

## Category 3: Improving the environment, promoting health

### Healthy Spaces - Walsall

Walsall Council's Healthy Spaces vision;

"Working together to maximise use of our public spaces to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all citizens to live a healthy, active lifestyle".

Some areas of Walsall are deprived with increased health inequalities, often as a result of poor lifestyle such as inactivity and unhealthy diet. Walsall is recognised as being a particularly green borough and its parks have huge potential to improve the health of its residents. However, evidence is very clear that it is not the quantity of green spaces but the quality that will have the greatest impact on health

The Healthy Spaces Steering Group has been developed with representation from Public Health, Parks and Green spaces, Sports and Leisure and Community Development. The aim is to pool expertise and develop integrated programmes of work to make better use of our spaces, particularly parks as a means of supporting healthy living of our residents.

Integral to the group's progress has been the "Vision of a Healthy Park" that includes a range of evidence based infrastructural improvements and interventions that will have a large scale impact on health, particularly those living in areas of greatest deprivation. This is alongside a revision of the existing service/ delivery model leading to a more holistic health and wellbeing offer in parks and green spaces and greater efficiency and impact.

The partnership work has led to substantial increases in usage of parks and green spaces for health reasons (Public Health Outcomes Framework Indicator – 1.16) from 6% (2011/12) to 18% (2017/18). This is now in line with the national average and in real terms is an increase of nearly 25,000 residents.

The "Vision of a Healthy Park" is presented below for one the local strategic sites. More details are provided on how the vision is being realised across a range of strategic sites within Walsall.

Investment in people counters demonstrates the usage of park sites (e.g. 1 million visitors/year in Walsall Arboretum) which has increased opportunity for sponsorship (e.g. Fireworks event)

Led Walks and Jogs programme participants from April to Dec 2017 have almost doubled compared to same period last year (1600 residents)

Investment in social enterprise to recycle bikes to be used for personal use and social cycling

Working with West Midlands Combined Authority to roll out the Bike Share Scheme

Improved signage across strategic sites including maps and way markers promoting a range of walking and cycling routes

Promotion of a range of park based activities through "Active Outdoors Walsall" booklet

A range of park based activities have been integrated within Walsall's healthy schools model

In partnership with Business in the Community, an event was delivered to promote community based corporate volunteering opportunities. Five businesses have committed to volunteering in parks (please see attached), including Co-op and Unity Bank



Investment in signage and notice boards. This includes development of specific branding for Walsall Parks and Green Spaces.

Health Switch is working with mobile food vendors within parks. It educates vendors on the cooking and promotion of healthy options

In partnership with One Walsall Volunteering Centre developed over 30 volunteering roles for leading and supporting activities. In 2017/18 12,000hrs approx volunteering hours, equivalent of £90,000 if paid at living wage.

"Club Spark" has been introduced to monitor usage and promote other activities. It has also been key to engagement with LTA for a developing funding application.

Further opportunities for young people to improve health and wellbeing. For example Junior Park Run has been set up due to the success of adult Park with over 40 young people attending weekly.

