

Teignbridge District Council
Executive
16th July 2026
Part i

Active Wellbeing Strategy

Purpose of Report

To brief members on the development of the Active Wellbeing Strategy and approve the Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) Approve the proposed Strategy, providing a practical framework for future service design, partnership working and commissioning.
- (2) Give delegated authority to the Head of Leisure to make minor amendments to the Strategy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of the Active Wellbeing strategy. The process by which financial implications may arise is shown in section 3.1 of the report.

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Legal Implications

Comments are added to section 3.2 of the report.

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Risk Assessment

Risks are noted in section 3.3 of the report.

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Environmental / Climate Change Implications

Environmental implications are discussed in Section 3.4 of the report.

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Executive Members

Cllr John Nutley
Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation.

Appendices / Background Papers

Appendix 1 – The Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy (SLC) full Strategy report (attached separately).

1. Introduction

The Active Wellbeing Strategy sets in motion a shift towards prevention, inclusion and community-based delivery to help residents live active and healthy lives.

The Council is at a pivotal moment. Rising health inequalities, increasing demand on public services, financial pressures on traditional leisure provision and changing patterns of physical activity indicate that the current model is no longer enough. For a rural and coastal district like Teignbridge, these pressures are often amplified by geographic isolation, uneven access to services and seasonal fluctuations linked to the visitor economy.

While the District benefits from a strong foundation of leisure facilities, sports clubs, parks, coastal and community assets, levels of physical active remain static. Rural communities, residents with limited transport options and some coastal communities face additional barriers that directly contribute to poorer health outcomes and widening inequalities.

At the same time, population growth and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) place new expectations on services. Ensuring that facilities and programmes are financially viable, sustainable and socially relevant is essential if they are to meet the needs of the residents of the district. In response, the Council is committed to moving beyond a conventional, facility-led leisure model. Instead, it will establish an Active Wellbeing service that places prevention, inclusion and wider health and social outcomes at its core. This is a proactive shift – from simply providing facility-led activities to enabling healthier lives.

The approach embraces everyday activity, locally delivered solutions, stronger partnerships and targeted support for those who face the greatest barriers. It ensures that the people who benefit least from a traditional leisure service gain the most from this shift. This shift is especially important in a district where dispersed rural settlements and small coastal towns require more flexible, community-embedded models of delivery.

This Strategy sets a clear and confident policy direction for the future of active wellbeing. It provides a practical framework for future service design, partnership working and commissioning. It gives the Council and its partners a shared blueprint for delivery. The framework recognises the need for approaches that are not one-size-fits-all, but instead reflect the diversity of Teignbridge's rural villages, market towns and coastal communities.

The approach lends to the Devon Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2026-2035), created to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities, with a strong emphasis on prevention and coordinated place-based working. It is based on the strategic needs assessment for Devon, which specifically highlights health challenges. For Teignbridge, it identifies that inequality is place-based and not district-wide, as there are clear pockets of deprivation. Wider determinants are the main drivers of health inequalities and are strongly linked to income, access to services and community. Focusing on preventative health and getting people more active is a crucial prevention tool to reducing health inequalities and keeping people healthier for longer. The District Council has a key role to play through public sector leisure provision, access to green spaces, and place making in its communities.

The Active Wellbeing Strategy is shared through extensive engagement with internal teams, external partners and community stakeholders. This collaborative approach reflects both the strength of the district's partnership network and the reality that delivering meaningful change requires shared ownership. It is proposed that the collaborative approach extends to the creation of an Active Wellbeing Strategy board, to support the delivery of the Strategy. Further information is detailed in section 3.4, Appendix 1.

The Council will lead the Strategy, but its success will depend on the continued commitment and energy of its partners. Partnerships are particularly vital in a geography where voluntary, coastal and rural community organisations often operate as the first point of support for local residents. It strengthens connections across the local system, including health, social care, community and voluntary sector organisations. Providing clarity for delivery partners on the direction of travel.

Ultimately, the Strategy establishes a compelling shared vision and clear strategic outcomes. It will shape how active wellbeing is supported and enabled across the district in years to come. It sets out not just what the Council and its partners will do, but why it matters and how it will make a tangible difference to residents' lives.

The key aims of the Strategy are:

- **To drive a shift from a traditional leisure model to a broader Active Wellbeing approach** – one that prioritises prevention, inclusion and improved physical and mental health outcomes, while still protecting and enhancing the core leisure offer.
- **To reduce health inequalities across Teignbridge** – by enabling less active and underserved communities, including rural villages, coastal towns and residents facing the greatest barriers, to access affordable, inclusive and locally delivered opportunities to move more.

- **To embed a whole-system approach** – aligning the service more closely with health, social care, education and the community and voluntary sector, ensuring collective effort towards shared outcomes.
- **To strengthen everyday activity and community-based delivery** – making movement easier and more accessible through local settings, trusted community spaces and information environments that reflect the district's rural and coastal geography.
- **To provide a clear strategic policy framework for active wellbeing** – guiding future service delivery, shaping partnerships working and informing the design of future operating and commissioning arrangements.

2. Background information

2.1 Research and review of evidence

A comprehensive review of Council and stakeholder strategies identified clear opportunities for the Active Wellbeing Strategy to support local strategic priorities, improve health outcomes and embed active wellbeing across policy and practice.

There is a clear opportunity for the Active Wellbeing Strategy to support the delivery of several key objectives in the Council's One Teignbridge Strategy including:

- Run leisure facilities to support community health and wellbeing across the district.
- Create opportunities for healthier and happier living.
- Look after our play areas, parks and green spaces, making sure they are clean, safe, and wildlife friendly places where people of all ages want to go.

Teignbridge faces significant health and lifestyle challenges. Current strategic responses make limited explicit use of physical activity as a tool to address priority health outcomes. This highlights the importance of adopting a whole-system approach. It flags the need to strengthen links between wellbeing services, primary care and community-based programmes.

Teignbridge's rural geography and pockets of deprivation, some within the 20% most deprived areas nationally, present specific access and engagement challenges. While the district benefits from an established leisure centre offer, there remains an opportunity to support more local, place-based physical activity provision, particularly in communities with lower participation.

Overall, the evidence points to a clear role for the Strategy in providing a coherent framework for active wellbeing across the district and in supporting delivery against a range of strategic priorities.

2.2 What did people and local organisations tell us?

To capture the perspectives of those involved in planning, commissioning, delivering, and ultimately accessing the service, a mixed-methods consultation and evidence-gathering approach was undertaken. This included an online consultation with community members and wider stakeholders, alongside one-to-one and group discussions with both internal and external stakeholders. Together, these methods ensured a broad and inclusive range of views informed the process.

The key themes that emerged from these conversations are:

- Shift from leisure to prevention and community wellbeing
- Targeted support and programme delivery
- Workforce development and transition
- Embedding a culture of collaboration
- Protect and enhance leisure portfolio
- Establishing a sustainable model for the future

2.3 Strategy framework.

The Strategy has been shared through a series of structured workshops with internal teams, external partners and community stakeholders. These conversations helped identify the key themes, priorities and opportunities that underpin the draft Vision, Strategic Outcomes and Strategic Objectives for the new Active Wellbeing Strategy.

The resulting framework is built on four interconnected layers, each reinforcing the next.

- It begins with a clear and ambitious **Vision**, setting out the future the district is striving to achieve and providing a unifying direction for the service.
- The second layer, **Strategic Outcomes**, translates this vision into the tangible end results the Strategy aims to deliver – describing what success looks like for residents, communities and partners.
- The third layer, **Strategic Objectives**, sets out the specific goals that provide focus and act as the stepping stones towards achieving the strategic outcomes.
- Finally, the **Action Plan** outlines the practical steps, interventions and early priorities required to deliver on the objectives and move the Strategy into implementation.

Together, these layers create a clear and coherent “golden thread” that links long-term aspirations to short-term action. This ensures that every decision, investment and partnership contributes meaningfully towards delivering the desired outcomes and ultimately realising the Vision.

2.4 Vision.

A series of draft vision statements were developed through workshops held with the Council’s project team and key stakeholders. Participants reviewed the evidence from the consultations and brought their own perspectives to co-produce a vision for Teignbridge.

The refined vision was agreed as:

- Teignbridge: active, healthy and thriving.

A short vision statement provides clarity, memorability and flexibility, making it easy for partners, stakeholders and the public to understand, recall and align with the overall direction.

2.5 Strategic Outcomes and Objectives.

Based on the outputs of the stakeholder workshops, SLC (consultants) and the project team have developed a set of Strategic Outcomes centred around five

themes. Each Strategic Outcome is underpinned by 3 Strategic Objectives, providing a total of 15 objectives to help focus resources on areas of greatest impact. A summary of Strategic Outcomes and Objectives is presented in the following table:

Strategic Outcomes	Strategic Objectives
<p>Prevention Active lives that protect long-term health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increase participation in physical activity among children and young people. ▶ Increase the proportion of older adults meeting weekly age-appropriate physical activity guidelines. ▶ Support people with the greatest needs to access inclusive, affordable opportunities to be active.
<p>Workforce Skilled people supporting active wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Equip the leisure and active wellbeing workforce to confidently support people experiencing health inequalities and complex needs. ▶ Recognise, develop and support a skilled volunteer workforce that meets the needs of local groups, clubs and wellbeing services. ▶ Embed the active wellbeing workforce within prevention and early-intervention pathways.
<p>Infrastructure Places and spaces that support active lives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintain and enhance the ability of existing leisure and active wellbeing facilities to meet the needs of all community groups. ▶ Support a network of sustainable, affordable and accessible community venues, school facilities, local parks and green spaces. ▶ Protect and develop safe, accessible walking and cycling networks, actively promoting community awareness and confidence to use them
<p>Collaboration Stronger partnerships that connect people to local activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increase community awareness, visibility and engagement in local active wellbeing opportunities and services. ▶ Enhance collaboration and partnerships between community sport, physical activity and health and wellbeing providers (e.g. clubs, schools, local organisations). ▶ Strengthen cross-sector referrals, social prescribing, and signposting to support prevention and early intervention.
<p>Accessibility Local, digital and inclusive access to activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maximise opportunities for residents to be active in their neighbourhood. ▶ Expand digital access to interactive and tailored active wellbeing opportunities. ▶ Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of physical activity opportunities by reducing participation barriers.

2.6 Making it happen.

Delivering meaningful and sustained change will rely on strong partnerships, evidence-led decisions and a flexible, adaptive approach to delivery. The Strategy

will be guided by clear principles and behaviours, a phased action plan and proportionate governance arrangements, ensuring early progress can be made while the wider system continues to evolve.

By taking a flexible, collaborative and system-wide approach, the Strategy will remain relevant, responsive and firmly focused on improving outcomes. The Strategy will maximise the value of existing assets, partnerships and investment.

The following principles will underpin how the Strategy is delivered and reviewed. They reflect recognised best practice and the specific needs of Teignbridge's rural and coastal communities. These principles should guide decisions; shape partnership working and inform ongoing development of the service.

- **Collaboration and shared ownership** – Delivery depends on strong, focused collaboration with health, education, voluntary and community partners. Clear roles, shared goals and open community will drive co-ordinated action. This approach builds on the strong partnership networks already established across Teignbridge.
- **A system-wide approach** – Active Wellbeing will be embedded across the wider health, wellbeing and place-based system. It will align with existing plans and contribute directly to priorities such as reducing inequalities, strengthening resilience and supporting healthy ageing.
- **Evidence-led and insight-driven** – Decisions on priorities and investment will be guided by robust data and local insight, particularly from rural, coastal and underserved communities where barriers to activity are greatest.
- **Responsive and flexible delivery** – Delivery will adapt over time. Priorities and approaches will be reviewed regularly to respond to emerging needs, new evidence, funding opportunities and system pressures. Flexibility is essential in a district with diverse geographies and seasonal population change.
- **Continuous learning and improvement** – Monitoring, evaluation and feedback will underpin delivery. A “test and learn” approach will identify what works, refine what doesn't, and scale effective models. This enables the service to evolve with confidence and continually strengthen impact.

2.7 Action planning.

A collaborative and evidence-led approach has shaped the Action Plan to ensure the Strategy translates into practical and meaningful change. SLC co-developed the action plan with the Council's leisure team and key stakeholders. Discussions centred on identifying priority actions, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and exploring how existing programmes and assets across the system can be more effectively aligned with the ambitions of the Strategy. The result is a phased and proportionate Action Plan that recognises early opportunities alongside the longer-term system changes needed, while remaining realistic about capacity and resources. It is critical that action plans are subject to financial appraisals. In other words what are the financial implications of delivering those action plans in full and are they affordable. If not, additional resources must be secured, or plans must be scaled back.

Implementation of the action plan will be supported through a formal launch stage. Launch stage features the following key activities:

- Generate energy and excitement.

- Revisit stakeholder engagement plan.
- Large scale communications.
- Re-affirm commitment from stakeholders.
- Make commitments in public to deliver.

2.8 Monitoring and evaluation.

Full details of the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy are set out in Appendix 1, section 3.2.20 to 3.7.3. Monitoring will help ensure the work is on track and progressive.

2.9 Supporting evidence.

The most consistent themes and insights emerging from stakeholder and public engagement, highlighting the issues and opportunities that have shaped the vision, outcomes, objectives and recommended actions of the new Strategy.

SLC engaged with 28 stakeholders through a several channels including one-to-one and group discussions, and workshops forums. Stakeholders were specifically targeted following the completion of a robust stakeholder mapping process in partnership with the Council.

Stakeholders represented a broad cross-section of the local health, wellbeing and community 'system', including:

- **Council Members** including the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Recreation, Resorts and Tourism
- **Council Officers** responsible for Leisure, Planning, Green Spaces, Communications, and Strategy
- **Key local health, wellbeing and community partners**, including senior representatives from Devon County Council Public Health, NHS Devon Integrated Care Board, Teignbridge CVS, Libraries Unlimited, Active Devon, Sport England, Devon FA, Swim England.

Key themes from the consultations are summarised with more detail in section 4.1.7, Appendix 1, but are outlined here as:

- A shift from leisure toward prevention and community wellbeing
- Ageing facilities require modernisation
- Financial pressures are recognised to be limiting the Council's ability to invest in leisure and meet growing demand
- Targeting support where it will have the greatest impact
- Workforce transformation
- Leisure team capacity gaps
- Volunteer capacity and participation
- Working collaboratively through a whole-system approach
- Accessibility and affordability are recognised as the key barriers to increasing participation
- Delivering services in place and developing a hub and spoke model
- Protecting existing provision among housing growth
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), both a constraint and an opportunity

Alongside direct stakeholder engagement, a programme of targeted online surveys was developed to gather broader community insight and complement qualitative discussions. These surveys generated responses from:

- 1,382 residents
- 26 sports clubs and community groups
- 9 local employers
- 4 schools

Appendix 1 details the feedback from:

Section 4.1.16 – Resident survey

Section 4.1.19 – Sports clubs and community groups survey

Section 4.1.22 – Schools survey

Section 4.1.25 – Local employer survey

There is a substantial amount of information that could not readily be summarised to this report, and the feedback is worth reading in full context, as directed.

2.10 Key health and population demographics data.

The data shows that Teignbridge is challenged by significant health and lifestyle issues including physical inactivity, poor mental health and supporting older adults to age well. Section 4.3 of Appendix 1 provides further details.

- Physical inactivity is a major issue in Teignbridge, with a significant proportion of adults, children and young people failing to meet recommended activity levels. This inactivity likely contributes to high rates of adult obesity and sickness absence from work in the area, which exceeds both regional and national averages. Smoking prevalence is also notably high. These trends indicate a need for more effective community-based interventions to promote active lifestyles and healthier behaviours.
- The mental health and wellbeing of Teignbridge residents is also a key area of concern. Hospital admissions for intentional self-harm are significant in Teignbridge indicating a need for improved or additional mental health support or early intervention services.
- Other health burdens include an elevated prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions and a significantly high rate of emergency hospital admissions due to falls among adults aged 80 and over. This highlights the importance of providing effective preventative health measures, particularly for older adults, to reduce avoidable hospitalisations and maintain independence.

A key characteristic of the district's changing population is its rapidly ageing profile. The number of residents aged 65 and over grew by 25.8% between 2011 and 2021. This outpaced growth of the working-age population which increased by only 2.9% over the same period. This trend is anticipated to continue in the future and is likely to place increasing demands on public services, particularly those linked to promoting health and wellbeing.

Section 5 of Appendix 1 provides further details of the key strategic documents reviewed to support the development of this Strategy.

2.11 Documentation development.

Beyond the detailed Strategy report (Appendix 1), a Strategy document will be produced to summarise the key themes and objectives, and a two-page infographic (similar to the 'One Teignbridge' approach) will also be created.

3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

3.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications to the implementation of this strategy. Schemes may be developed on the back of this strategy. At such point, they will only proceed if resources are available and if the tests of prudence and affordability are met.

3.2 Legal

The Council has power to adopt and implement the Active Wellbeing Strategy under its general statutory functions, including powers relating to public health improvement under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, leisure and recreation powers under section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, and (where applicable) the general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The strategy must also comply with the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty.

3.3 Risks

The 'One Teignbridge' Strategy provides the framework in which the Council services and projects are prioritised. The Active Wellbeing Strategy enables the Council to work to an agreed framework for delivery of work programmes and best use of resources, which will help reduce health inequalities and promote quality of life for Teignbridge residents.

Risks to the implementation will be mitigated and managed through the governance, monitoring and evaluation, as set out in the Strategy report (Appendix 1).

3.4 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

The Active and Wellbeing Strategy contributes positively to the objectives of sustainability and reducing carbon emissions in Teignbridge. Schemes developed in support of this strategy broadly enable environmental improvements; examples include walking and cycling network improvements, which may directly contribute to reduced car dependency and increases in active travel, through to increasing participation in local sport and activity, which may contribute to reducing demands on health service resources. Environmental impacts of new infrastructure and facilities, such as increases in energy use and embodied carbon in new materials may be evaluated through the planning process and at the project level when subsequent proposals are brought to committee.

4. Alternative Options

The Strategy was created from stakeholder and public engagement, highlighting the issues and opportunities that have shaped the vision, outcomes, objectives and recommended actions. Broad discussions and challenges were debated to ensure the Strategy is derived from detailed considerations.

5. Conclusion

The project fulfils the Council's 'One Teignbridge' strategic ambition. It was an agreed priority project (IN.7) to develop and implement an Active Wellbeing Strategy.

This Strategy sets a clear and confident policy direction for the future of active wellbeing. It provides a practical framework for future service design, partnership working and commissioning. It gives the Council and its partners a shared blueprint for delivery.

It is recommended that the Council resolves to:

- (1) Approve the proposed Strategy, providing a practical framework for future service design, partnership working and commissioning.
- (2) Give delegated authority to the Head of Leisure to make minor amendments to the Strategy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation.