



***Active Fife:***  
**Physical Activity and Sport Strategy**  
**2021 to 2024**

*'An Active Fife where everyone has opportunities to be more active, with better health & wellbeing'*

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out Fife's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, developed in conjunction with the Fife Partnership, including Fife Council, Fife Sports & Leisure Trust, NHS Fife and sportScotland.

The range of organisations involved highlights how the benefits of being physically active are wide-ranging and potentially transformative, at both an individual and community level. This links to the overarching ambition of the Plan for Fife, envisioning Fife as a place where all residents can live good lives, make informed choices and have a sense of control.

- 1.2 In a national context, physical inactivity is estimated to kill around 2,500 Scots every year and cause direct costs to the NHS of around £91m per year (source, *Scottish Government Health Survey, 2019*). The risks of inactivity have also been recognised on a global scale by the World Health Organisation. Its 2018 Global Action Plan on Physical Activity, '*More active people for a healthier world*' set out a target of achieving a 15% relative reduction in the global prevalence of physical inactivity in adults and in adolescents by 2030.
- 1.3 The benefits of such an approach seem clear. People who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing many long-term and chronic conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, strokes and some cancers. Research has also found that physical activity can boost mood, sleep quality and energy, while reducing risk of depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. On a community level, this involvement in physical activity can provide opportunities for people to connect with their neighbourhoods and come together in shared activities, of particular importance in a society dealing with the effects of the COVID pandemic.

## 2.0 National and Local Strategic Links

- 2.1 This strategy provides a framework for delivering against National and Fife Priorities. Public Health Scotland has recognised physical activity as one of six public health priorities for Scotland. This recognises that physical activity levels are influenced by a range of factors, including transport and planning systems, the availability of accessible and affordable facilities and clubs, and stigma, social expectation and other pressures.

**SportScotland**, the national agency for sport, has a vision of an active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport. Their mission is to help the people of Scotland get the most from the sporting system with a commitment to inclusion underpinning everything they do. [Sport for Life](#) articulates the sporting systems contribution to a more active Scotland.

The Scottish Government has a vision for a Scotland where more people are more active more often. Alongside making improvements on poor diet and substance misuse, physical activity is vital to enabling a healthy and active population. For a more active Scotland, a variety of organisations need to work together with communities and individuals in different settings. To help focus this work, the Government has created a set of Active Scotland outcomes to which organisations can contribute. The [Active Scotland Outcomes Framework](#) is aligned with Scotland’s National Performance Framework.



Figure 1. Active Scotland Outcomes Framework

2.2 The Plan for Fife Ambitions relating to Physical Activity and Sport are:

**Ambitions for Fife:**

- Fife has reduced levels of preventable ill health and premature mortality across all communities.
- Fife’s communities and individuals are more involved in local decision making and in helping to plan and deliver local services.

Fife’s Public Health Priority six aims to achieve, “A Fife where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active”.

2.3 The Active Fife Strategy demonstrates a commitment to work collaboratively to contribute to these national and local ambitions and to achieve locally relevant and agreed outcomes, bringing a level of accountability among key stakeholders and partners. Whilst some are taking the lead in developing and implementing aspects of the strategy, its success relies on everyone fulfilling their commitments on each of the outcomes. It also recognises the positive contribution and potential impact of our local clubs and communities.

**3.0 Background and Fife Context**

- 3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented disruption to the delivery of physical activity, sport and leisure provision across Fife, and life in general. All communities across Fife have been affected, with individuals, clubs, groups and communities all having to adapt to meet these new challenges. Many services have been paused, stepped down or have been reconfigured during the pandemic. While many of these services started to resume while restrictions eased, the resurgence in cases meant that these were then paused, and only recently have these services and facilities begun to re-open, as Scotland moved back to the tiered system.
- 3.2 The effects of the pandemic are likely to be felt for some time, not only in relation to physical health but also mental and emotional wellbeing, and health inequalities. Those people who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities have been impacted further, so we aim to ensure that affordability is not a barrier to participation. Other challenges include the increase in sedentary behaviours as result of many people working from home, the impacts of furlough and unemployment, and children having been away from school for much of the past year.
- 3.3 Existing variations in participation rates are likely to be exacerbated by the ramifications of the Covid pandemic, with pre-pandemic figures highlighting the impact of both gender and deprivation on Fife participation levels.

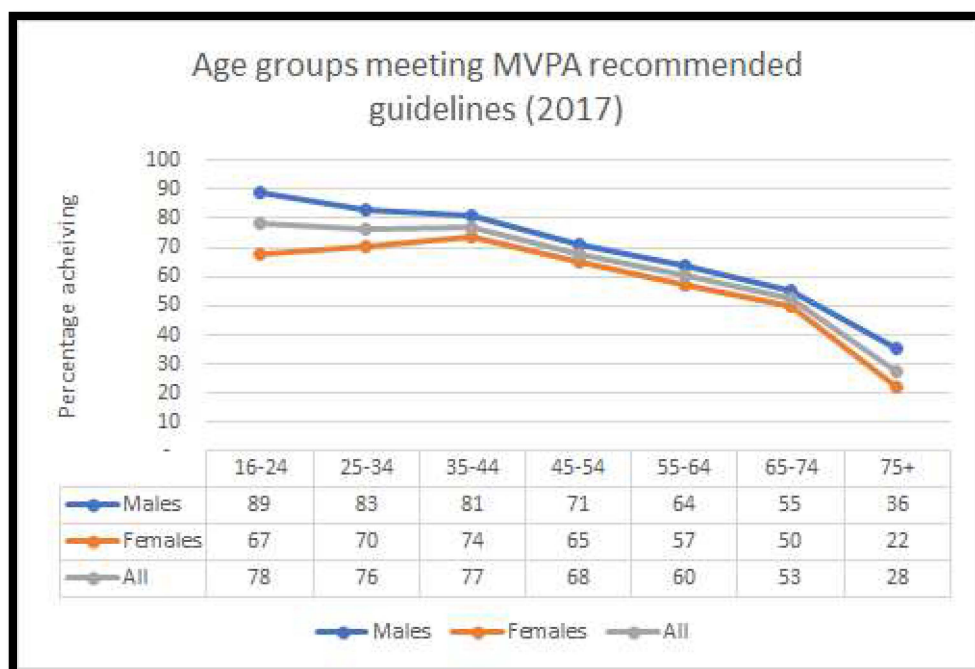


Figure 2.: Age groups meeting recommended physical activity levels

The above figures from the Scottish Health survey highlight not only how Scottish males are more likely than females to meet recommended guidelines for moderate to vigorous physical activity (mvpa), but also how the participation of both sexes decreases with age, from 45 onwards.

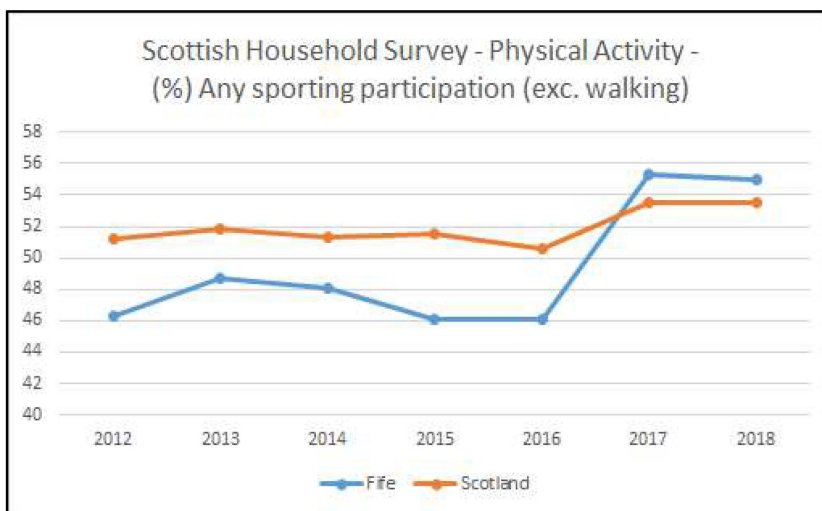
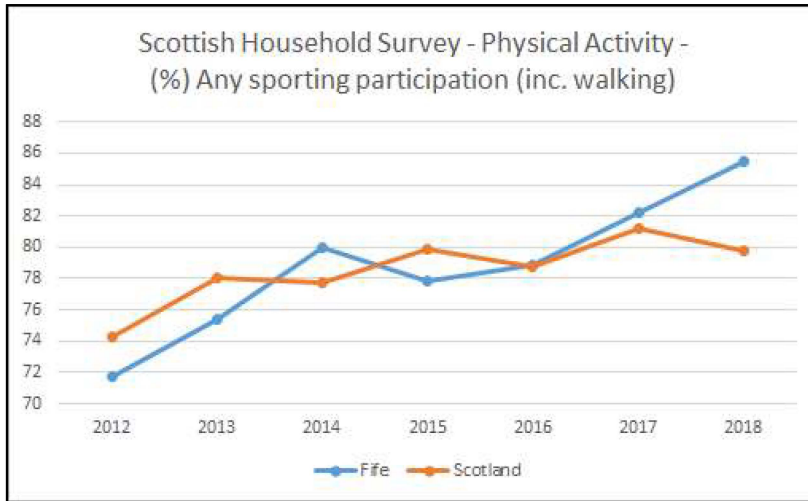
- 3.4 This difference between the sexes is evident across SIMD quintiles, with a higher percentage of males meeting recommend levels in every age category. What is more striking is the difference in physical activity levels between the most deprived and least deprived areas. Only 51% of females in the most deprived SIMD quintiles meet recommended mvpa guidelines, compared with 67% in the least deprived areas. The imbalance for males is similar, with a figure of 63% in the most deprived quintiles increasing to 77% in the least deprived areas.
- 3.5 Strengthening this relationship between increased deprivation and lower levels of physical activity, 17% of people in the most deprived areas of Fife engaged in low levels of activity in a sampled four-week period, compared with 8% of people in the least deprived areas. It is unclear whether this reduced involvement is affected by cost factors, proximity to facilities, or simply reduced opportunity or inclination to take part in sporting activities. Cycling and golf were among the activities most strongly associated with least deprived areas, with involvement in snooker/pool and bowls showing a stronger link with areas of higher deprivation. While cycling was a common activity for both males and females, men were around twice as likely to participate. It remains to be seen whether the increased popularity of cycling and running during the Covid pandemic will redress this balance, or indeed sustain its popularity.

	1 - 20% most deprived	2	3	4	5 - 20% least deprived	All
<b>Fife 2018</b>						
Any sporting participation (including walking)	83	81	80	91	92	85
Any sporting participation (excluding walking)	50	53	49	56	67	55
Walking (at least 30 minutes)	72	63	67	76	81	72
Swimming	17	10	12	22	21	16
Keep fit / Aerobics	18	15	3	7	21	13
Multigym / Weight training	8	6	13	11	18	12
Running / Jogging	10	18	11	10	16	13
Cycling (at least 30 minutes)	10	4	7	16	18	11
Dancing	4	10	12	4	11	9
Football	4	7	11	7	3	7
Golf	2	1	8	10	9	6
Snooker / Billiards / Pool	8	6	6	-	2	4
Bowls	-	4	4	2	1	2
Other	1	5	2	5	16	6
None of these	17	19	20	9	8	15

Figure 3. Fife participation in physical activity and sport in the last four weeks, by SIMD

- 3.6 Another potential legacy of Covid behavioural change is the increase in people walking, both to maintain fitness and social contact. Fife has historically shown greater participation in walking than other parts of Scotland. In 2018, 85% of Fife respondents to the Scottish Household Survey reported some sporting participation (including walking), compared with 80% across Scotland as a whole. When walking was excluded from sporting participation

this gap narrowed, with 55% of Fife respondents reporting any sporting participation against 54% of Scottish respondents. This difference may reflect the many and varied walking routes that are available in Fife, and well-established initiatives such as ‘Bums off seats’ that help to promote this.



Figures 4 and 5. Physical activity comparison: Scotland and Fife

- 3.7 The effect of deprivation on physical activity should not be overlooked. While 50% of Fife adults in the most deprived areas reported taking part in sporting activities other than walking, this increased to 67% in the least deprived areas. Similarly, walking also sees a gradual increase as deprivation levels reduce. An exception to this is in the 20% most deprived areas, where 72% of respondents report participation in walking, this may be affected by reduced access to transport, or by people being able to walk to work.

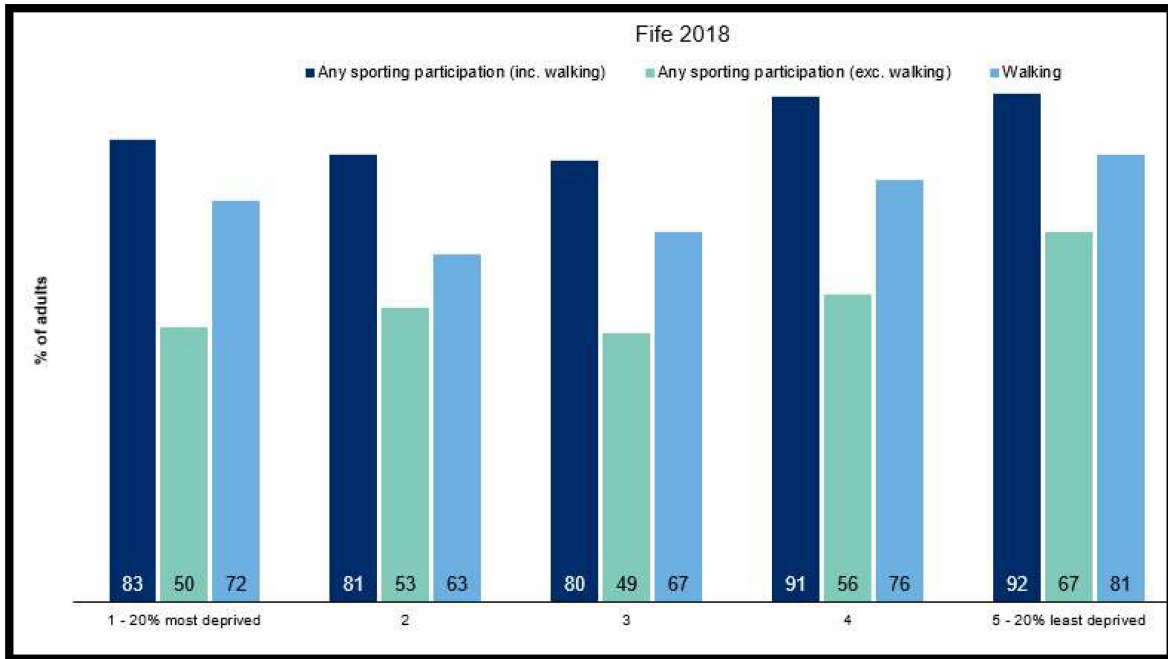


Figure 6. Fife sporting participation (2018). By deprivation level

- 3.8 Physical activity should be sustained throughout life and it's important to encourage older adults to remain active. A large proportion of the Health and Social Care budget is spent on caring for the elderly. An increase in adult and older adult opportunities to participate physical activities is important, whether it's attending an active options class, walking football, a health walk or home activities. These all contribute reducing sedentary behaviour, as well as retaining independence and improving social connectedness.
- 3.9 While much physical activity will be linked to individual or loosely organised participation, clubs and sporting organisations play an important part. While the normal activities of such organisations have been curtailed during the COVID pandemic, both individuals and organisations have played a significant role in supporting their wider community, particularly those most in need. This has included making befriending calls, donating to food banks, organising walk and talks and providing free essential transport. Many public service staff, including staff from the Council and the Trusts, were redeployed to support the 'Team Fife' efforts. Such outreach activities have been made possible by the strong community club sport network in Fife, helping to support a range of physical activity and sport opportunities.
- 3.10 Fife has a wealth of assets and offers a wide variety of opportunities in both indoor and outdoor provision, which supports and enables individuals and groups to participate in physical activity, sport & leisure:
- 2,855 hectares of greenspace, including:
    - 446 play parks
    - 406 hectares of playing fields
  - Over 40 public and private golf courses
  - Fife Cycle Park
  - Middleden Mountain Bike Trail

- Lochore Meadows & Outdoor Education Centre
- 14 sport and leisure centres
- 152 community facilities, including halls/centres and community use schools
- Over 300 grass football pitches (either directly managed by Fife Council or leased/owned by community and third sector organisations)
- Numerous community-based assets
- Community/Private leisure centres and gyms
- Community/Private sports clubs, golf, tennis, bowls, gymnastics, motor racing etc
- Waking routes such as Fife Coastal Path, Fife Pilgrims Way and network of core paths across Fife
- Higher Education university & college sports and leisure facilities

3.11 While assets such as play parks and green space are spread across Fife, others have a smaller geographic footprint. 16 golf courses are in North East Fife, including St Andrews, Cupar and the East Neuk. The availability of such provision varies across Fife. Information on private sector sports/leisure providers taken from the Mint UK database shows a large variation in private sector provision across Fife and demonstrates the importance of the public sector's assets and facilities in promoting physical activity and sport.

## **4.0 Vision & Ambitions**

4.1 Our vision is for

*‘An Active Fife where everyone has opportunities to be more active, with better health & wellbeing’.*

4.2 Our ambitions are:

1. Reduce inequalities in physical activity and sport across Fife
2. Increase and sustain physical activity, physical confidence and sport participation
3. Build resilient communities that are physically active and participate in sport
4. Invest in facilities and infrastructure for physical activity and sport

## **1. Reduce inequalities in physical activity and sport across Fife**

### **Why?**

The ability and opportunities to be physically active should not be dependent on income, where you live or be subject to discrimination or stereotyping. Reducing inequalities will lead to better health and wellbeing outcomes for all Fifers.

### **Actions:**

1. Implement a new concessionary scheme which provides discounted access to a range of physical activity, sport & leisure opportunities, to reduce health inequalities and increase participation.
2. Provide targeted free opportunities to be physically active and participate in sport for individuals and groups in areas with poorer health outcomes (SIMD areas).
3. Increase inclusive opportunities for physical activity for equalities groups.
4. Provide pathways to sustain activity and participation across local sports clubs and local physical activity provision in areas of higher deprivation
5. Fife to become the '*Daily Mile Kingdom*' – where people walk/run/jog/cycle a mile or more per day, from their own door and within their own communities.
6. Improve and promote transport links to local based provision, supporting and enabling opportunities to participate through concessionary travel.

## **2. Increase and sustain physical activity, physical confidence and sport participation**

### **Why?**

The benefits of staying active throughout life are significant, including improved wellbeing, reduced depression and anxiety and a decreased risk of premature death. Developing physical competence and confidence from an early age is essential for young people to stay active throughout life.

### **Actions:**

1. Provide more local and community-based opportunities, classes and programmes for physical activity and sport.
2. Develop quality learning through physical education for Fife's young people by improving the provision of quality PE and teacher confidence, using the new benchmarks for PE.
3. Improve support networks, partnerships and connections across schools, families, and communities by strengthening and evolving the Fife PEPAS

model through distributed leadership, developing its effectiveness and sustainability to ensure continued improvement.

4. Increase young people's attainment and achievement by increasing opportunities for young people and families' participation in physical activity and in sport and to create pathways for pupils to engage in physical activity and sport.
5. Improve young people's mental and emotional wellbeing through physical education, physical activity and sport.
6. Provide opportunities across all stakeholders/partners which encourages employees/volunteers to be more active, linked to our new ways of working agenda.

### **3. Build resilient communities that are physically active and participate in sport**

#### **Why?**

The core of the physical activity and sports provision across Fife are the clubs, volunteers, coaches and others supporting and enabling Fife's residents to be active. By championing and enabling community led approaches which promote community wellbeing, in partnership with local communities and clubs, including community sports hubs and wider partners we can reduce inequalities and increase healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

#### **Actions:**

1. Implement area programming plans with key stakeholders, partners and providers, identifying local provision, and linking with the Health and Social Care Partnership Plans
2. Improve support to coaches, tutors, volunteers and community sports clubs across Fife to jointly deliver local outcomes that improves physical, mental health & wellbeing.
3. Improve community capacity building support to local communities and groups to enable more community-led approaches to improving health and wellbeing.
4. Support the return to sport for community-based clubs and organisations
5. Promote healthy lifestyles alongside Fife's Food Strategy and public health priorities.
6. Improve connections with community development, youth work, employability, volunteering and coaching development, to better support and enable participation for all.

### **4. Invest in facilities and infrastructure for physical activity and sport**

### **Why?**

For people to be physically active and enjoy participation in sport we need modern safe outdoor and indoor spaces ranging from outdoor and greenspace through to modern, state of the art sports & leisure facilities. By investing in facilities and infrastructure we can promote physical activity providing safe inclusive experiences for all.

### **Actions:**

1. Deliver £55m ten-year programme of investment in community facilities and green space that promotes community wellbeing, physical activity and sport.
2. Deliver a new play space strategy and invest in restoring key playparks.
3. Develop our coastal space and greenspace to promote outdoor recreation and wellbeing.
4. Improve how people can access physical activity and sport opportunities across Fife by developing the 'Active Fife' product.
5. Implement a new online leisure management system.
6. Improve our promotion and marketing, making better use of data and business intelligence.
7. Improve joint working across public sector providers by investing in a programme to increase participation in physical activity and sport.
8. Seek funding opportunities to support community and council-led infrastructure projects
9. In partnership with sportScotland and other stakeholders, review facilities across Fife to inform future investment requirements

## **5.0 Stakeholders & Partners**

- 5.1 Our stakeholders are defined as those who collaborate and work with us in delivering, providing and supporting physical activity and sport in Fife, and those who participate and are recipients of the services and provision we offer. Supporting the citizens of Fife to take part in physical activity requires dedicated support and resources. This includes the Fife Partnership and number of Council Services, working collaboratively, including Communities and Neighbourhood Service, Education and Children's Services, Transportation Services (Active Travel), Fife Sports and Leisure Trust, Fife Cultural Trust, Fife Coast & Countryside Trust, Sports Councils, sportScotland, NHS Fife, Health & Social Care Partnership, national governing bodies, higher education establishments and numerous local clubs, organisations and community groups.
- 5.2 **Community Sport Hubs** - bring together sport clubs and community organisations who want to develop and grow the sporting offering in the community. They focus on sustainable, community-led approaches that get clubs working together to develop welcoming, safe and fun environments for sport. Community sport hubs are National Lottery funded and are one of

sportScotland's key programmes, which contributes to legacy and supports local sport clubs to play their part in a world class sporting system.

A community sport hub is focused on the clubs that operate around a sports centre, community centre, school, park or a playing field pavilion. In some cases, a community sport hub combines a number of these places, or it may centre on a single venue, hosting many clubs. The 'hub' is a collective of progressive sport clubs and community organisations working together in a local community.

- 5.3 **Sports Councils** – There are three sports councils in Fife: East Fife, Kirkcaldy & Central, and Dunfermline & West Fife. They receive a recurring grant from Fife Council (around £45K per annum) and their provision is monitored and evaluated to ensure they provide consistent support and services for local member clubs.

## 6.0 Leadership & Governance

- 6.1 There has been improved collaboration and partnership working at both a strategic and operational level in response to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. A new leadership team has been established, co-chaired by the Head of Communities & Neighbourhood Services in Fife Council and the Chief Executive of Fife Sports & Leisure Trust. This group will provide overall leadership and governance for the strategy.
- 6.2 Delivery plans developed by stakeholders, detailing their progress and how they are contributing to overall strategy, will be developed. Once fully implemented, the new leisure management system will provide data and business intelligence which will enable performance to be better analysed and monitored.

## Appendix: Strategic Links Table

### 1. Reduce inequalities in physical activity and sport across Fife

Plan for Fife Priority Theme; *Opportunities for All*

Ambition 3. *Fife has reduced levels of preventable ill health and premature mortality across all communities*

Active Scotland Outcome 1. *We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active*

### 2. Increase and sustain physical activity, physical confidence and sport participation

Plan for Fife Priority Theme; *Opportunities for All*

Ambition 3. *Fife has reduced levels of preventable ill health and premature mortality across all communities*

Active Scotland Outcome 2. *We encourage and enable the active to stay active throughout life*

Active Scotland Outcome 3. *We develop physical confidence from the earliest age*

### 3. Build resilient communities that are physically active and participate in sport

Plan for Fife Priority Theme; *Opportunities for All*

Ambition 3. *Fife has reduced levels of preventable ill health and premature mortality across all communities*

Plan for Fife Priority Theme; *Community Led Services*

Ambition 12. *Fife's communities and individuals are more involved in local decision making and in helping to plan and deliver local services*

Plan for Fife Priority Theme; *Thriving Places*

Ambition 7. *Every community has access to high quality outdoor, cultural and leisure opportunities*

Active Scotland Outcome 4. *We improve our active infrastructure – people and places*

Active Scotland Outcome 5. *We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport*

Active Scotland Outcome 6. *We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport*

### 4. Invest in facilities and infrastructure for physical activity and sport

Plan for Fife Priority Theme; *Opportunities for All*

*Ambition 3. Fife has reduced levels of preventable ill health and premature mortality across all communities*

*Plan for Fife Priority Theme; Community Led Services Ambition 12. Fife's communities and individuals are more involved in local decision making and in helping to plan and deliver local services*

*Active Scotland Outcome 5. We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport*

*Active Scotland Outcome 4. We improve our active infrastructure – people and places*