

REPORT TITLE: Supporting Physical Activity in Dewsbury and Batley

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date:	14 November 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Councillor Carole Pattison
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No Yes
Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek the views of Scrutiny in the early stages of developing a new Sport and Leisure facility in Dewsbury For scrutiny to be updated on the next steps towards developing a new Sport and Leisure facility in Dewsbury To update on the plans for wider physical activity support for North Kirklees. 	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Scrutiny note the proposals agreed by Cabinet and the next steps in delivering those proposals That Scrutiny consider ways in which they can support the identified next steps regarding the options appraisal and feasibility study process. For Scrutiny to support officers to ensure that the widest range of views and needs are considered in finalising proposals, as well as suggestions for potential co-located services / partners to explore. 	
Reasons for Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most frequent feedback received by Brightsparks was the desire for a replacement facility for Dewsbury Sports Centre. Cabinet therefore approved (on 21 October 2025) to commence an options appraisal and feasibility study for a new sport and leisure facility for Dewsbury, alongside wider work with KAL and other partners to reduce barriers and provide access for as many people as possible to a range of opportunities to be physically active. It is recognised that significant inequalities exist in levels of physical activity between demographic groups and areas, with Heckmondwike, Batley (East and West), and Dewsbury (East, South and West) wards being amongst the least active wards in Kirklees. Additionally, data shows lower physical activity levels for people of Asian ethnicity; those with a disability; females; and people living in the most deprived areas. The provision of a new facility will take careful planning. The options appraisal will consider what services and provision meets the widest needs of communities and the feasibility study will identify options for physical location. To meet the needs of many residents, we must understand learning and evidence from similar and past projects, different views, consider possible services and partners, assess the site, explore funding options and to understand the financial implications of any provision (both capital and revenue). We invite Scrutiny to share ideas and feedback so the options 	

appraisal and following feasibility study reflects the whole communities voice, helping us create a lasting resource for everyone.

- In the meantime, work will take place to supplement existing provision to support people to be more active across North Kirklees and we would welcome scrutiny's views on how this is targeted.

Resource Implications:

- Resource to commission an options appraisal and subsequent feasibility study - c.£100K which will need to be identified from the existing capital plan.
- Provision will be made in the capital programme through the budget setting process for a new sport and leisure facility. This will, initially, be an indicative marker until the outcome of the options appraisal and feasibility study are properly understood, and a clearer understanding of the amount of capital required can be defined. There is an expectation that some external funding may be available to support the capital costs and the options appraisal work will support identification of this, which will help to mitigate the corporate borrowing requirements needed to fund the capital project.
- It is imperative that the ongoing operational costs of the new facility are identified and factored into the Medium-Term Financial Plan when appropriate. This work will be part of the feasibility study.
- Utilise existing council officer capacity to continue to work alongside services and partners to address the wider barriers and issues impacting physical activity.
- Utilise existing council officer capacity to work alongside potential partners regarding the possible co-location of services.
- Re-purpose existing Public Health resource to pilot an approach to developing work to understand and address a range of place-based health inequalities across Dewsbury.
- Funding from Public Health will be made available to Kirklees Active Leisure for a pilot of a community based physical offer for the communities of Dewsbury and Batley. The value of this will be identified once the work has been fully scoped.

Date signed off by Executive Director & name

Rachel Spencer Henshall – Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate – 6 November 2025

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?

Kevin Mulvaney – Service Director for Finance / Section 151 Officer – 6 November 2025

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?

Samantha Lawton – Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer) - 6 November 2025

Electoral wards affected:

All wards

Ward councillors consulted:

Councillors across North Kirklees were invited to give views on the approach and advise on potential groups to consult with, which helped to shape the Brightsparks engagement.

We intend to continue to engage with Councillors across North Kirklees as part of this next stage.

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered?

1. Executive Summary

As part of the decision to permanently close Dewsbury Sports Centre by Cabinet on 5 November 2024, it was requested that further engagement be carried out to understand how physical activity levels could be improved in Batley, Dewsbury and across North Kirklees, where they have historically been much lower than local and national average levels, even with the existence of a leisure centre in Dewsbury.

Brightsparks Agency were commissioned to carry out research on the barriers and enablers to physical activity with a particular focus on Batley and Dewsbury, to add to our existing knowledge and insight. Their final report was received in early October 2025 (Appendix 2)

On 21 October 2025, Cabinet approved proposals to progress plans for a new sport and leisure facility in Dewsbury to supplement existing leisure provision in North Kirklees. Recognition of a wider range of factors which can impact on physical activity levels were also accepted, along with plans to work alongside partners to improve these.

Cabinet also approved working with KAL to pilot some additional outreach activity to supplement existing local provision, to support more people to be active across North Kirklees, whilst noting that Public Health are also piloting some additional capacity to look at impacting health inequalities in Dewsbury.

Scrutiny are invited to provide support and views on how these next steps can be effectively carried out, and particularly in getting the broadest possible range of views from different cohorts and communities, so that actions and solutions can be developed which meet the wider needs of the residents of North Kirklees and help increase overall physical activity levels.

2. Information required to take a decision

Scrutiny are invited to consider the recommendations accepted by Cabinet on 21 October 2025 and provide their feedback on how to move forward and develop actions which are informed by and support the broadest range of residents to be physically active across North Kirklees.

This work is coming to Scrutiny within the very early stages of project initiation. Officers are seeking early feedback and engagement from Scrutiny in order to ensure that the options appraisal and subsequent feasibility study meet the needs of North Kirklees communities, specifically Dewsbury and Batley.

Officers are initially proposing the following:

Options Appraisal

An independent options appraisal is commissioned by Kirklees Council in order to:

- Build on the top-level research from Brightsparks and determine what communities want in a new facility – including an understanding from cohorts who didn't previously use Dewsbury Sports Centre regularly.
- Consider how this new facility can support the wider ambitions laid out within the [NHS 10 Year Plan – Fit for the Future](#), including a focus on early intervention and prevention and service integration within communities.
- Identify potential services and partners who may wish to be co-located in the new facility, or who might compliment the offer.
- Understand the practical limitations of what may/may not be in scope.
- Identify potential locations for a new facility considering size, accessibility, availability and cost.
- Identify potential external sources of funding which can contribute to this project, and any conditions attached to that funding.

Feasibility Study

- Once preferred options are identified, a feasibility study will then determine the ability to deliver these within available budgets and on preferred sites being mindful of the annual operating costs.

We are seeking feedback from Scrutiny on our proposals for both the options appraisal and feasibility study. This could include:

- Recommendations for groups or networks who might be engaged with as part of the options appraisal process.
- Recommendations for further consultation with North Kirklees councillors.
- Consideration of population groups who are most affected by inequalities and how these should be considered as part of the process
- Wider views from Scrutiny on how they can support the process for a new facility

Outreach offer with KAL

- We are currently working with KAL to refine the detail of this offer, which is expected to be from a couple of community settings initially. Sessions will be indoor and site selection will be dependent on availability of venues which have sufficient space, accessibility, and storage for equipment.
- The intention is that KAL's offer will complement the existing community offer in North Kirklees, and provide alternative opportunities to be active.

We are seeking feedback from Scrutiny on how best to target and promote this offer.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

This work supports the following aspects of the Council Plan:

- Getting the basics right - a balanced budget and a modern organisation
- Protecting the vulnerable and achieving inclusion

- Thriving people and communities - now and over the longer-term
- Local economic growth, working with regional and national partners

3.2 Financial Implications

- Resource to commission an options appraisal and subsequent feasibility study - c.£100K which will need to be identified from the existing capital plan.
- Provision will be made in the capital programme through the budget setting process for a new sport and leisure facility. This will, initially, be an indicative marker until the outcome of the options appraisal and feasibility study are properly understood, and a clearer understanding of the amount of capital required can be defined. There is an expectation that some external funding may be available to support the capital costs and the options appraisal work will support identification of this, which will help to mitigate the corporate borrowing requirements needed to fund the capital project.
- It is imperative that the ongoing operational costs of the new facility are identified and factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan when appropriate. This work will be part of the feasibility study.
- Utilise existing council officer capacity to continue to work alongside services and partners to address the wider barriers and issues impacting physical activity.
- Utilise existing council officer capacity to work alongside potential partners regarding the possible co-location of services.
- Re-purpose existing Public Health resource to pilot an approach to developing work to understand and address a range of place-based health inequalities across Dewsbury.
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3.3 Legal Implications

The council has a statutory duty under section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Section 2B of the NHS Act 2006 - duties as to improvement of Public Health) to take appropriate steps for improving the health of the people (which includes children) in its area. The steps include amongst other things:

- o Providing information and advice
- o Provision of services or facilities for the prevention, diagnosis or the treatment of illness
- o Providing financial incentive to encourage individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles
- o Providing assistance to help individuals to minimise any risk to health arising from their accommodation or environment
- o Making available the services of any person or facilities.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty replacing the previous duties in relation to race, sex and disability and extending the duty to all the protected characteristics i.e. race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and gender reassignment. The Public Sector Equality Duty mandates public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- o Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under this Act
- o Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and

- o Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, which involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to - (a) tackle prejudice and (b) promote understanding.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- o remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- o Undertake measures to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, including, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities;
- o Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

This will be considered further as part of an Integrated Impact Assessment which will be developed once during the options appraisal process.

3.5 Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) or Human Resources

As advised in the Cabinet Report, as we determine the specific details for a new facility, an Integrated Impact Assessment will be carried out and published.

4. Consultation

The work from Brightsparks built on a prior Leisure Centre Review Consultation (2023) and explored in more detail some of the major barriers and issues which impact on the capability, opportunity or motivation to be more physically active, with a particular emphasis on the communities of Batley and Dewsbury.

5. Engagement

Brightsparks' robust research methodology combined high-level quantitative data from a large cross-section of the local population with more detailed qualitative insight from a smaller subset of the population, through focus groups and other engagement activity.

Despite all adults in Batley and Dewsbury being encouraged to take part in the survey and focus group research, engagement with children and young people was more limited. The voices of young people are therefore underrepresented in the report, although adults with caring responsibilities shared their perspectives.

It is recognised that further engagement with all sections the community will be required as part of the options appraisal process to fully understand what is needed as part of a new facility.

6. Options

6.1 Options considered

Options appraisal and feasibility study

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

As part of a usual process to develop a new facility, an options appraisal should scope out what is needed; consider site options and understand potential partnerships. In this instance, further detail is required to understand what exactly is needed by the residents of Dewsbury and North Kirklees.

Subsequently, a feasibility study will help determine what is deliverable within available resources, and make recommendations for final approval.

7. Next steps and timelines

Feedback from Scrutiny will be considered by the Portfolio Holder and officers, and will be fed into the commissioning process for the options appraisal.

Suggestions regarding the outreach work will also be discussed with KAL and help inform the development of that offer.

8. Contact officer

Martin Gonzalez, Public Health Manager
Lucy Wearmouth, Head of Improving Population Health

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Cabinet: 5 November 2024 – [The Future of Dewsbury Sports Centre](#)
Cabinet Report 21 October 2025 [Cabinet Report 21 Oct 2025 final.pdf](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Director of Public Health Report 2024/25 [Director of public health annual report 2024/25: Physical activity matters | Kirklees Council](#)
Appendix 2 - Brightsparks report and Technical report [Involve: Kirklees Movement & Physical Activity Research](#)

11. Service Director responsible

Rachel Spencer-Henshall - Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director Public Health and Corporate Resources