

Doncaster Local Delivery Pilot: Process evaluation April to September 2019



Client: **Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council**
Project: **Doncaster LDP Evaluation**
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This report presents a summary of the process learning from the Doncaster Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) for the six-month period April to September 2019 as required by Sport England. It is intended that the national evaluator, IFF Research, will combine these findings with those from the other 11 pilots to produce an over-arching process learning report.

The report is based primarily on the following:

- Extensive discussions and interactions between the Doncaster LDP core team and wider stakeholders and members of the public over the period April to September 2019.
- Ongoing reflection and discussion as part of normal business meetings and ways of working.
- A specific reflection meeting of the LDP core team in early September 2019, for which a list of activities was generated (see Appendix 1) and the implications discussed.
- A formal focus group conducted by Dr Nick Cavill on behalf of CFE Research on 11 September 2019. This was recorded, transcribed and analysed to produce the interpretations below.

This report has been shared with the LDP core team for their additions and approval.

Findings

The main activities carried out as part of the LDP are described by the LDP core team in chronological order in Appendix 1. This was used to aid discussions in the focus group to explore the significance of the activities, their implications to the working of the LDP and potential impact on the local system. These are discussed below.



Building strong foundations

Overall members of the LDP team feel they have achieved a great deal in the last six months. There was a strong feeling that they had spent the time building a strong foundation on which they could build in the future.

I feel that we have made a huge amount of progress in a relatively short space of time, and most of it is around creating some strong foundations for moving forward.

It feels like we are now in a position where we're thinking ahead to the next step and the next phase. Which we weren't even thinking about six months ago.

The team felt that the 'foundations' were a mixture of less visible 'behind the scenes' activities (such as juggling multiple contractual procurement processes); more tangible public-facing events (notably the Tour de Yorkshire); and a great deal of internal relationship building within the council. It appears that this has combined to mean that the LDP has more 'traction' across Doncaster with partners, stakeholders and the public.

If we think about the procurement that we've done in various phases over the last six months, it helps us to move forward faster and further than perhaps otherwise we would have been.

This increase in pace has been helped by recent recruitment to make sure there are people in post to drive the programme forward. This sense of pace and urgency is growing and is one of the key developments within this period. In recent months the relationship building in particular has been seen to be very valuable, helping to begin changing aspects of the system so there is greater support for physical activity from all agencies and sectors. But this is also balanced with practical, outward-facing activities.

We're doing stuff at a strategic level that helps us to move forward, develop the system, but at the same time we're making a real difference to real people's lives now. And that balance feels right to me. We should be doing stuff that's system wide as well as being very locally focussed and making a real difference to how people perceive physical activity.

Much of the activity has been hidden and internal, (such as developing briefs for procurement of contracts) and quite time-consuming, but it has led to the position now where the team feel ready to 'Crack On!' (a popular saying within the LDP team).

Influencing across the system

Work has been undertaken on events (*The Tour de Yorkshire/UCI race*), active travel, active communities and parks. The LDP team felt that the most significant advances in working across the system have been in cementing the reputation of the LDP within the council, forging strong relationships with other departments who might become key allies and on events.



Members of the LDP core team have been doing a great deal of relationship building within the council by attending other teams' meetings; making presentations; developing links and 'selling' the topic of physical activity as something that can help other agendas. They noted a real shift in the last six months from being in a position where they were 'muscling in' to other people's business, to a position where they are now; being invited to attend other people's meetings and physical activity is integrated into the work of other areas within the authority:

It feels like there's a shift in us going to other people's agendas, and just talking about what we're doing. It's gone from that to actually them coming to us. And we're almost inundated now.

This is seen to be an essential aspect of system change not only so that the local authority is singing from one hymn sheet on activity (i.e. with consistent messages) but also tackling the issue from multiple starting points or policy perspectives. Examples include:

- A presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board, at a health and inequalities workshop, that led to multiple other invitations to speak about the system approach being taken by the LDP team.
- A talk to the CCG Strategic Commissioning Group (focused on proposed clinical pathway revisions) that led to conversations with the primary care network in Primary Care Doncaster.
- Strengthening of links with the Children and Families Board.

These strengthened connections have taken place across the authority, with all members of the team helping to 'spread the word'. However, the Director of Public Health was singled out as one person who has been particularly helpful in influencing across the system. This is due to his strong, positive relationships with key individuals (for example, the Director of Children and Families) but also due to his new role leading joint strategic commissioning for the council. This means that he is in a unique position to be able to influence agendas in favour of physical activity and system change:

...it then allows us to look at where we can embed...prevention and whole-population approach...and physical activity is part of that. So, that's significant, but also, some of the ways that he wants to address that issue is from a systems approach, behaviour-change approach.

As mentioned above, links to the Children and Families Board were seen to be particularly important. Children and families are a key aspect of the work of the LDP but it was felt that connections to this issue within the council were not particularly strong.

The children and families area in particular, there's been a significant amount of investment in children's sport, physical activity and sport, in the borough, but that collaboration amongst the system is not what I would think is working very well.



This has, however, been transformed by the appointment of a new Director, who is enthusiastic and supportive of the LDP work. It was thought that she was particularly persuaded by presentations that showed the LDP was taking a very long-term, system-wide approach to the issue. They presented details of systems mapping, insight results, and behaviour change approaches leading to further collaborations. This was thought to be particularly important as the area of children and young people is not very well represented across the council's policies. The system mapping has been important in this regard also, helping to demonstrate that the LDP team is taking a broader approach:

The Chief Executive went on about the systems mapping stuff we did with parks and open spaces the other day, and they were like, 'Love this systems approach that you're taking for parks and extending it to a wider remit than just what you're looking at,' so I think that, for me, feels as though we're getting a bit of recognition about what we're doing.

Sharing learning and growing networks

Sharing learning across the various departments in the local authority has been important, but this has been complemented by lots of activity to share learning and strengthen relationships with other authorities. External relationship-building has been seen to be an important achievement in recent months as well, with requests from neighbouring authorities to discuss the LDP work and helping other authorities consider whether they could adopt similar approaches. This is a significant advance as the Doncaster team are starting to be seen as the leaders in this area – a position they welcome.

there was an explicit invite...to go over and talk to them about the process that you've followed to develop the walking strategy here in Doncaster. So, reflective of other local authorities and other partners, starting to think, 'Hang on, there's something going on over there.'

This is important from a reputational perspective: the new Chief Executive of Doncaster local authority talks about 'One Council – Good to Great' describing the aspirations to improve the reputation of the authority, and this chimes very well with the ambitions and working methods of the LDP team. Connections to the Chief Executive are also being enhanced by the policy priority being given to climate change within the authority (the Mayor is soon to announce a climate emergency to emphasise the prioritisation of the issue) which connects very well to the LDP's focus on active travel.

The above work is all connected to the LDP team's ambitions to grow the network of people concerned with, and working for, physical activity. The team has been involved in an analysis of their physical activity network, using social network analysis, as part of the evaluation (see Baseline Report). This was thought to be very valuable as it helped to illustrate issues of 'distributed leadership' across the system, so that there were multiple leaders or champions for physical activity, and access to knowledge or power was not in the hands of single gatekeepers.



Distributed leadership, for me, is that lots of other people out there are stimulated to do activity that... helps us along the way, and that they're taking that forward on their behalf. So, I hope the next version of the social network analysis starts to show that the network and influence is spreading, that the depth of those connections is growing, that people aren't going necessarily through [specific named people].

Overall it was felt that the network was in a very healthy position, especially when considering that the LDP itself was relatively new.

Community engagement

The next major theme to emerge was the focus the LDP core team had been taking on consulting and engaging with communities across Doncaster. There has been a lot of activity on this topic, with earlier phases in conjunction with Sheffield Hallam University, who commissioned doorstep surveys and training of 'community explorers' to strengthen links with the local community, find out their needs and lay the foundations for co-designed interventions. In this evaluation period this work has been supplemented by the recruitment and deployment of four new project officers who are working on active communities projects. Work has commenced with four community workshops across Doncaster, seeking the views of 'key organisations and key members of the local community' about what they are doing and how they might input into future stages of the programme.

We've been getting to know our communities locally as Community Officers are going out and engaging with different groups that are already going on...and those workshops bring people together. We do some mapping of local areas and then we work together, have little focus groups, and try to talk about some themes that maybe are related to that local area...we ask them in the workshops what they want to prioritise within the community.

In addition to this, there has been more traditional consultation, e.g. on more formal strategies (dance; open spaces; cycling; walking). The overall aim has been to make sure the LDP is really focused on what people need and want locally.

This emphasis on community engagement is seen to be a key aspect of the overall strategic approach being taken by the LDP team. Doncaster has a history of community consultation – in 2000 they employed community officers overseeing a co-design approach but this was seen to have 'fallen by the wayside' with a resulting loss of intelligence and connections and contacts. The LDP now seems to represent a chance to get back to the situation where communities are at the heart of programme planning and service delivery. This is also based on the approaches to community consultation that being taken by Well North, that were seen to be particularly strong.



Policy is something that the council does well. Leadership is something it did absolutely really well, from the top, both politically and as officers, but what was lacking was knowledge about the communities and the motivations and barriers that they were facing. So this shift, I think, has been based on trying to plug a gap that was definitely there.

This is also linked to the points about distributed leadership made above. The notion is that if the LDP is linked strongly to the community and their expressed needs and wants, then it is more likely to survive when LDP funding stops. It has already been noticed that as a result of the community consultation, people have been coming forward and taking responsibility for key components of the programme, increasing the likelihood that things will get done and will also survive longer than the LDP itself.

In addition the community engagement work has been seen to be useful to individual members of the LDP team, as it gives them an insight into the communities they are serving. This has given them an insight into how people view physical activity, how it fits into their life and which opportunities they would like to see more. However, this has not all been positive; some of the consultation has highlighted entrenched views about activity being ‘only for sporty people’ and revealed some groups of people who are simply not at all interested in being more active. The survey work has also begun to show that inactivity levels may be far higher than the Active Lives survey indicates.

Communication and ‘framing’ of the physical activity message

The LDP core team has invested a lot of time considering the communication issue around physical activity over the last six months. Firstly, efforts have been put into reframing the physical activity message among stakeholders – including internal council staff. As noted above, connections to other teams within the council have been strengthened over the last six months, but this has not been without challenges. It has been found that it is easy to overestimate the extent to which people are ‘on message’ when it comes to the recommendations on moderate intensity physical activity, and research about the barriers to participation. So, it has often been essential to go over some of ‘the basics’ about physical activity when meeting potential partners for the first time:

So, I’ve gone in thinking I need to have really strategic conversations, and I’m going to talk about systems leadership...and actually, the questions I’m getting from senior members of staff is: ‘why are people inactive, is it to do with income, is it not to do with income?’ It’s the realisation that I actually do need to go over the basics a little bit.

Secondly, the team continues to grapple with traditional views about physical activity among the public and its relevance to people’s lives. It remains a core challenge to re-position physical activity as something normal and an everyday action.



Whenever you mention physical activity, they think sport, they think structure, they think traditional, they think male, they think aggressive. So, all of the community explorer type of work starts from that precept in people's minds, which again echoes that we need to think broadly across the borough and really reshape people's thinking around what physical activity is to them.

It has also been quite sobering for the team to hear results from the 'COM-B' work being undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University; not only do many Doncaster residents struggle with notions of 'what counts' as physical activity (especially that everyday activities like walking 'count') but for many physical activity is not relevant to their lives and they do not want to change:

Some of the insight says that some Doncaster residents don't want to change. Don't want to increase their activity levels. That's a concern. There's an acknowledgement that there's quite a lot in the borough, but they're not engaging with it.

Thirdly, the team has made significant progress in what they call 'hiding the wiring'. Internally there have been many discussions about the complex nature of the funding structures in Doncaster, with overlaps between Get Doncaster Moving, the Local Delivery Pilot and Transforming Cities (see Baseline Report for details).

It feels like we've come a long way in terms of we're a bit clearer that everything's GDM [Get Doncaster Moving]. You know, we're not externally separating one from another as such.

This has fed into detailed work on communications strategies, with a communications agency about to be appointed to take forward a broader public communications strategy. While it has not been firmly decided that any public-facing communications campaign will definitely be branded *Get Doncaster Moving*, it has become clear that it has to have a single common identity that brings together all the activity-related initiatives under a single umbrella.

Additional activity in this period has included work with the FrameWorks Institute: a workshop was convened in June and they are currently helping the Council to write a Framework focusing on how to communicate physical activity messages. The organisation is also planning a storytelling workshop for October.

The Tour de Yorkshire/UCI race

The Tour de Yorkshire was held in this evaluation period (May 2019), and has been a major focus of activity for the LDP, along with the UCI cycling road race (September 2019). What is particularly notable with these events is the detailed planning and approach that the team took. It is clear that the focus for Doncaster's involvement was not to do with the traditional 'role model' assumption (people will see the races and then will be inspired to want to jump on their bikes) and much more using the races as a vehicle to bring communities together:



I think the community work that we've run at speed with the Tour de Yorkshire and the UCI, what it's shown that has really surprised me is that in some of these communities...it's really dormant, very fertile. You go in and they've got a passion for their communities, but it's just something that ignites it. It's hard to explain, but I suppose one example is, for the UCIs this year, we've worked with schools, and people and schools are predominantly very hard to get into. But we've got 5,000 stood on the route.

On the day of the Tour de Yorkshire, there were 22 live bands playing across the town on four stages that local communities had built. A micro-grant programme was established that focused on maximising people's enjoyment of the event, aiming to bring people out onto the streets and strengthen the sense of community. The programme provided funding for tables and chairs linked to community centres and other venues so people could get refreshments and use the toilets during the races. The impact of these events is being closely monitored, with a focus on community cohesion:

The feedback is, it's bringing the community together. It's engaging them in being socially active, which then makes it easier, from speaking to our community groups, for them in future to actually engage with the communities and develop whatever you want to do in there.

It has been found that these events have brought new agencies and community organisations on board, and have helped to win over people who were previously negative about the role of the council. And critically it was not all about cycling fans or even sports fans, with monitoring showing attendance by large numbers of women and older people – not the usual cycling race audience.

Other key public-facing events: building foundations through active travel

Other events have included work on Clean Air Day, when a road near a school was closed to traffic for the day, and active travel-related events were put on for local families. This has led to requests from the community to close the road more often or make it one-way. Fourteen community street audits have been conducted over the last six months to look at gathering feedback from local people and local communities around what is good in their area in terms of being able to get around. Health Walks have been given a boost (Doncaster has a long history of organising health walks) with strengthened links to GP surgeries.

Implications for the future phases of the LDP

The final consideration is: what do these developments mean for the next phases of the LDP in Doncaster?

Members of the LDP core team have a strong and clear agenda, which they are keen to see through, despite the likelihood of a turbulent time politically. It has been pointed out that they need to stay focused on their strategic plans and not be tempted by short-term announcements



or offers of short-term funding associated with an election period. Central to their plans will be mobilising their new contracts, notably the communications element.

It's felt like we're out of the ground, in that sense, building quite a strong base to deliver. I think the next twelve months are critical. It needs to take what we're learning and what we're doing and grow that, so it reaches a wider audience.

The team is very focused on 'holding their nerve' and continuing to see their plan through – driven by their investment plan - and not be tempted to revert to old ways of working. This commitment is woven throughout their programme planning and strategic thinking, and informs every decision they make. There is an acknowledgement that they must continue to work collaboratively to manage key relationships to keep individuals on-side. This is coupled with a strong commitment to sustainability: making sure that the work of the LDP lives long after Sport England funding has finished or after individual team members may have move on.

Other clear priority areas for the next twelve months include:

- Strengthening community links.
- Building on the work done with children and young people.
- Devising a programme on parks and open spaces.
- Launching plans on active travel.
- Developing the network (building on the results of the social network analysis).

But more than just focusing on the immediate tasks, the team is focused ensuring that the next time means moving on from the foundation stage and consolidating plans to focus on reaching into communities and driving population-level change:

If you get more anchors in, you've got more stability. At the moment, the anchors are in certain communities...the anchors over the next twelve months have to be more securely fastened in other areas, like children and young people, come to a solution about the parks and open spaces type of work... where the learning can be population change, which was our bid: population change

This focus goes alongside continued efforts to influence policies in favour of physical activity: using the LDP as a lever to make sure that new and emerging policies are as activity-friendly as possible, from work with the CCF and children and families through to the Place Plan and new work on parks and open spaces.

Overall it appears that the LDP core team has built a strong foundation for the programme to take off over the next period.



Summary

What has been happening?	So what? Why is this significant?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour de Yorkshire (including social impact work and micro-grants) • Preparation for UCI race • Multiple procurement processes especially communications agency • Multiple presentations about LDP work to others – sharing learning and strengthening contacts • Multiple community engagement events and processes, and recruitment of new staff for this work • Active travel events • Work on multiple strategies including dance; open space; cycling; walking • Multiple community street audits • Social network analysis • Future parks project tendered • Evaluation activities including baseline report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour de Yorkshire seen as a community event (not a bike race) • Building strong foundations for the future • Strengthening relationships – within the council (especially children’s team) • A feeling that the team is ‘out of the ground’ and ‘cracking on’ • Building strong new external relationships – other councils and beyond • DPH now in charge of strategic commissioning so opportunity to embed LDP work • Working across the system – learning what this really means in practice • Getting the LDP work on the map • Developing a deeper understanding of communities’ views to influence the programme • Community engagement leading to increased ownership – people have started volunteering to lead things • ‘Hiding the wiring’ – all physical activity work in Doncaster now feels part of one movement (regardless of funding stream)
<p>What does this mean for the future?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities for the future include: strengthening community links; building on the work done with children and young people; launching work on parks and open spaces and active travel; and developing the network. • Communications activity will be critical to bring together all the elements under one umbrella, and give partners something tangible to buy into. • Continuing engagement with communities will be key to ensuring physical activity is owned by the people, ensuring sustainability, and creating population-level change. • The team needs to continue to ‘sell’ physical activity and GDM to influence other agendas across the system. 	



APPENDIX 1: INITIAL TIMELINE AND FEEDBACK FROM CORE LDP GROUP

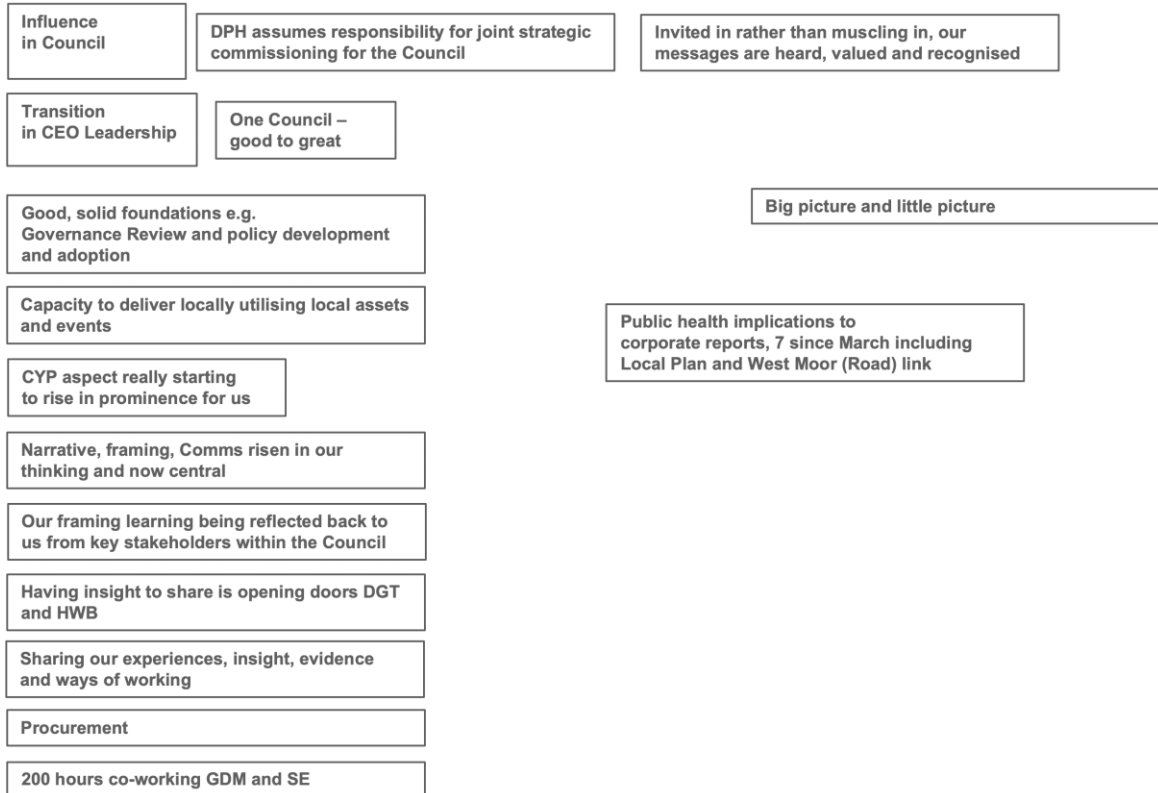


PROCESS LEARNING
April to September 2019

Core LDP group (also shared with Rupert Suckling DPH
and SRO for GDM)



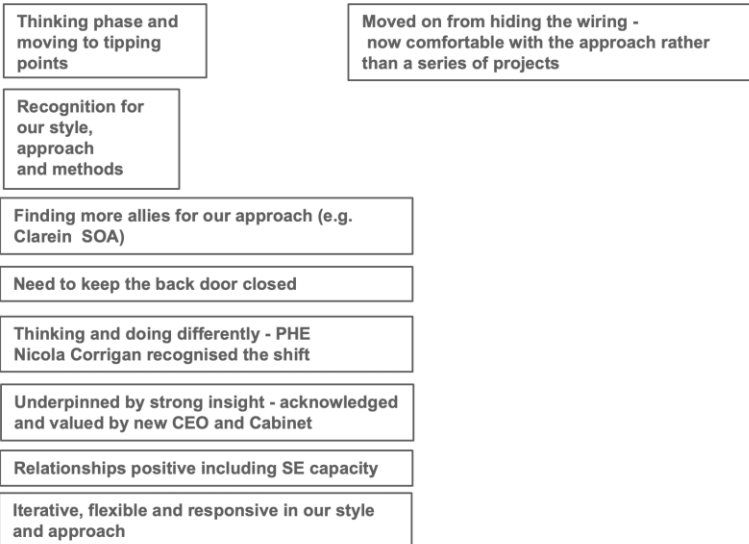
Themes



Sport England: Towards an Active Nation 2016-21



Thoughts and feelings



Sport England: Towards an Active Nation 2016-21

