



# Strategy 2023–2028

Creating opportunities  
for communities to thrive



# Contents

3	Introduction
4	About us
5	Context
6	What we do
7	Leisure and community centres
8	Community health and wellbeing
9	Learning and skills
9	Active training and development
10	Luton libraries
11	Corporate services
12	Developing our strategy
13	Engagement
14	Strategic alignment
15	Strategic priorities
22	Summary

# Introduction

**This strategy is a five-year vision to support people to achieve their potential.**

A very difficult socio-economic environment in recent years has resulted in a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. Luton is one of the places where this is most evident, set against a background of pre-existing deprivation and health inequalities.

This is one of the reasons that Luton is the first town to become a Marmot town<sup>1</sup>. It joins a growing number of Marmot places, which include cities and regions, that are committed to tackling the social and economic issues that contribute to health inequalities.

Luton's thriving Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, of which Active Luton is an integral part, will play a crucial role in realising this commitment.

Our strategy sits within the context of a town-wide effort to improve the health, wellbeing and life chances of our communities.

<sup>1</sup> Reducing health inequalities in Luton: A Marmot town.  
<https://www.instituteofhealththequity.org/resources-reports/reducing-health-inequalities-in-luton-a-marmot-town>





# About Us

## Active Luton is a community wellbeing trust.

Our mission is to make a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Luton's community; inspiring, motivating and offering opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to learn and take action to improve their life chances.

We provide a wide range of high-quality programmes, activities and facilities, enabling residents to participate in physical activity, improve their health and wellbeing, enhance their education and skills and in doing so create career opportunities.

We are committed to being inclusive, accessible and affordable, working closely with partners locally, regionally and nationally, continuously looking to bring the best to our diverse and vibrant community.



# Context

**We are a key strategic partner in Luton, leading health and care system transformation by working collaboratively with other professionals. The aim is to make the health and wellbeing of our community everyone's business and to embed the principles of equity and fairness.**

We are recognised as an anchor institution<sup>2</sup> in Luton, playing a significant role in supporting our local communities to improve their health and wellbeing, enhance education, development and training and tackle inequalities.

We are committed to measuring the outcomes of all of our interventions to evidence impact, to collaborate for shared learning and to continuously improve what we do and how we design and deliver our services. We are constantly listening to customers' feedback, which is collated from a variety of sources, to ensure that we understand their needs and adapt programmes and services wherever possible.

Our values of teamwork, innovation, inclusivity and excellence underpin everything we do and how we work as an organisation.

We continue to apply our principles of inclusive, accessible and affordable when designing our services.

## Our values



<sup>2</sup> Anchor institution refers to a large, typically non-profit, public sector organisation whose long-term sustainability is tied to the wellbeing of the populations they serve. Anchor institutions are closely connected to the local population, and have a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of communities.

# What we do

**Active Luton works at the heart of the community to deliver integrated services across a wide-ranging remit.**

We are responsible for:

- Luton Council's leisure centres, libraries and some community centres
- Health and wellbeing programmes
- Luton's holiday activity scheme for disadvantaged children
- PE training and development services for schools
- Creating and enhancing employment opportunities within and beyond our organisation

We strive to achieve maximum impact by delivering interconnected and innovative programmes and services in our centres, libraries and community hubs.





## WHAT WE DO

# Leisure and Community Centres

**Our leisure and community centres span a wide range of facilities offering inclusive access for every age, ability and background.**

From our world-class, multi-sports facility and 50 metre pool and diving centre at Inspire: Luton Sports Village to our traditional leisure and community centres, athletics and golf centres and local health hubs across the town, we offer a fantastic range of services from diving to boxing, swimming to group fitness, squash to gyms, athletics to golf. And everything in between!

Our reach and presence is such that the majority of Luton's residents can access an Active Luton facility or service within 800m of their home.

## WHAT WE DO

# Community Health and Wellbeing

**Our health and wellbeing service offers a range of high-quality opportunities for Luton's residents to get active and improve their health and wellbeing that are inclusive, accessible and affordable, with the aim of changing lives for the better.**

The team takes a holistic approach, recognising that people's lives are complex. Our award-winning health improvement services include social prescribing, healthy lifestyles, NHS health checks and stop smoking programmes.

Our programmes aim to support, encourage and improve health and wellbeing and are delivered across Luton and Bedfordshire with easy access through self-referral or referral from health professionals.

Our Active Communities Team has a wealth of experience in engaging Luton's diverse population and is passionate about creating behaviour change to enable people to live healthier lives.

The team works in a variety of community settings and with a range of health commissioners to deliver innovative projects and to create pathways and opportunities for people to become physically active.

Tackling inequalities is at the heart of everything they do whether this is among young people, older people, deprived populations, women and girls and families with children under five.







#### WHAT WE DO

## Learning and Skills

**The Active Education team works primarily with staff and young people in local schools to transform how PE is prioritised, planned and taught.**

With an aspiration of all children leaving school being physically literate, the team promotes and supports a holistic, child-centred approach to PE, where all children are encouraged to develop the physical competence, confidence, motivation, knowledge and understanding required for them to be active for life.

As experienced teachers, the team has a wealth of knowledge and skills in the delivery of high-quality PE, school sport and physical activity, in both primary and secondary school settings. The team is passionate about the difference that physical education can, when taught well, have on the lives of young people and its contribution to addressing wider issues such as emotional wellbeing, health, behaviour, confidence, self-esteem, fairness and respect.

## **Active Training and Development is Luton's leading leisure, health and wellbeing training provider.**

The team delivers training across a wide range of leisure-related areas and with a variety of organisations from large and small employers, including charities, schools and businesses, to the general public.

As experienced and highly qualified trainers, the team delivers a large portfolio of vocational and technical courses, including apprenticeships. Active Luton is also a host provider for Swim England's swimming teaching, diving coaching courses and qualifications.

The team also plays a major role in developing our own colleagues' capability and potential through ongoing training and development. Many of our team members joined us in entry level roles and apprenticeships and have progressed to senior roles and careers within our organisation and beyond.

## WHAT WE DO

# Luton Libraries

**Luton Libraries offers safe, welcoming spaces for people who live, work or study in Luton. In addition to a central library and branch libraries, it also offers outreach services, including a home library service and an extensive digital library service.**

In line with our continuing steps to widen access and remove barriers to library use, Luton Libraries does not charge for requests or late returns. Public computers can be accessed for an hour free each day by anyone with a library card, with free time extended for job seekers or people applying for universal credit and unlimited time for school-age children.

Creativity and social inclusion are paramount to the service provided by the library team, with free sessions ranging from Rhyme Time for pre-school children to The Library Games for Adults – one of the many sessions delivered as part of our Community Health and Wellbeing team's social prescription service.







## WHAT WE DO

# Corporate Services

**Active Luton's corporate services teams support the varied functions across the organisation from its head office in central Luton.**

Corporate services include Finance, IT, Human Resources, Administration and Marketing and Business Development, all working flexibly to support the changing organisational needs and its diverse customer base, both internal and external. Great customer service is key.

Continuous investment is undertaken in systems, in particular finance and IT, to ensure that we provide best-practice solutions to support the organisation. The teams also provide services for third-party organisations.

Our people are key to our success, and we are continuously developing strategies to ensure that we nurture, grow and retain team members and volunteers not only through training and career development but also through a culture of feeling valued.



# Developing our strategy



## DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGY

# Engagement

**Our Senior Leadership Teams and our Board of Trustees have worked together to refine our six strategic priorities for the next five years and the ways in which we will principally achieve these.**

All of our teams, including volunteers, will play a vital role in delivering our priorities. This strategy will serve as a road map to guide teams in achieving our collective goals, supporting the development of annual plans and determining team objectives.

An engagement programme will include a series of events to launch our strategy to raise awareness, generate ideas for delivery and gain buy-in from our people.

## DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGY

# Strategic Alignment

We have considered the following key strategic plans in setting our own strategic priorities for the next five years to ensure they align at local, regional and national level.

The core commitments, outlined below, from Luton Council's Luton 2040 Strategy and from the Marmot principles, are reflected in our strategic priorities.

## Luton 2040 Strategy

- a town built on fairness
- a child friendly town
- a carbon neutral town by 2040

## Marmot Principles

- give every child the best start in life
- enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- create fair employment and good work for all
- ensure a healthy standard of living for all; create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention
- tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes
- pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.

The other strategic plans we have aligned with include:

## NHS Long Term Plan and associated Integrated Care System plan for Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK)

### Sport England's "Uniting the Movement"

- A 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity

### The Arts Council's "Let's Create"

- A 10-year vision in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.



# Strategic Priorities 2023–2028

## 1

# Supporting children in our communities to get the best start in life



## We will do this principally by:

Ensuring programmes enable all children and young people to thrive, have fun and become confident individuals

Conducting research and analysis to inform our offer for children, young people and their families to be physically and socially active

Developing focused interventions that contribute to more children being a healthy weight and reporting positive emotional and social wellbeing

Increasing opportunities for children and young people with additional needs

Sharing outcomes, learning and impact with a focus on tackling inequalities

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023–2028

2

## Supporting the wellbeing of our community



### We will do this principally by:

Increasing the understanding of the value of community activity in enhancing physical, social and emotional wellbeing

Involving local people in the development of services that enable them to thrive

Supporting our community to increase physical activity, reducing obesity, reducing social isolation and improving emotional wellbeing

Contributing to safer and more cohesive communities, signposting to and supporting capacity within the voluntary sector

Understanding and evidencing our role in preventing ill health and tackling inequalities



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023–2028

## 3

## Developing skills and lifelong learning



### We will do this principally by:

Providing high quality training, life skills and development opportunities for our community

Supporting people who face the greatest barriers to gaining employment and increasing economic wellbeing

Working with young people who are still in education to improve their job readiness, supporting pathways to meet changing employer needs

Showcasing opportunities available across the organisation and the positive impact of engaging in lifelong learning and personal development

Developing a comprehensive programme of volunteering and work experience with positive outcomes for our volunteers and for Active Luton

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023–2028

4

## Developing further as a great place to work



### We will do this principally by:

Taking an organisation-wide approach to embedding our values within recruitment, retention and succession planning

Prioritising leadership development and shared learning at all levels of the organisation

Enabling great performance where success is shared and celebrated

Prioritising the wellbeing of our people

Developing and implementing a comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action plan to ensure we are reflective of our community

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023–2028

5

## Strengthening financial viability and sustainability



### We will do this principally by:

Proactively working to retain and grow existing funding and identify new opportunities for funding and revenue generation

Strengthening our reputation and brand through nurturing stakeholder relationships and communicating our impact across our networks

Regular review of financial viability and demonstrable impact of all programmes and services, with pricing strategies that maximise income while ensuring activities remain affordable, inclusive and accessible

Constantly reviewing our capital investment strategy, ensuring it is aligned with our strategic priorities and informed by organisation wide data

Developing and investing in IT infrastructure and capabilities



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023–2028

6

## Conducting our business in an environmentally sustainable manner



### We will do this principally by:

Developing and implementing an environmental sustainability strategy that encompasses culture change and the technology to support implementation

Reviewing, developing, strengthening and embedding the Active Luton environment policy

Focusing on opportunities for carbon reduction

Reviewing and reducing the impact of transport and travel by promoting active and sustainable alternatives

Driving positive change in the community through motivational messaging and role modelling of effective use of resources



## In Summary

**Our strategy creates a roadmap for Active Luton for the next five years and will inform not only our team, customers and service users but also our partners, wider stakeholders and any potential partners.**

Behind this sits our Annual Plan, Marketing and Communication Strategy, Financial Business Plan and Capital Investment Plan. Following an organisation-wide launch, the strategy will provide a framework to develop directorate team objectives and directorate implementation plans.

Engaging our teams in developing the Active Luton Way and embedding our values will underpin our strategy, making it a relevant and important reference point for developing our future, how we work together and how we can best serve our community.

**activeluton.co.uk**

