Report to Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee

Move More, the Place Approach, and Oldham Active

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10 November 2026

Purpose of Report
To provide an update on how we are delivering a Whole-System Approach to Physical Activity, Health Improvement, Prevention and Community Wellbeing

Executive Summary
Physical inactivity remains one of the leading risk factors for poor health and contributes to obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, poor mental wellbeing and loss of independence in later life.
Collaboratively with our partners and our communities we are delivering a whole-system Move More approach which seeks to embed physical activity into everyday lives through neighborhoods, communities, active travel, sport, leisure and health services.

Recommendations
The Committee is asked to

1. Consider the report, and note the progress being made through the Move More place-based approach to increase physical activity, reduce inequalities and improve health outcomes across Oldham.
2. Note the positive contribution of partnership working, external funding, and working alongside our communities.
3. Recognise the role of Oldham Active in supporting health improvement, reducing inequalities and delivering community benefit beyond the requirements of the contract.
4. Endorse the continued development of a whole-system approach to physical activity as part of Oldham's prevention and wellbeing agenda. #MoveMoreFeelBetter

Move More, the Place Approach and Oldham Active

1 Background

1.1 Physical activity is a key determinant of health and wellbeing and plays an important role in preventing illness, reducing health inequalities and supporting socially connected and healthy communities.

The Move More Feel Better approach aligns with:

- Oldham Corporate Plan priorities
- Public Health priorities
- Live Well ambitions
- Integrated Care Partnership prevention agenda
- Active Lives, GM Moving and Sport England outcomes
- Oldham Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2030

Our approach recognizes that increasing population physical activity levels cannot be achieved by any one team or organisation alone. Instead, a whole system approach is required. Collaboratively working with Public Health, Action Together, Oldham Active, Planning, Transport, Community Organisations, Residents, Education, Health, and others, to create environment and activities where moving more becomes a normal part of daily life.

2 Current Position – Move More Place Based Approach

2.1 The Oldham Place Partnership

Oldham's Move More approach is underpinned by a strong Place Partnership model (formerly the Local Delivery Pilot). Bringing together organisations and teams across the council, transport, sport, VCFSE, our communities & residents, and health, to create the conditions that enable residents to Move More, and where being active is the norm.

A key principle of the Place Partnership approach is working alongside residents and communities to understand local priorities, strengths and barriers, ensuring activities are shaped by those they are intended to benefit.

Oldham continues to strengthen its Place Partnership approach, bringing together organisations that positively influence health, wellbeing and activity levels.

We collectively recognize that physical activity is influenced by a wide range of factors including:

- Personal motivations & barriers
- Health & wellbeing
- Transport & Connectivity
- Communities and their capacity
- Access to facilities and green spaces close to where our residents live
- Social connection
- Cost and affordability

Working collectively enables partners to align resources, insight, and develop solutions alongside our communities that respond to the needs of our residents and communities.

The focus is on creating opportunities alongside our communities, and for our residents to be active in a way that suits them, which are accessible, affordable and sustainable in places and spaces that they trust.

Key priorities include:

- Reducing inactivity
- Working with and alongside our communities
- Addressing health inequalities
- Increasing community participation
- Embedding physical activity into wider health and social outcomes.

Activities

- Community engagement & co-production
- Capacity building & workforce development
- Developing local physical activity opportunities
- Activating community assets & spaces
- Systems & partnership integration.

Outcomes

- Greater awareness of physical activity opportunities
- Increased confidence & motivation to be active
- Stronger community relationships & voice
- Better partner collaboration & joined-up working
- Greater use of local spaces and community led opportunities
- Increased community leadership & volunteering
- Physical activity is more embedded in local systems & services

2.2 What the Place Partnership approach has enabled

Through collaborative working, the partnership has:

- Strengthened relationships and trust between key organisations & communities
- Increased opportunities for communities to influence programme design and delivery
- Supported external funding applications and investment
- Connected physical activity programmes to wider health and social outcomes
- Created opportunities for learning and sharing good practice (in and outside Oldham)

2.3 Active Travel

Active Travel remains a significant element of our Move More approach.

Working with colleagues across transport, environmental services, regeneration, education, businesses and communities, activity has focused on encouraging everyday walking, wheeling and cycling.

Examples include:

- Walking groups
- Cycling programmes
- Bee Network activation.
- A new walking and cycling forum and a dedicated Facebook group.

Benefits include:

- Increased physical activity
- Improved air quality
- Reduced social isolation
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Supporting access to employment, education and services
- 18 new Walk Leaders trained
- 2 additional School Bike Libraries in development
- 450 members of the new Oldham Walking & Cycling Facebook page

During 2025/26 and 2026/27 Active Travel activation funding was integrated into our Public Health Move More team with the Activation officer sitting across Public Health and Strategic Transport. This has strengthened the connection and impact of Active Travel, physical activity and community development.

Supporting local VCSFE organisations to access funding from GM Moving and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Wheels & Walks programmes has allowed local organisations to deliver a range of community-led projects and active travel initiatives, helping to reduce barrier to participation and create more opportunities for residents to be active within their local communities.

2.4 Place Partnership and Active Through Football

The Place Partnership and Active Through Football are both place based approaches that focus on engaging residents living in areas experiencing high levels of inequality and inactivity. Using football, sport and physical activity as a catalyst to improve many outcomes and often working with local community organisations or community leaders.

Through both the Place Partnership and Active Through Football programmes, investment is focused on neighbourhoods experiencing the highest levels of health inequality, deprivation and physical inactivity.

Activity is delivered across all five districts with a particular focus on supporting communities to shape and lead locally appropriate solutions. This has resulted in new opportunities for residents to be active, increased community ownership, stronger local partnerships and greater use of community assets and spaces.

Through the Place Partnership approach, residents and community organisations are supported to identify local priorities and shape solutions that reflect the strengths and needs of their neighbourhoods or their groups & communities.

Activity varies across each district or each ‘place’ but typically includes ongoing community engagement, activation of parks and community spaces, development of local volunteers & leaders, training opportunities, walking & cycling initiatives, and support for local groups to deliver physical activity opportunities, which sometimes are tailored to a identified cohort like women & girls, families & children, or groups based on culture or faith.

This approach recognizes that sustainable behaviour change is more likely when opportunities to be active are developed with communities rather than for / to communities. By investing in local relationships, trusted organisations and community assets, the Place Partnership has helped create environments where moving more is increasingly becoming part of everyday lives.

Alongside increased opportunities to be active, wider benefits have included stronger community networks, improved social connections, increased confidence amongst residents, greater volunteering and community leadership, and stronger collaboration between local organisations and groups (rather than in competition).

Collectively, this work now reaches and enables residents across all five districts of Oldham, enabling local solutions to be developed whilst contributing towards borough wide health and wellbeing priorities.

3 Funding and Investment into Oldham

We have secured over £3.1 million of external investment over the last five years to support physical activity, health improvement and community wellbeing. This has been done by the Public Health Move More team working in partnership with other local organisations.
This figure does not include other groups and organisations that we have supported for them to bring in investment into Oldham.

Through partnership working, we have successfully secured & supported bids for external funding from organisations including:

- Sport England
- Football Foundation
- GM Moving
- Active Travel England
- Other regional and national partners

These investments enable extra programmes, interventions, infrastructure improvements and valuable capacity to make a positive difference, that would not be possible otherwise.

'Programme'	**External Investment secured**
Place Based approaches to Physical Activity (Place Partnership & Active Through Football)	£ 1,109,635
Capital improvements (Eg PlayZones, Cricket NTPs and Park Tennis Courts)	£ 733,599
Swimming Pool Support Fund	£ 500,000
Active Travel Activation & Bikeability	£ 369,200
Opening Schools Facilities	£ 310,692
Other Move More Programmes	£ 104,500

4 Impact on Residents

The Move More Place Partnership approach is delivering positive outcomes for residents, communities and partners through a combination of increased opportunities to be active, stronger community capacity and improved health & wellbeing.

Health & Wellbeing

- Increased confidence & social connection
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Reduced social isolation

Community Capacity

- Development of local leaders
- Strengthened Partnerships

- Increased number of volunteers & volunteer opportunities

Community Activity.

- 18 new Walk leaders trained recently
- 450+ members of the new Walking & Cycling Facebook group
- Plus, an increase in the…
    - Number of walking groups
    - Number of opportunities available to be active
    - Number of residents participating in local opportunities
    - Number of volunteers supporting physical activity opportunities

4.1 Case Study 1: Tommyfield Park Active Travel & Safety Pilot

As part of the new Tommyfield Park regeneration programme, pupils from two local primary schools took part in this pilot. Acting as 'Route Detectives', children and school staff explored the park and surrounding area, identifying barriers and opportunities for walking, wheeling & cycling. Their feedback was shred directly with the landscape architect leading the next phase of regeneration, ensuring that young people's experiences helped shape future improvements to accessibility, active travel routes and public spaces.

4.2 Case Study 2: ATF Women's Just Play Football Session. <Participant Quote>

"Coming to the Tuesday Women's Just Play session has been such a positive experience for me. It's great knowing you can just turn up, play football and enjoy being active without any pressure or expectations. The fact that the sessions are free has made it accessible for so many of us who might not otherwise have the chance to play. It's also helped me build confidence and meet new people. One of my favourite memories was being part of the launch of the new Oldham Athletic kit for the season. That was a proud moment and showed how much women's football in the community is growing."

4.3 Move More Family Event at Spring meadows Family Hub

This event brought together local residents, community organisations and health partners to Encourage physical activity, improve wellbeing and connect people with local support services. It was also a great opportunity to engage with residents.

Despite poor weather requiring the full event to move indoors, 77 residents attended, including 37 children. Families took part in a range of activities, including boxing, active play and circus skills, while residents also accessed health checks and information about local opportunities to be active.

Feedback highlighted the value of providing accessible activities within the community. The event also provided useful insight into local barriers to physical activities, with cost and time identified as the most common challenges, helping inform future community engagement and activity programmes.

5 The Contribution of Oldham Active

Oldham Active (Oldham Community Leisure – OCL) is a key strategic partner in the delivery of Oldham's ambition to support residents to move more and live healthier lives. Whilst best known for operating leisure facilities on behalf of the council, its contribution extends far beyond the provision of sports and fitness services.

As a Community Benefit Society & Charity, Oldham Active reinvests any surpluses back programmes, facilities and services that benefit local residents. Through its facilities, partnerships, outreach work and targeted health programmes, Oldham Active plays an important role in supporting prevention, reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing outcomes across the borough.

Oldham Active has over 1.5million visits a year and 12,904 Health & Fitness members, of which 1,900 are Young Person memberships (an ever-increasing cohort), who regularly use their facilities. A short video will be shown at the Committee meeting to highlight the latest annual report.

5.1 Supporting the Prevention Agenda

Oldham Active's approach aligns closely with Oldham's prevention priorities, recognizing that increasing physical activity can help reduce the risk of a range of long term health conditions including cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, poor mental health & social isolation.

Through a combination of leisure provision, community outreach and targeted interventions, Oldham Active supports residents across the life course to become and remain physically active.

This contributes directly to wider public health objectives by helping residents maintain independence, improve wellbeing and reduce demand on health and care services.

5.2 Improving access and reducing inequalities

Oldham Active continues to work with partners to reduce barriers that can prevent residents from accessing physical activity opportunities.

Examples include:

- Welcome to Oldham activity offers supporting newly arrived residents to access local facilities and activities
- Oldham Halloween Half Marathon continues to have record entries each year, with 412 runners taking part this year (2026). Helping to raise money for local charities and supporting our town centre economy by bringing visitors into Oldham from all round the country to take on the hilly challenge.
- The Shower & Go initiative, helping individuals experiencing homelessness or financial hardship access facilities with dignity.
- Active Start membership & programmes supporting pregnant women, families and those new to physical activity.
- Targeted community outreach programmes designed to engage residents who are traditionally underrepresented within leisure and physical activity settings.
- Over 200 adults received free swimming lessons each week, and 4,500 children on their swimming lesson programme all of which receive free swimming to help them practice between swimming lessons.

This approach aligns with our Place Partnership approach and helps ensure that opportunities to be active are accessible to all residents, particularly those living in communities experiencing the greatest health inequalities.

5.3 Investing in Facilities and Customer Experience

Oldham Active continues to invest in facilities and services to ensure residents have access to high-quality, welcoming and inclusive environments in which to be active and connect with others.

Recent developments include:

- Refurbishment of changing village facilities at Failsworth Sport Centre has started, including improved accessibility and inclusive provision
- Ongoing investment in swimming provision and programme development
- Embarking on the refurbishment and operation of Grange Astro Turf Pitch
- Partnership working to maintain & develop community access to sports facilities across the borough
- Improvements to digital systems, including enhancement of customer booking platforms and online services with a new refreshed website.

These improvements support increased participation whilst ensuring facilities remain fit for purpose and responsive to community need.

5.4 Working with Communities and Partners

A significant strength of Oldham Active is its extensive partnership network across health, voluntary, community and public sector organisations.

Partnerships include collaborations with:

- Public Health
- Primary Care Networks (PCNs)
- Family Hubs
- Age UK Oldham
- Action Together
- Community & voluntary organisations including groups and clubs such as SAWN and Fatima Women's Association
- Faith groups
- Live Well and Connected Communities teams

Through these partnerships, Oldham Active is able to connect residents with wider support services while promoting physical activity as part of its holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

Partnership working also enables targeted engagement with groups who may face additional barriers to participation, ensuring services are informed by community needs and local priorities.

5.5 Supporting Community Capacity and Volunteering

Oldham Active continues to make a valuable contribution to developing local skills, volunteering and employment opportunities

Through volunteering programmes, apprenticeships, work experience placements and workforce development initiatives, they support local residents to gain confidence, develop skills and access employment opportunities. 150-160 volunteers are engaged or supported each year, helping deliver programmes across the borough.

Volunteers contribute significantly to activity delivery and community engagement across the borough, helping strengthen community capacity and supporting the sustainability of local programmes.

5.6 Contributing to the wider Move More agenda

Oldham Active is an integral part of the borough's wider Move more system and works alongside the Council, Public Health, GM Moving, Sport England and other partners to increase physical activity levels and improve health outcomes.

The collaborative approach ensures leisure facilities act as only one part of a much broader physical activity ecosystem, connecting residents to opportunities within communities, districts and various spaces and places.

Oldham Active's contribution therefore extends beyond facility management and includes supporting strategic objectives around prevention, health improvement, community wellbeing and reducing inequalities in Oldham.

5.7 Looking ahead

Oldham Active remains committed to continuing its role as a strategic partner within Oldham's place-based approach to physical activity and wellbeing.

They continue to work alongside the Council & partners to maximise opportunities for residents to be physically active, improve access to services, tackle inequalities and contribute to healthier, more resilient communities.

As work progresses towards the future leisure operating model beyond 2028, Oldham Active will continue to support the Council in delivering positive outcomes for residents whilst maintaining its focus on community benefit, partnership working and health improvement.

6 Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

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