. hikes and longer walks in the [countryside]) are organised. There are examples in [PP] case studies of specific barriers being overcome, rather than being community-wide. Barriers still remain (e.g. the price of leisure and the accessibility of opportunities, given the size and rural geography of [place]).
		6-7	Throughout the Place, physical activity is **widely valued** and **embedded as a routine part of life**, even among groups who have tended to be less active. This represents a large-scale shift in beliefs and attitudes to PA, seen in more active travel choices, within existing social settings and participation in organised activities. **Most people with experience of barriers to participation**, can now experience the freedom and confidence to be active in ways that suit them and that they value and enjoy.	

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
Sector integration of physical activity	**a) Place management for PA: Local built and natural environments are designed, managed and invested in ways that enable and encourage movement and PA**	1	Physical activity, everyday movement and informal interaction are rarely considered in planning, transport, housing, regeneration or environmental decisions. Environments may create or reinforce barriers to movement, access and interaction, with little coordinated action to address them.	
		2-3	Physical activity is recognised in some strategies, plans, policies or projects. However, consideration remains fragmented and dependent on particular teams, individuals, funding or opportunities. There is limited evidence that it influences routine environmental decision-making across the wider system.	**Example of a 2 (13)** There are lots of green spaces which have been improved to make it safe for people such as providing lighting and **working with neighbourhood teams around anti-social behaviour** to help improve the **use of the physical environments.** **Example of a 3 (90)** Focusing on the built environment, significant work is ongoing in a local park regarding community assets. Assets work underway has focused on **determining assets available for long-term community use** and proposing appropriate interventions to **enable access to the sites** for residents. Included in this work are the community clubs/halls/a centre - all sites which can play a role in PA delivery. Additionally, focusing on planned improvements to local public green space, the **green space redesign has now received final planning approval for the building of three new pathways to encourage access to the park and space for walking, running and cycling**. Planning has also approved the development of a new outdoor gym. Plans are in development to provide community members with ongoing training and support to use the gym, working with community organisations to consider the possibility of community champions or trained local instructors.

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Example of a 3 (62) Changes in **policies and strategies** which include amongst others, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and adoption and **development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**'s across the County.
		4-5	Physical activity, movement and accessibility increasingly influence how built and natural environments are planned, designed and managed. Established relationships, policies and collaborative processes support action across relevant sectors. However, this influence is not yet consistent across all systems, geographical areas or decisions.	**Example of a 4 (84: 2026)** Overarching view In [Place], **some aspects of the physical and built environment** including housing developments, natural spaces, and local infrastructure are being **designed and managed to promote inclusion and encourage informal interactions and physical activity**. These efforts help **address barriers experienced by residents facing disadvantage**, though authentic co-design and co-production with communities are still developing and often remain **more consultative than fully collaborative**. For example, planning around the proposed [local leisure centre] incorporates active travel considerations, wayfinding, and public engagement, ensuring that the new facility supports movement for all members of the community. Similarly, [local leisure provider] and [local disability inclusion organisation] have co-created leisure centre access audits with disabled people to understand lived experience and improve accessibility. The impact of these audits has rippled across other council facilities, including community centres and libraries, encouraging wider adoption of inclusive practices. Regeneration work in [local area] **integrates physical activity into conversations about local housing and infrastructure development**, ensuring that new spaces are designed to promote movement and healthy lifestyles. At [local running track], an **air quality review is evaluating whether tree planting improves the local environment for physical activity,** demonstrating a focus on health-promoting infrastructure. Joined-up planning across housing, education, and other sectors ensures that amenities and environments are increasingly inclusive and accessible. While these initiatives show a commitment to embedding physical activity into the built environment, much of the work remains **statutory consultation rather than genuine, ongoing co-production with communities**, indicating room for further development to fully empower residents in shaping their local spaces.

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Example of a 5 (52: 2026) Built and natural environments across [Place] continue to evolve to better support physical activity. The [development assessment group] now oversees all new developments, ensuring **design quality and alignment with strategic priorities such as active travel, green space access, and sustainability**. [local programme] neighbourhood park developments at [two neighbourhood parks] exemplify active design in areas of high deprivation, while citywide projects including pedestrianisation of the city centre, [major regeneration scheme] planning, and low-traffic neighbourhoods in [three neighbourhoods] demonstrate a **system-wide commitment to healthier, more walkable places**. However, limited council funding and maintenance capacity remain **significant barriers to long-term sustainability**. Continued collaboration across planning, transport, and public health is essential to fully realise [Place]'s ambition for active, inclusive, and well-maintained environments.
		6-7	Physical activity, movement and accessibility are routinely embedded in the systems that plan, design, invest in, manage and renew built and natural environments. Policy, governance, collaboration and community participation sustain this influence, while long-term investment, stewardship and learning support environments that enable everyday movement and interaction.	**Example of a 6: (5: updated 2026)** Building relationships – shaping policy and now in delivery mode. Sense of progress in the last year – policies starting to deliver. New Play Parks Infrastructure Policy (PPIP) to inform investment in parks and challenge traditional ways of thinking about parks play provision. This has been a catalyst for work to start on developing a wider Parks Policy, incorporating the PPIP and also, for example, the Greenspace Audit. - Active Travel (AT) - over £29m worth of improvements to 27 miles of cycleways and footways across [place…]. Embedded role with active travel – engaging local communities in design of infrastructure. Schemes have focused on ensuring that active modes of travel are more accessible, feel safer and better connect residents to the wider transport network, education and employment opportunities. - [Place] Local plan – [PP] has successfully **embedded physical activity in the Local Plan**, ensuring barriers and enablers are considered in planning applications.

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				Longstanding piece of work that started with planning department, in 2015 – walking and cycling have own independent policies in local plan, adopted in 2021. LDP way of working helped get this through the decision-making process. Work with planning is strengthening all the time – doing work on active environments in consultation with us. Well [Place] has had a strong input to city centre master plan through the **Appreciative Inquiry process**. Live consultation that is **engaging residents** in different ways. Bringing in capital investment for infrastructure – aligned with [PP] priorities – places of deprivation. Priorities – inactivity and supporting people to work – local industrial hubs – ways of working are integrated. Potential for scaling up. Sustainability. More actively involved in implementation of policies across sectors, policy through to delivery more widely, shaped delivery. And how funding is allocated. **Community-led Masterplans** for Walking, Wheeling and Cycling: • Two community-led plans have been developed for the communities of [two local areas]. • They capture insights on: how and where residents travel and how they would most like to travel; how local areas could be improved to make journeys feel safer, more accessible and more enjoyable. • This provides evidence to inform and influence political decision-making and funding. • This approach will be used to co-design further plans, helping to secure investment and guide the implementation of the improvements identified. • In 2024, a panel comprising residents with impaired vision and/or other physical disabilities, and carers, was established to influence improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling facilities through real, lived experience

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
GEN – access to natural environments and public open spaces	**b) Parks & open spaces for PA: Parks and open spaces are enjoyed as welcoming places for being physically active, for everyone**	1	Access to natural environments and public open spaces is limited or uneven. Spaces may be difficult to reach, enter or use, or experienced as unsafe, poorly maintained or unwelcoming. Some communities face substantial practical, social or cultural barriers.	
		2-3	Some spaces are recognised and used as community assets, with work beginning to improve access, safety, attractiveness or opportunities for use. However, experiences remain uneven, barriers may be poorly understood or only partly addressed, and improvements are often localised or focused on provision.	**Example of a 2 (26: 2026)** Significant investment goes into parks and green spaces across [Place]. [local neighbourhood] is considered asset-rich in terms of buildings and green spaces, which people talk about. Investment is going into new [new multi-use activity facilities], but this has created issues. For example, in [local neighbourhood], they have an open MUGGA, which was accessible to all, but a [new multi-use activity facility] will have a lock and keypad. Local schools were not consulted on this due to the time-limited nature of the proposal. While the [new multi-use activity facility] may be seen as a community asset by the wider community, it is not by the school that was not consulted. The perception from outside the area is that the whole estate is unsafe. However, for residents who live there, this is their "norm." The community is very generational. **Example of a 3 (90)** Part of scoping work undertaken for the local programme identified a key issue for residents was lack of accessible community spaces. **Accessibility refers to physical access, but also relates to standard of repair, level of comfort, access**

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Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
				to utilities such as WiFi, the location of some buildings, cost and ease booking/use. This has been identified as a barrier to improving their health and wellbeing. Additionally scoping work undertaken by [evaluation partner]) found [local park] was an underused resource, with **many local residents feeling unsafe using the park**. This learning has underpinned the focus of [place] second ToC on active environments - paving the way for a focus on physical environments to open up physical activity to many. (11) **Example of a 3 (25: 2026)** [Place] is rich in natural assets, but access and **confidence in using these spaces vary across communities**. Initiatives are underway to make parks and green spaces more welcoming and inclusive, especially for those facing mobility or cultural barriers. Examples: • [walking engagement programme] Project in [local town]: [walking engagement programme] encouraged residents to explore local green spaces through gamified walking. Partners such as [local wildlife organisation] and Forestry England offered free opportunities to explore nature, helping residents overcome barriers like lack of confidence or knowledge. • Art Trail Collaboration: Building on the energy from [walking engagement programme], [local arts organisation] and other partners are co-designing a trail that links parks and green spaces with creative installations. This initiative promotes inclusive access and encourages physical activity through cultural engagement. Access Challenges: Despite the abundance of green spaces, insights from [local town] show that hilly terrain and lack of confidence in accessing woodland paths exclude some residents. Action groups have prioritised developing an equitable volunteer workforce to support access for those with limited mobility.

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
Area of action	Definition	Score	Descriptor	Practice examples
		4-5	Natural environments and public open spaces are increasingly accessible, safe, welcoming and used for movement, physical activity and social interaction. Places are developing a stronger understanding of who uses spaces, who does not, and the barriers shaping different experiences. However, inequalities in access, confidence, belonging or experience remain.	**Example of a 4 (53)** This city is noticeably green, with a **large amount of green space for the size of the population.** Much of this is well connected through wagonways and cycle paths. The local council is working with a [local charity] focused on management/restoration/development/protection of local parks, and communities to improve the perceptions and use of green spaces by particular communities. There is s**ignificant variation in the perception and reputation of different parks across [place].** This is changing through initiatives such as [local initiative] and work done by [local initiative]. The [local scheme/funding] work (which the council is through to the second round of application for) will also improve this and will be using the Place Standard Tool as part of its **engagement and consultation with residents.** (53). **Example of a 4 (68: 2025)** Within communities Within communities, **open spaces and facilities remain central to how residents interact, connect and move**. There is clear progress in places where community input and ownership have influenced design and access. In [coastal town], the development of new tennis courts has created a fully operational and accessible facility, supported by the installation of a new ramp. [local tennis community interest company] has reported a growing number of users, demonstrating how even modest infrastructure improvements can increase participation. The [local parkrun] has also made good use of existing open space along the promenade, providing an inclusive and accessible activity for residents. However, **access across places remains inconsistent**. While many parks and open spaces across the county are available and well-used, areas such as [name] still **require improvement** to ensure they are safe, accessible and appealing for everyone. The decision-making process for park maintenance and redevelopment also remains **inequitable** — often driven by who raises issues rather than by consistent, insight-led prioritisation. Encouragingly, this process is beginning to shift through [capital investment programme] planning and community insight gathered

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				via groups like [local lived-experience group], who are helping to highlight real access and inclusion challenges. In [place], a similar approach has helped transform a previously underused MUGA, which local insight identified as unsafe and unattractive. By giving the **community greater ownership of the space and involving them in redesign discussions**, the facility has been revitalised and is now seen as a more welcoming environment. These examples demonstrate that when communities are genuinely involved in decision-making, improvements are more relevant, inclusive and sustainable.
		6-7	Natural environments and public open spaces are widely accessible, safe, welcoming and valued as shared community assets. Evidence shows sustained use by different communities, with inequalities actively addressed. Communities meaningfully influence how spaces are designed, used and cared for, supported by coordinated improvements, maintenance, activities and stewardship.	**Example of a 6 (90: 2025)** [Place] now has the most Green Flag parks in [wider region], with a Green Flag awarded to [local park] for the first time. [local park] is a green space at the heart of [local neighbourhood] - the initial focus of [Place]'s local delivery pilot. Learning from the local delivery pilot highlighted the **importance of inclusive, safe and accessible spaces as being an important condition for supporting people to be more active**. This was a key project that co-designed with the community from the outset and it has totally t**ransformed the park and highlighted the power of community insight and collaboration**. From ideas on post it notes to formal consultation, amendments to plans to activate blue space, Planning Inspectorate Consent - twice, delays with contractors and everything in between, it was hard to imagine that we would deliver a project that has made a huge difference to the community. The **feedback from local people has been hugely positive**, with comments being shared with local councillors and the parks team. The pathways have made a huge difference to people's ability to cross the park, with the entrances increasing the sense of safety and clear lines of sight across the park. The gym is busy and in regular use, along with the [outdoor fitness equipment] which are some of the busiest in [wider region]. Plans for further activation have been co-designed with the community [...] Feedback from staff at the adventure playground has already highlighted that the improvements have **increased the number of older children (12-14) attending the playground** and the **length of time that they are staying**. The

9. Built & natural environments that enable physical activity				
Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
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				markings and equipment is providing more structured play/physical activity opportunities that may be more appealing than free play, to a slightly older age group.
Tackling structural inequalities	**c) Place regeneration: Action to address structural inequalities reflected in living environments**	1	The **poor condition** of the local built environment and infrastructure (including local amenities and travel) where disadvantaged local people live **undermine community activity, safety, and local pride**.	
		2-3	Local agencies recognise the need for investment and are engaging with local people to understand their needs and aspirations. Small scale improvements to local housing, amenities, and/or public realm are taking place.	**Example of a 2 (68: 2026)** In [local town], the [local regeneration programme] continues to link regeneration investment to active travel and public realm improvements, showing how infrastructure can be shaped to address access and inclusion. Across coastal communities, projects such as [town]'s seafront improvements have shown how even small changes — like the installation of accessible showers — can open opportunities for people who were previously excluded from activity. **Example of a 3 (8: 2026)** Partners have moved from **awareness to structured intent: they have the right conversations, governance, and design principles, but not yet the fully functioning delivery system, resourcing, and routine accountability that would make park and public-realm safety improvements a normal, sustained part of how [Place] operates.** It is rated emerging rather than establishing because, while there is now clear recognition of the problems and early structural plans to address them, delivery, consistency, and accountability mechanisms are **still forming rather than functioning at scale.**

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Local natural and built environments are attractive, accessible and safe, encouraging movement and physical activity				
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				Partners are honest that most improvements so far are still localised or reactive—for example, the clean-ups, bins, and cut-through fixes in [central neighbourhood] show what's possible, but these have not yet been replicated borough-wide or embedded in a standard maintenance or capital-planning cycle. The [local active environments] framework and cross-department commitments are still in draft or newly agreed; ownership, metrics, and cadence are being designed but have not yet produced sustained, measurable change. Similarly, the proposed park-hub pilots, community-centre business plans, and [workplace travel plan pilot] are at the planning or pilot stage rather than embedded policy or routine practice. In the workshop, the team explicitly acknowledged capacity constraints, leadership turnover in parks, and fragmented operational footprints, which make it difficult to ensure continuity and equitable improvement across sites. Until these issues are stabilised—consistent leadership, confirmed budgets, and working data/reporting loops—the work cannot yet be described as establishing systemic change.
		4-5	Some community-orientated regeneration and renewal programmes are being implemented, to improve local living conditions, including housing, local amenities and public realm. This is shaped with participation of disadvantaged groups	**Example of a 4 (97)** There is significant work underway across the city to **increase the opportunities for local residents to travel actively;** this includes a new scheme of e-bikes for residents to hire which have been located across the City; as well as **structural changes to streets to increase dedicated cycle paths as well as opportunities for families to hire bikes via a 'penny' bike scheme which are prioritised in areas of high deprivation**. A leisure centre in an area of high deprivation in the city has transferred ownership to a Community Trust organisation to create a wellbeing hub and provide opportunities for local residents to be active; this includes extensive remodelling of indoor sports hall facilities and outdoor pitches. **Example of a 5 (84: 2026)** In [Place], **significant community-oriented regeneration and renewal work** is underway to improve the local built environment and infrastructure, particularly in areas where disadvantaged communities live. This work is **guided by evidence for**

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				health-promoting places, with the aim of increasing community activity, safety, and local pride. For example, [neighbourhood regeneration programme] investments in [two local neighbourhoods] are supporting community-led regeneration, **enabling residents to shape improvements** that reflect local priorities and promote wellbeing. [local area] regeneration similarly engages communities in discussions about how changes to the built environment can support physical activity and overall health. Built environment plans around the [local leisure centre] **combine local participation with evidence-based approaches** to ensure active travel, accessibility, and engagement are central to development. Safeguarding plans and input from residents, particularly disabled people and other underserved groups, ensure that regeneration work is informed by lived experience, helping to create spaces that are inclusive, safe, and responsive to community needs.
		6-7	**Large-scale, long-term investments in regeneration and renewal programmes** are improving living conditions for disadvantaged communities by investment in housing, local amenities and public realm. This responds to the needs and aspirations of disadvantaged groups and cultivates community pride and cohesion.	