

Norfolk Local Access Forum

Item No.

Report title:	The health benefits of walking and cycling
Date of meeting:	11 October 2017
Responsible Officer:	Steve Miller, Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage
Strategic impact This work will help inform the Council and the Local Access Forum about the benefits of walking and cycling – both economic and health – to better plan initiatives for Norfolk	

Executive summary

Whilst we all know that taking exercise – in particular walking and cycling – is good for us, we do not have detailed evidence to support the statement. As part of the Pushing Ahead programme, the Medical School at the University of East Anglia is working with the Environment Team at Norfolk County Council and Active Norfolk to evaluate the benefits of a range of active travel activities. They will explain why they got involved, how they have set up the evaluation and report on progress to date.

Recommendations:

The Norfolk Local Access Forum to

- **note the report and presentation**
- **recommend the final results be taken into account in forward planning for walking and cycling and active travel initiatives in Norfolk**

1. Proposal (or options)

1.1 Monitoring and Evaluation for “Pushing Ahead, Your Journey Your Way”

The University of East Anglia have developed an evaluation protocol for the “Pushing Ahead, Your Journey Your Way” programme. This builds on the evaluation strategy that is currently being delivered during the Sustainable Transport Transition Year AtoBetter initiative, 2016-17. This involves specific evaluation for key activities (e.g. Personal Travel Plans and Bikeability) as well as the production of an overall evaluation framework where key performance indicators for the programme will be collected.

The framework also involves a process evaluation; process evaluation is central to determining how interventions work and whether their mechanisms perform as intended. It will therefore provide understanding of how the context within which interventions are developed and implemented impacts their effectiveness. All staff engaged in the AtoBetter initiative are engaged with the evaluation protocol, and will continue to work with UEA to collect the necessary data at all stages of programme delivery.

Funding from the Access Fund allows continuity and enables robust evaluation of the interventions over a longer time frame than is typically possible. So as to ensure project delivery is closely linked to intelligence from the evaluation, the University chairs the Programme Evaluation Group which meets on a monthly basis and comprise the heads of the various delivery programmes and will also sit on the Project Delivery Board.

The University will explain why they got involved, how they have set up the

evaluation and report on progress to date.

2. Evidence

2.1 One of the Key challenges identified for Pushing Ahead was health inequality

The Index of Multiple Deprivation indicator for health shows inequality across the Pushing Ahead project study area with parts of central Norwich and coastal Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft showing that health is poor in comparison with national statistics. In the most deprived wards, life expectancy at birth is well below the average for England. For example, in the most deprived wards in Great Yarmouth, the life expectancy for a male is 73.2 years and for a female is 78.9, compared to an average in UK of 79.6 years for males and 83.2 years for females.

3. Financial Implications

3.1. Funded from the Department for Transport Access Fund

4. Issues, risks and innovation

4.1. Improved understanding about the health and economic benefits of walking and cycling will assist the County Council plan and target its resources where most needed reducing the risk of poor planning.

5. Background

5.1 **“Pushing Ahead, Your Journey Your Way”** ” is a £1.66m programme mainly funded by the Department for Transport Access Fund and focuses on increasing cycling and walking in key growth areas of Norfolk. The programme builds on the successful and innovative AtoBetter travel planning programme and all the initiatives being delivered using the Sustainable Transport Transition Year (STTY) funding to expand their impact in to other locations, to focus on functional barriers to cycling and walking, not local authority borders. The programme will improve access to employment, education and training, increase active travel and create a legacy where all forms of sustainable travel become the norm.

The high level objectives were set to align with the ambitions of the Department for Transport Access Fund:

1. To support economic growth across New Anglia
2. To improve public health across New Anglia

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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