

Meeting:	Portfolio Holder
Date:	5 March 2026
Cabinet Member	Councillor Beverley Addy
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No Yes
<p>Purpose of Report: To provide details of the pilot KAL community activity in Batley and Dewsbury and approve use of the Public Health grant to fund this activity.</p>	
<p>Recommendations: 1) That funding be confirmed to KAL for the delivery of a 12-month pilot specialist programme from 2 community-based settings in Batley and Dewsbury 2) That, subject to successful evaluation of defined Key Performance Indicators, this funding be extended for an additional 2 years.</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendations: One of the recommendations approved by Cabinet on 21 October 2025 was for Public Health to work with KAL to develop a community-based offer for Batley and Dewsbury, recognising that an alternative approach is required until a new leisure centre can be developed.</p> <p>KAL are the only local provider who offer specialist programmes for people with health conditions or who need support to start to become physically active, offering these services from their leisure centres.</p> <p>This pilot will see KAL provide access to these specialist sessions in both Batley and Dewsbury from community venues,</p>	
<p>Resource Implications: Funding will be provided from the ring-fenced Public Health Grant and has been included in the base budget for 2026/27 and subsequent two years.</p>	

Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer Henshall – Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate – 3 March 2026
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	John Bartlett (on behalf of Kevin Mulvaney – Service Director for Finance / Section 151 Officer) – 4 March 2026
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?	Samantha Lawton – Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer) – 5 March 2026

Electoral wards affected: Batley East, Batley West, Dewsbury East, Dewsbury South, Dewsbury West.

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered. Yes

1. Executive Summary

On 21 October 2025, Cabinet approved recommendations which included commissioning an options appraisal and feasibility study for a new health and leisure centre to serve Dewsbury and the surrounding area and, in the meantime, for Public Health to work with KAL to develop a pilot for a KAL community offer for Batley and Dewsbury.

Officers have been working closely with colleagues from KAL to develop the detail for such an offer, which will be a specialist, community targeted programme in keeping with an existing offer in KAL leisure centres, and understand some of their facility needs to deliver any programme.

Funding for this pilot will come from the Public Health grant, and has been ringfenced in the budget for this purpose. Supporting physical activity is among the non-prescribed uses for this funding as defined in national guidance ([Public health ring-fenced grant financial year 2026 to 2027: local authority circular - GOV.UK](#))

It is proposed that the pilot be evaluated according to defined KPIs during Autumn 2026, and if KPIs are in line with expectations, that the scheme be continued for at least a further 2 years, with budget provision having been made for this.

2. Information required to take a decision

Dewsbury faces significant health challenges and inequalities being one of the most deprived areas in Kirklees and England. The life expectancy at birth for both males and females in Dewsbury is lower than the national average with these wards having some of the lowest levels in Kirklees. Seven LSOAs in Kirklees fall within the top 10% priority areas for physical inactivity and social need nationally, two of which are situated within the three Dewsbury wards. Furthermore, the CLiK Survey 2021 found that 48% of respondents in Dewsbury East, 42% in Dewsbury South and only 34% in Dewsbury West met the guidelines for physical activity.

There is an acknowledged lack in physical activity levels across various populations and cohorts, both on a national and local scale. These disparities are particularly evident among women and girls; individuals with long-term health conditions or disabilities; certain ethnic groups; and residents of more deprived areas.

Given this background it is, therefore, recognised that immediate work should be undertaken in Dewsbury and Batley in order to deliver short term improvements in physical activity opportunities and support longer term plans for a new leisure centre.

Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL), who are a key partner for the delivery of physical activity opportunities across Kirklees, already provide a range of targeted programmes aimed at increasing activity among some of these under-represented cohorts. KAL have agreed to work in partnership with Kirklees Council to pilot a place-based community offer for the residents of Dewsbury and Batley, operating out of community facilities in both towns.

This proposed KAL community offer is built upon their existing specialist Fitness for Health (a 12-week Exercise Referral Scheme) and First Steps to Fitness (a 6-week self-referral programme to support inactive adults) programmes. These programmes prioritise some of those aforementioned less active cohorts, and will be based in areas of notable disadvantage, and will be offered free of charge to clients during the pilot period. Programme KPI's include:

- Height, weight, blood pressure
- EQ5D (EuroQol 5 D) – a standardised measure of health-related quality of life across 5 dimensions (Mobility; Self Care; Ability to perform usual activities; Pain/Discomfort; and Anxiety/Depression)

- Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWEBS) – a scale which has been validated for the measurement of mental wellbeing, captured by a self-report questionnaire
- IPAQ (International Physical Activity Questionnaire) - a standardised questionnaire for adults designed to assess the frequency, duration, and intensity of physical activity.
- Chester Step test – an aerobic capacity test to predict cardiovascular fitness
- Self-Efficacy for exercise

This proposal will initially work across 2 community settings in Dewsbury and Batley, and will have capacity for 5 to 6 new client consultations per day, and deliver 5 to 6 group fitness sessions daily, each for up to 20 people. KAL will have the ability to deliver sessions in a sensitive manner, for example female only, should there be a requirement for that.

These programmes require staff with specialist training to support people with health conditions or who have been physically inactive for an extended period as well as to ensure the safety for participants. Developing a community-based approach to providing this specialist support, will help provide local access to services that are more readily available in other parts of the district. As clients come to the end of their specialist support programme, the staff will encourage and support people to access either existing KAL programming and facilities, or alternatively to other local provision based on the preference of the individual.

Settings will need to have adequate space to accommodate group fitness classes for up to 20 people, as well as a private consultation room and manned reception space, as well as being available.

Funding for this pilot will come from the Public Health grant, with this type of targeted physical activity work being among the non-prescribed uses for this funding.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan.

This work supports the following aspects of the Council Plan:

- Protecting the vulnerable and achieving inclusion
- Thriving people and communities - now and over the longer-term

3.2 Financial Implications

The Cabinet approved recommendations for Public Health to work with KAL to pilot a community-based approach, recognising that revenue funding will be made available to Kirklees Active Leisure for a pilot of a community based physical offer for the communities of Dewsbury and Batley.

After close collaboration with KAL, the value of this work has now been identified as being up to £45,282 in financial year 2025 – 26; and £159,595 in financial year 2026-27, which will be funded from the Public Health grant. Ringfenced provision to continue to fund this work for financial years 2027–28 and 2028-29, subject to successful evaluation, is included in Public Health’s 3-year budget plans. Supporting physical activity is among the non-prescribed uses for this funding as defined in national guidance ([Public health ring-fenced grant financial year 2026 to 2027: local authority circular - GOV.UK](#))

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:

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

The council has a duty of Best Value under section 3 of the Local government Act 1999 to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are carried out having regard to a combination of economy , efficiency and effectiveness .

The Council has a fiduciary duty to taxpayers to ensure revenue funding and capital costs are prudent ,affordable and sustainable in the context of the need for a balanced budget .

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:

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

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- 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;
- 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.

3.8 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

4. Consultation

Whilst consultation has not taken place about this specific programme offer, the Brightsparks consultation did highlight the people wanted place-based opportunities to access physical activity. KAL will be expected to seek regular feedback from programme attendees to ensure continuous service improvement, and as the programme becomes established, they are also committed to understanding from local people what other physical activity gaps they can help support within the capacity available.

5. Engagement

Significant public engagement has taken place regarding barriers and enablers to physical activity in Batley and Dewsbury.

Among the key findings were that accessible, free and affordable activities are needed, and that people need to feel safe in any proposed setting. By piloting this approach from trusted local community settings and which, at least initially, will be free of charge to users, this pilot takes these findings into consideration. Furthermore, the importance of culturally appropriate or gender specific activity was also identified, and KAL propose to operate with female only staff to support and encourage access from the local community.

6. Options

Option 1 – Pilot a specialist KAL programme to support people who have health conditions and / or have been physically inactive across 2 community settings, 1 in Batley, and 1 in Dewsbury.

This grant essentially allows KAL to redesign and deliver specialist physical activity support in community settings, building on their expertise and existing relationships with referrers. This would provide some targeted local opportunity for some priority cohorts, whilst exploring an approach which may have potential for wider roll-out, or that could be delivered from alternative or additional venues in the future, however this would be dependent on additional funding being identified.

Option 2 - KAL to provide specialist programmes across a range of community settings.

It is felt that, given the limited staffing involved, this approach would significantly limit activity capacity with staff spending more time moving from setting to setting, including the transportation of equipment, as well as increased administration and challenges in securing suitable available space at a greater number of sites.

Recommended option

Officers recommend Option 1.

7. Next steps and timelines

KAL will finalise the development of the pilot programme, with an aim to launch activity in the first week of April.

Evaluation of the pilot will be carried out in Autumn 2026, the results of which will be brought to the Portfolio Holder with a recommendation to either extend the programme for an additional 2 years; make programme adjustments if required; or to discontinue the pilot at the end of March 2027.

8. Contact officer

Martin Gonzalez, Public Health Manager martin.gonzalez@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Cabinet: 21 October 2026 [Cabinet Report 21 Oct 2025 final.pdf](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Brightsparks – Kirklees Physical Activity and Movement Report 2025;

Appendix 2 - Brightsparks - Technical Report: Physical Activity and Movement in North Kirklees

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/involve/entry.aspx?id=1206>

11. Service Director responsible

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