



Joint Strategic Assets Assessment – Physical Activity

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. What’s the problem we’re trying to address? | 1 |
| 2. What are health and wellbeing assets? | 1 |
| 3. How are we assessing assets in Stockport? | 2 |
| 4. What have we done? | 2 |
| 5. What have we found about physical activity? | 3 |
| 6. Recommendations for physical activity | 9 |
| Appendix 1 - What have we found out about the process and the method? | 10 |
| Appendix 2 – Unamended Research Brief | 12 |

1. What’s the problem we’re trying to address?

Since the development of the first JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) for Stockport it has been recognised that a deficit based needs assessment only gives part of the picture; locally our ambition has been to improve our JSNA by strategically assessing assets alongside need; producing a Joint Strategic **Asset** Assessment (JSAA).

The more familiar needs or ‘deficit’ approach focuses on the problems and deficiencies and leads to services or programmes that aim to fill the gaps and fix the problems and as a result, a community can feel disempowered and dependent.

The asset approach values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in a community. In an asset approach the glass is half-full rather than half-empty. Assessing and building the strengths of individuals and the assets of a community opens the door to new ways of thinking about and improving health and of responding to ill-health. It has the potential to change the way practitioners engage with individuals and the way planners design places and services. It is an opportunity for real dialogue between local people and practitioners on the basis of each having something to offer. It can mobilise social capacity and action and lead to more meaningful and appropriate services.

The asset approach does not replace investment in improving services or tackling the structural causes of health inequality. The aim is to achieve a better balance between service delivery and community building and to value what works well.

2. What are health and wellbeing assets?

A health asset is any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, communities and populations to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing. These assets can operate at the level of

the individual, family or community as protective and promoting factors to buffer against life's stresses.

An asset can be formal or informal resources, they can be:

- personal: for example skills, experience or interests
- people: for example friends, family, neighbours, colleagues or volunteers
- community: for example associations, voluntary groups, social groups, institutions or clubs
- organisational: for example service delivered by government, libraries or schools
- cultural: for example arts or role models
- economic: for example businesses, shops, employers, media or technology
- environmental: buildings, facilities, parks, transport and natural spaces

These assets can be used to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and impact on the wider determinants of health, such as the ability of population groups to take greater control of their own health and manage their long-term conditions.

3. How are we assessing assets in Stockport?

Stockport is committed to embedding assets assessment within the JSNA and we have undertaken a number of asset assessment pilots; including community mapping and appreciative inquiries in our priority neighbourhoods. The findings of these projects have been mixed, some have been successful and others less so.

Stockport are now piloting an approach to enable the coproduction of an assessment by talking to members of the community, using a number of different approaches, to gather the necessary information to assess personal assets. Once assessed the assets then need to be mobilised to form new models of bringing about change; using mix of service delivery and community development.

The focus of this pilot has been twofold:

- To find out what assets local communities value when trying to increase their activity levels; particularly focussing on the change from being sedentary to being somewhat active
- To develop a methodology that can be applied to other topics / themes for assessing personal assets for health and wellbeing.

4. What have we done?

Over the last year a group has worked together to develop this new approach, after a number of discussions and review of the literature the group have formulated a three strand method to try and identify the assets used by Stockport residents when trying to increase their physical activity levels.

The three strand method was based partly on the local authority endorsed pin point methodology and involved:

- **Event stands** (5 minute – self completion) – exploring key themes / initial responses with attendees at events. Three key questions to be posed and answers given using pin point procedures. This enabled us to test the approach and questions.
- **Focus group** (1 hour in length – 10-20 participants) – exploration of issue through discussion. Three key questions to be discussed (plus warm up and warm down questions), and session to be run using pin point procedures.
- **On line survey** (10 minutes maximum) – a quick “vox pops” survey to enable a quantitative test of results. The questions were in part shaped by findings from event stands and focus group, but also were designed to test public understanding of current phrasing.

Copies of the focus group / stands research brief and questionnaires are available on request.

For the physical activity pilot we have:

- Used the event stands at 7 events over 2 months (Feb – March 2013)
- Run 6 focus groups over 3 months (1 test, 2 training, 3 public) (May – August 2013)
- Run a test face to face survey with MBC staff (37), than an on line survey with MBC staff (281) – September – October 2013

5. What have we found about physical activity?

The results of the pop up stands and focus groups have been synthesised in the mind maps below; under two key themes, **motivators and enablers**.

Some key themes emerge; but it’s important to note at the start that there are differences too and what works for some people will not work for others.

In terms of **motivations** for activity:

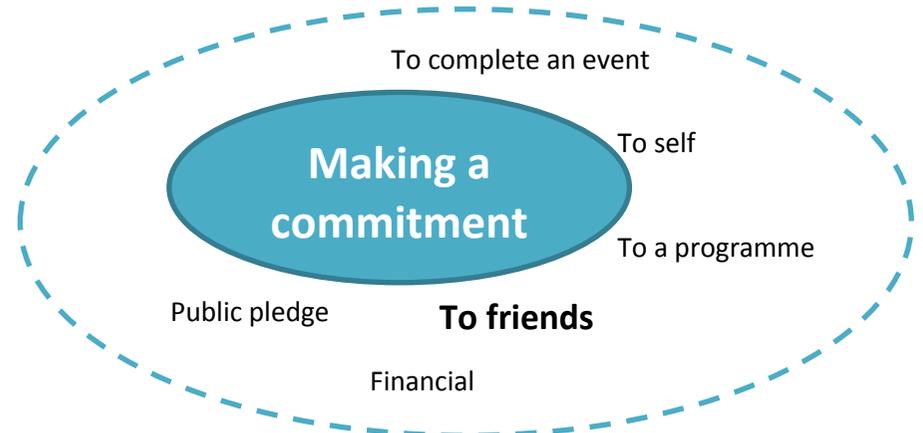
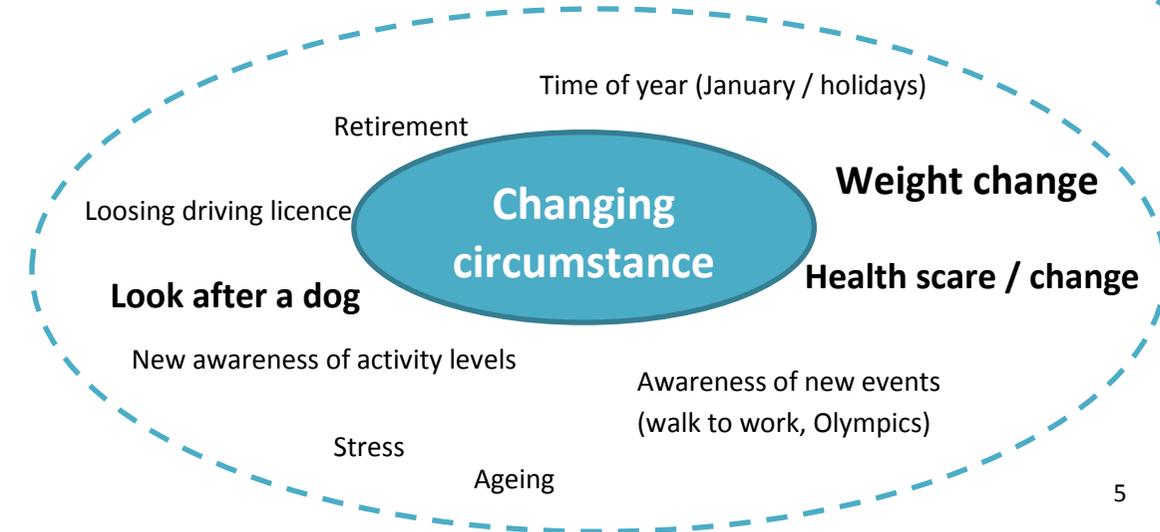
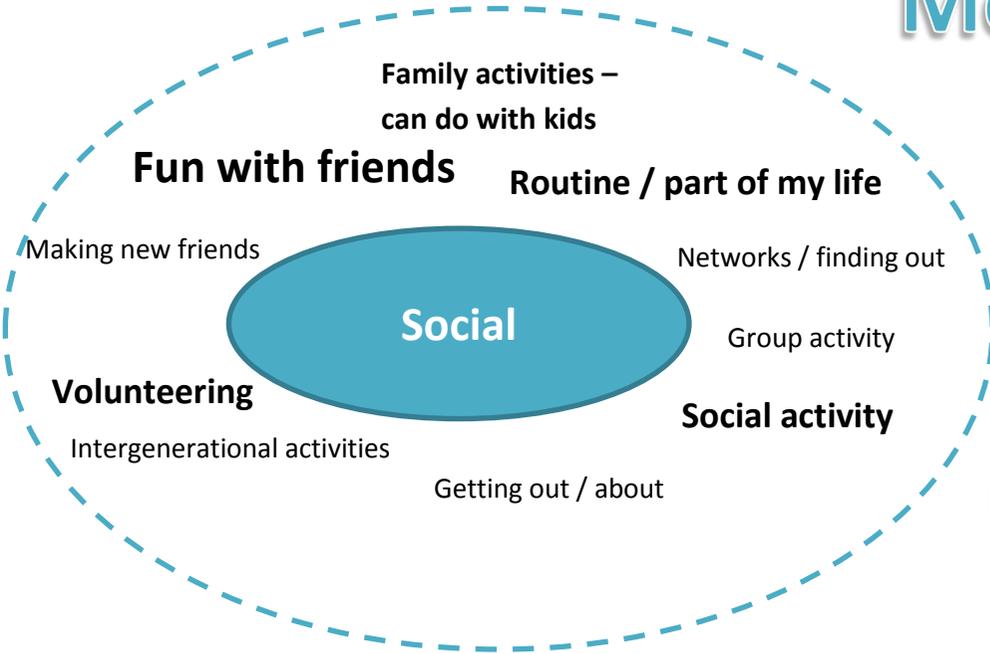
- **Social aspect key** – especially for keeping the activity going in the long term – social aspect can work in different ways:
 - Going to do something fun with existing friends
 - Meeting new people
 - Creating a commitment to others
- **Building routines key** – again especially for activity that is maintained – activity needs to be part of life, and not seen as an add on
- The **rewards of activity** vary between people:
 - **Having fun and enjoying the activity** is a reward for some – a huge variety of activity is enjoyed by people. Dancing was enjoyed by many people, as was activity to music; novelty (trying something new) appeals to others.
 - **Challenge** – works for some people – but again works in different ways for different people:
 - It can be about setting a personal goal
 - It can be about aiming for a particular event (e.g.10k run)
 - **Competition** works for others – again different forms of competition are important
 - Competing with colleagues / friends

- Competing with self (personal bests)
 - Competing in events
- **Getting fit / healthy and losing weight**– works as a motivation for other people, especially following a health scare or change in personal circumstance
 - One key change is gaining a new **awareness of the levels of activity** (or lack of activity) done, increasing personal knowledge helps kick start and motivate a change.
 - Simple changes such as looking after a friends dog can lead to habits changing

In terms of **enablers** for becoming more active:

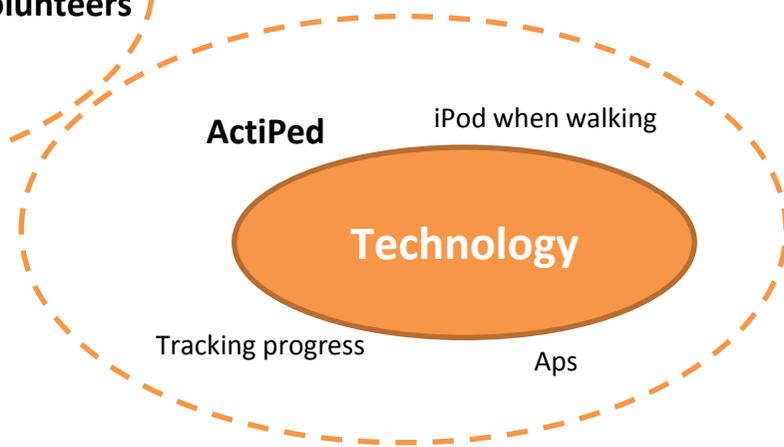
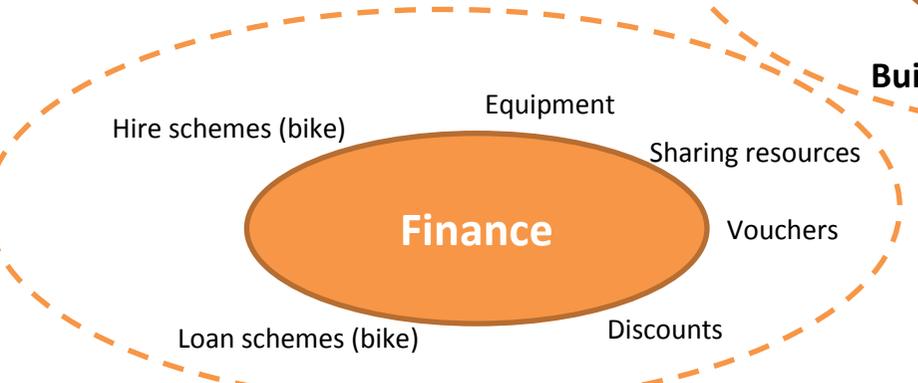
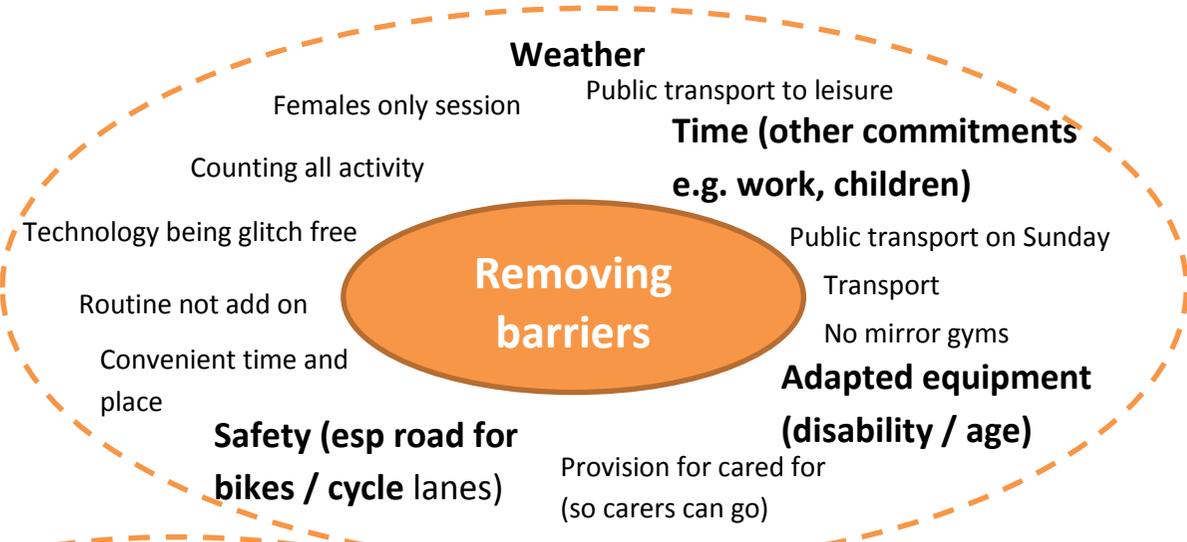
- **Information** was highlighted – people need to be able to find out about the range of activities on offer. Information should be accessible.
- Recognising the wide **variety of activities** that people enjoy – especially dancing which was highlighted by many people and activity to music. **Promoting choice** beyond the perceived traditional “fitness / gym” is essential to attract as wide a range of people as possible.
- **Support and encouragement** – work as an enabler in a number of ways.
 - Support can be from professionals – and needs to be enthusiastic but sensitive to individual needs
 - Support can be from friends – encouragement or challenge
 - Support can be from volunteers – running events, such as park run or running community services
- **Technology** can be also be an important enabler; Acti-ped, apps and similar products work in number of ways to increase activity.
 - They can be used as a learning tool – providing knowledge about current levels and types of activity
 - They can be used to monitor progress – against a particular goal or just to see improvement
 - They can make activity more fun (music, rewards)
- **Removing or reducing barriers** (both perceived and actual) to physical activity, are not necessarily assets in themselves, but these responses show the assets that people feel are limited
 - time is mentioned frequently and demonstrates the importance of building activity **into routine** and not as an add on
 - Other commitments especially work and children are also mentioned as constraints on time – promoting active travel and family activities can help
 - **safety** is an issue especially for cycling, routes need to be safe and accessible and safety equipment affordable and used
 - **access** can be perceived as a barrier in a number of ways:
 - convenience of time
 - convenience of location
 - adaption of equipment / instruction for those with particular needs

Motivators



Size of text / boldness – reflects number of responses

Enablers



The final method, a quantitative survey, was used to see whether the findings of the focus groups were born out in a wider population. In addition these surveys were used to assess people's responses to the phrases "physical activity" and "physical inactivity", to gain insight into how this jargon is understood by the public.

People were asked what three words came to mind when they thought about "physical activity":

- 30% of responses were traditional words (exercise, fit, sport)
- 20% of responses were action words (movement, energetic, busy)
- 20% of responses mentioned particular activity types (walking, running, cycling)
- 17% of responses referenced health benefits
- 3% of responses each referenced fun / enjoyment; feeling positive as a result, feeling a physical change (e.g. breathless)

Despite the rewards and enablers of "having fun" being highlighted across the focus groups when people had a chance to think more deeply about the issues, it seems that on a rapid response people don't associate the term "physical activity" with fun. Instead it is seen as either getting fit / doing exercise; related to action or related to particular activity types – all themes to do with the actual process of being active. Only a fifth of responses focused on the consequences of being active, and unsurprisingly most of these were positive.

This suggests that we should consider language which more immediately brings to mind the outcomes and motivators for activity, rather than activity itself. Highlighting the social side of activity is vital if we want to motivate more people to be active.

People were then asked what three words came to mind when they thought about "physical inactivity":

- 30% of responses related to health reasons for or consequences of inactivity (overweight, being unhealthy, unfit)
- 30% of responses were negative feeling words (laziness, sleepiness, boredom)
- 20% of responses mentioned particular inactive activity types (sitting, watching TV, resting)
- 10% of responses referenced the feelings resulting from inactivity (couch potato, sedentary, slob)

Unsurprisingly the majority of responses to this question were negative; however unlike the physical activity questions these responses focused much more on the consequences of being inactive rather than the process of being inactive.

The survey also asked respondents to indicate what would help them become more active, following the results of the focus groups additional responses were added to the draft of this question including "doing something active with a friend", "do family activities" and "use technology".

The survey highlighted that "doing something active with a friend" was the most popular choice as a support likely to help respondents become more active, followed by "taking on an active challenge" and "doing family activities". This agrees with the findings from the focus groups.

The least popular choices as a support likely to help respondents become more active were “spending time walking a dog”, “walk or cycle to work” and “using technology”.

| How likely or unlikely are you to do any of the following to be more active? | Already do this | Likely to do | Unlikely to do |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Join a gym or sports club | 41% | 11% | 48% |
| Take part in an activity or active class, e.g. dancing, martial arts | 33% | 27% | 40% |
| Walk or cycle to work | 31% | 13% | 56% |
| Replace short car journeys with a form of exercise, e.g. walk to the shops | 58% | 28% | 14% |
| Do something active with a friend | 41% | 44% | 14% |
| Do family activities, e.g. go to a park, go on a cycle ride | 48% | 33% | 19% |
| Use technology (e.g. gadget, app) to set goals and track progress | 21% | 26% | 53% |
| Spend time walking your dog | 26% | 6% | 68% |
| Do jobs around the house and/or garden | 70% | 26% | 3% |
| Take on active challenges, e.g. charity event, race for life | 28% | 35% | 37% |

A final question asked people to identify the barriers to being more active and again the finding of time was strongly identified. Lack of motivation was also a popular response.

| What is stopping you from being more physically active? | Already do this |
|---|-----------------|
| Health / injury | 28% |
| Time spent at work | 77% |
| Time spent looking after children | 32% |
| Time spent on other caring | 3% |
| Time spent on other activities | 5% |
| Cost of activities | 28% |
| Lack of motivation | 32% |
| Self-conscious / feel uncomfortable | 15% |
| Weather | 25% |
| Lack of facilities near where I live | 10% |
| Don't know what's available near where I live | 3% |
| Nobody to go with / support me | 12% |
| Safety | 1% |

6. Recommendations for physical activity

This research leads to the following recommendations for commissioners and planners in Stockport when thinking about increasing activity levels:

- Consider language used - “physical activity” has a traditional connotation and doesn’t bring to mind immediately the positive consequences of activity; as a phrase, it is possibly a turn off for many people. Instead consider talking about “**enjoying being active**”.
- Focus on the motivators of social rewards – especially **having fun with your friends** and **making new friends**.
- Focus on building routines – **make activity fit into your life**. Time is the biggest perceived barrier to activity so this needs to be addressed.
- Promote a wide **variety of activities** – different people like different activities; non-traditional activities will work for some people and others like novelty so will be looking for the new.
- Providing opportunities for **making a commitment** or signing up to a **challenge** will work for some people – building on events such as community fun runs, Race for Life will encourage some people to become active.
- **Information** about “enjoying being active” needs to be available in the right places, especially when targeting those who are not active already.
- Helping people to **understand their true level of activity** could be a key behaviour change trigger, technology and tools can be used to support this self-awareness.

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December 2013

Appendix 1 - What have we found out about the process and the method?

For the focus group discussions and event stand responses, the questions were as follows:

- Q1 What is the best thing you did in the last week?
- Q2 Thinking about a time when you succeeded in becoming physically active:
 - Q2a What were the things that gave you a good start?
 - Q2b What were the things that made it happen at that point in time?
- Q3 What would have helped even more?
- Q4 What 'assets' have you recognised as a result of this discussion that you had not realised you were using?
- Q5 What assets do you have that you might share with others?

Respondents were taken through each question in turn; first given a chance to reflect on their own and write their thoughts on a card or post it; which were then shared with the group and discussed. Further cards were added to the boards as the discussion developed and themes were identified. In general terms the process was effective and the questions led to the type of responses and information that was anticipated. As each question was addressed the discussion flowed naturally between the general and the specific. Given the open nature of the questions it is anticipated that these should work well for other topics. There were however some elements of the process that could be improved.

Q1 – the purpose of this question was two-fold. It helped to set a positive tone for the discussion by focusing people on positive experiences; i.e. the assets rather than the deficits. It also enables the facilitator to explain the nature of assets, using the responses provided. For example, the existence of specific facilities such as sports clubs or transport networks; personal assets such as time, money, skill; and social assets such as friends or the group nature of an activity. The intention is to illustrate the different varieties of assets available:

- personal: for example skills, experience or interests
- people: for example friends, family, neighbours, colleagues or volunteers
- community: for example associations, voluntary groups, social groups, institutions or clubs
- organisational: for example service delivered by government, libraries or schools
- cultural: for example arts or role models
- economic: for example businesses, shops, employers, media or technology
- environmental: buildings, facilities, parks, transport and natural spaces

This was intended to help participants in answering the final two questions but in reality the explanatory link was not easy to develop.

It may be more helpful to **introduce an additional step** in the process that enables people to move their attention from these positive experiences onto the topic that is the theme of the assessment. The facilitator may be able to use the content of the positive experiences to create this link during each discussion, or it may be more effective to develop a standard text that is used to bridge this step.

Q2a and Q2b – these two questions created some confusion as they overlapped and could feel repetitive. It may be more effective to merge them together in the discussion and simply draw out the differences as answers are provided. The use of specific prompt questions may also help in clarifying the difference. The first element was seeking to explore the context that enables someone to become physically active, while the second was exploring the triggers to act at a specific point in time.

Q3 – this was intended to create the space to discuss barriers, but is phrased in the positive to maintain the asset-focus of the exercise overall. Prompts were used to explore both items that would have helped if they had been present / available and items where it is their absence that would have been helpful. The facilitator also prompted respondents so that different types of barrier are considered using a similar framework as that used to describe types of assets above.

Q4 & Q5 – the purpose of these questions had been to give the participants the feeling that they had gained personal insight through the process, rather than data collection for the JSAA. Respondents however found these quite abstract, conceptual questions that were hard to answer. This may be partly due to the lack of explanation of ‘assets’ mentioned in relation to question 1 above. A different question is suggested to replace these:

- What is the best thing that happened as a result of your doing this (becoming active)?

The intention is to try and capture the positive ripple-effects that flow from any particular change, both for an individual and for the people around them.

There is an ongoing challenge in ensuring **sufficient capacity** to further develop this element of the JSNA/JSAA process. This is not simply in terms of enabling staff or partners to become confident to facilitate an asset discussion. The key to attaining scale-up will be to ensure that those interested and trained to facilitate asset discussions are given the time within their work schedule to deliver.

The recommendation is that if the JSAA is to become a standard element of the JSNA process then commitment to provision of sufficient capacity would be made at a senior level. Personnel would be involved from within and beyond the Public Health staff in the Council. Capacity would be strengthened through provision of training in the necessary facilitation skills and processes, provided from within Public Health staff. The final step would be that those trained are formally committed to delivery of an agreed number of sessions, in discussion with their line manager prior to attending.

Recommendations for future JSAAs

This research leads to the following recommendations for the future of asset assessment in Stockport.

- The format of the research works well and can be used for other themes once the **research brief has been revised** to amend questions as suggested and to include more guidance for facilitators regarding assets and prompts for probing further.
- **Capacity to deliver the assessments** remains the most significant challenge. Training for facilitators can be provided in house by the Public Health team, but those trained need to be supported by managers to give the time to running sessions. This needs to be built into the work plan of the JSNA.

Physical Activity Asset Mapping Events 2013

Agenda Design

[v3]

Background:

- The Asset Mapping project aims to help people be active (*and stay healthy*).

Event Purpose:

- The series of events aim to inform the development of a tool to allow individuals to identify assets within themselves and in the environment that they can utilise in order to be active (*and stay healthy*). The focus of the tool is physical activity, though not limited to sport or traditionally recognised routes of physical activity.

Event Type:

- 60-90 minute workshop undertaken with groups of members of the general public (older people / college students / school students (e.g. year 5-8))
- Participants recruited via any available existing groups that might be able to be approached.
- Ideal group size 8-15 participants

Objectives:

- This is primarily an information gathering process.
- By the end of the sessions participants will have:
 - Had the opportunity to consider what has been or would be of assistance in being active (*and staying healthy*)
 - Been encouraged to look within themselves and their individual situations, within their community and local environment, and not simply at sports and gym facilities
 - Had the opportunity to share their successes, look at how they could be more successful in future.
- By the end of the sessions the project will have:
 - A list of assets that people have found beneficial and may be beneficial for others to consider
 - A list of deficits people believe have had a negative effect on their success
 - A prioritised list of assets used by this group and suggestions for those which might be most helpful to others.

Event Process:**Board set up:**

- Entry activity – sprayed titled board, green cards (board 1 Back)
- Main activity – 3 sprayed titled boards, green yellow & orange cards (board 1,2,3 front)
- Exit activity – sprayed double titled board, yellow & orange cards (board 2 Back)
- Carpark - sprayed titled board (board 3 Back) – *only if required*

Equipment:

- 3 boards
- 1 tube of paper
- Case
- Camera (bring own if possible)
-

Book via rashda.tabassum@stockport.gov.uk, equipment stored 4th Floor Stopford House, North End, cupboard in Ladies toilet.

Activities

0-10 minute ENTRANCE

- arrival, settling in (drinks) and completion of entry activity (self completion GREEN CARDS) – What is the best thing you have done in the last week or so.

10-15 minute WELCOME

- Review of entry activity, introduction to the world of “assets” – what is an asset, e.g., personal, community, physical, environmental; bringing of focus onto being active (*and staying healthy*)

15-50 minute (15-75 minute extended) MAIN ACTIVITY: What makes a difference?

[5 min explanation]

- Thinking about when you have been successful (double card call GREEN, YELLOW CARDS)
 - GREEN what gave you a good start (even if you didn't realise it at the time)
 - YELLOW what made it happen then (rather than at any time before)

Encourage people to first, think about, being active (*and staying healthy*).

If people are really struggling to focus on being active, broaden the theme to 'staying healthy' and if that still doesn't get a response, get them to think about their wider lives, school, work, hobbies, family.

If cards are about being active and staying healthy the cards are kept complete, if they are about something other than being active and staying healthy, get the participant to tear off the top right corner.

Discuss together - group and theme as you go along (without separating activity and non activity cards – so you get a theme based on BOTH).

[20min / 30 min extended]

- Move on to the third question ...
 - ORANGE what might have helped even more (especially if it ultimately wasn't successful)

[5 min / 10 min extended]

Discuss together - group and theme as you go along

- If needed - activity with a CLOSED CARD CALL: Get the group to review the non activity cards – what would an “activity focussed” equivalent card look like – write and add these cards.

[5 min / 15 min extended]

50-55 minute (75-85 minute extended) EXIT ACTIVITY: Learning and Sharing

- Self completion YELLOW, ORANGE CARDS:
 - YELLOW – what have been the (3) most important assets for me
 - ORANGE – what (3) assets might be most helpful to other people

55-60 minute (85-90 minute extended) thanks and bye

Output:

Photographs of completed boards