NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY
LET'S MAKE SCOTLAND MORE ACTIVE

1. Reason for Report
This report informs Members of the recently launched National Physical Activity Strategy - Let's Make Scotland More Active, and advises Members of the key elements contained within the Strategy.

2. Background

2.2 In terms of statistics the following information (sourced from the Scottish Health Survey 1998) highlights the need for a national strategy for physical activity.

- 72% of women and 59% of men are not active enough for health.
- 27% of boys and 40% of girls are not active enough to meet recommended physical activity guidelines.
- In terms of recommended levels of physical activity only 34% of the population are aware of how much physical activity is needed for good health.
- The low level of physical activity makes it the most common risk factor for coronary heart disease in Scotland (more so than smoking).

2.4 Scotland's National Physical Activity Strategy - Let's Make Scotland More Active - was launched on 13 February 2003 following a nationwide consultation exercise. Prior to this a draft Strategy was forwarded to individual organisations in relevant sectors and 178 written responses were received.

2.5 The Dumfries and Galloway response to the draft Strategy was co-ordinated through the Leisure and Sport team, with support from the Council’s Health Improvement Co-ordinator and the Development Officer for Physical Education. Representatives from the Council, local NHS Trust, Forest Enterprise and various voluntary sector organisations attended a number of seminars at which feedback to the draft was provided.

2.6 A copy of the National Physical Activity Strategy – Let’s make Scotland more active has been placed in the Members Lounge at the Council Offices, English Street, Dumfries along with a copy of the Council response to the consultation process.

3. Discussion
Vision and Strategic Objectives/Priorities
3.1 The National Physical Activity Strategy is underpinned by a broad vision for future physical activity that states:

"People in Scotland will enjoy the benefit of having a physically active life."
3.2 At the heart of this vision is the recognition that there is the need for a shift in policy and culture at national levels. The World Health Organisation has noted:

'There is insufficient action and limited policy orientation for encouraging the adoption and maintenance of physically active lifestyles within supportive political, social and physical environments. Political leaders and decision-makers need to be convinced of the importance of physical activity for health.'

3.3 The national Strategy recognises the need to develop comprehensive strategies, policies or programmes that have long term funding to deal with the problem of inactivity in Scotland.

3.4 Linked to the aforementioned vision the Strategy sets out a broad goal for physical activity in Scotland, namely:

'To increase and maintain the proportion of physically active people in Scotland.'

3.5 In order to benchmark levels of participation for physical activity the following recommended guidelines have been established:

- 50% of all adults over 16 years and 80% of children aged 16 and under to meet the minimum recommended level of physical activity by 2022.

Minimum recommended level of physical activity are defined as follows:

- Adults should accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week.
- Children should accumulate at least one hour of moderate activity on most days of the week.

In terms of 'moderate activity' this has been defined as activity which uses about five to seven calories a minute - the equivalent of brisk walking.

It has been determined that the targets should be reviewed every five years following the publication of the Scottish Health Survey. In effect the Scottish Health Survey will be used to measure progress at national level.

3.6 In order to achieve the targets set out in section 3.5 participation in physical activity will need to increase at a rate of 1% each year across the population.

3.7 The Strategy is focused around a number of key strategic objectives:

- Development and maintenance of long-lasting, high quality physical environments to support inactive people to become active.
- Provision of accurate and evidence based advice to staff who are involved in government policy and service delivery and who work in the voluntary and private sectors.
- Raising awareness, and developing knowledge and understanding, about the benefits of physical activity.
- Undertaking research, monitoring and evaluation.
3.8 As well as the strategic objectives the Task Force has identified a number of underpinning strategic priorities for various life stage groups and environments.

3.8.1 Priorities to support children and young people
In order to address the strategic priorities of children and young people the following actions have been recommended:

- Opportunities to take part in physical activity for at least one hour each day.
- Access to a range of physical activity including play, sport, dance, exercise and outdoor activities.
- Creation of stronger links between schools and communities, and between nursery, primary and secondary school, and further and high education establishments.
- All children should be physically educated in nursery, primary and secondary school.
- Recommendation that the Scottish Executive's Review of Physical Education tackles the status and content of the physical education curriculum.
- National priorities/targets for education have given the Task Force the opportunity to develop and consult on performance and quality indicators for physical activity.

3.8.2 Priorities to support adults
In order to address the strategic priorities for adults the following actions have been recommended.

- Adults who have contact with primary care to be offered an assessment of the risks associated with their level of inactivity.
- Employers to be given incentives to promote physical activity through initiatives such as Scotland's Health at Work (SHAW) Scheme.
- Employees should have opportunities and be supported to be active in their work place.

3.8.3 Priorities to support adults in later life
The following proposals have been identified specifically for adults in later life:

- Adults in later life should have opportunities and should be supported and encouraged to remain active in the community.
- Frail older people living independently should have self-help resources and staff support to be physically active within their homes.
- People living in residential care should have opportunities for physical activity in line with the Care Home Standards 2001.

4. Implementation of National Strategy for Physical Activity

4.1 Co-ordination at national level
4.1.1 The Strategy recognises that at present there is no department, organisation or agency with a clear remit for implementing the actions detailed within the Strategy.

4.1.2 In order to deal with the lack of co-ordination and overall responsibility for physical activity at national level it has been recommended that the Scottish Executive give consideration to the following:

- Make the post of National Physical Activity Co-ordinator permanent.
- Establish a national co-ordination group for physical activity.
4.2  Co-ordination at local level in Dumfries and Galloway

4.2.1 At local level it is recommended that local community groups and initiatives are given political support and resources to co-ordinate and develop initiatives that relate to the national strategy for physical activity.

4.2.2 Within Dumfries and Galloway it is envisaged that through a community planning approach the local Physical Activity Working Group will lead the implementation of the Strategy at local level. The Physical Activity Working Group consists of representatives from a number of key organisations involved in the delivery of health and physical activity services including: Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Forest Enterprise, Building Healthy Communities and other voluntary sector agencies.

4.2.3 Furthermore, Dumfries and Galloway Council benefit from a post specifically created to promote and develop the health and improvement agenda and it is considered that the role of the Council’s Health Improvement Co-ordinator will be important in taking forward physical activity initiatives at local level.

5. Existing Physical Activity related initiatives presently in operation in Dumfries and Galloway

5.1 The Council is presently actively involved in a number of health related initiatives which can be viewed as having a direct link to the national strategy including:

- TOP Sport Programme
- Young Persons Leisure Transport Initiative (Ride 4 Free)
- Easy Access Card (Access to Council Leisure and Sport facilities)
- School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)
- National Cycle Network
- School Sport Co-ordinator Programme
- Profiles (Fitness Membership Scheme)
- Free Under 18 Swimming
- Yoga in Schools Initiative
- Safer Routes to School

5.2 The development and success of these projects highlights the excellent community partnerships that exist across Dumfries and Galloway.

6. Way Forward

The Scottish Executive, through the Physical Activity Task Force, is presently developing the national implementation plan to take forward the various proposals outlined in the Strategy. At local level the Physical Activity Working Group will seek to develop national recommendations and actions through addressing a number of actions linked through a local strategy for physical activity.

7. Financial Implications

In terms of this report there are no immediate funding implications.

8. Staffing Implications

In terms of this report there are no immediate staffing implications.
9. Policy Implications

9.1 The National Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland is an important document in establishing a future framework for improving the overall health of the nation. By focusing upon important physical activity and wider health related issues and through clear partnership working at both national and local level there will be excellent opportunities to address the Council’s Corporate Plan themes of Inclusion, Quality of Life and Lifelong Learning.

9.2 In addition, successful implementation of the National Physical Activity Strategy can contribute to Economic Regeneration through the establishment of a healthier community and therefore workforce.

9.3 At national level the Strategy clearly demonstrates the Scottish Executive aim to link cross-cutting health and social agendas through a multi-faceted approach involving a number of agencies.

10. Consultation
This report has been developed following consultation with the following:

- Health Improvement Co-ordinator, Corporate Services
- Area Business Managers
- Health Improvement Officer, NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

11. Recommendations
Members are requested to note:

11.1 the key features of the National Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland – Let’s make Scotland more active;
11.2 that the implementation of the National Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland will be co-ordinated through the community planning process at local level, with the local Physical Activity Working Group taking a lead role in developing physical activity related initiatives.

Stewart Atkinson
Group Manager - Community Services
Education & Community Services
2 April 2003
LS/88/1 PM/KIP

Fraser Sanderson
Corporate Director for Education & Community Services
30 Edinburgh Road
DUMFRIES
DG1 1NW

Background Papers:

i) Let’s make Scotland more active - A Strategy for Physical Activity – a consultation, Physical Activity Task Force, June 2002
ii) Let’s make Scotland more active - A Strategy for Physical Activity – a consultation, Consultation response form, Physical Activity Task Force, June 2002
iii) Consultation on a Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland: Analysis of responses, Scottish Executive, January 2003
iv) Let’s make Scotland more active – A Strategy for Physical Activity – Physical Activity Task Force, January 2003