# Northampton's Active Quarter

Overview

**Executive Leadership Team
31st October 2023**

Scott Bradley, University of Northampton, **Declan Ryan,** University of Northampton, **Richard Clinton,** Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust, **Peter Cox,** Head of Sport, Leisure & Culture, WNC, **Chris Holmes,** Northamptonshire Sport, **Deborah Mbofana,** Public Health Principal, WNC

Today's objectives

▶ Enable a greater corporate understanding of the Active Quarter partnership

▶ Demonstrate the value and impact of a collaborative approach across AQ partners

▶ Consider this work in the context of WNC corporate objectives and Live Your Best Life ambitions alongside

▶ Explore ELT's ambitions for the Active Quarter and WNC and identify collective next steps

Strategic Context
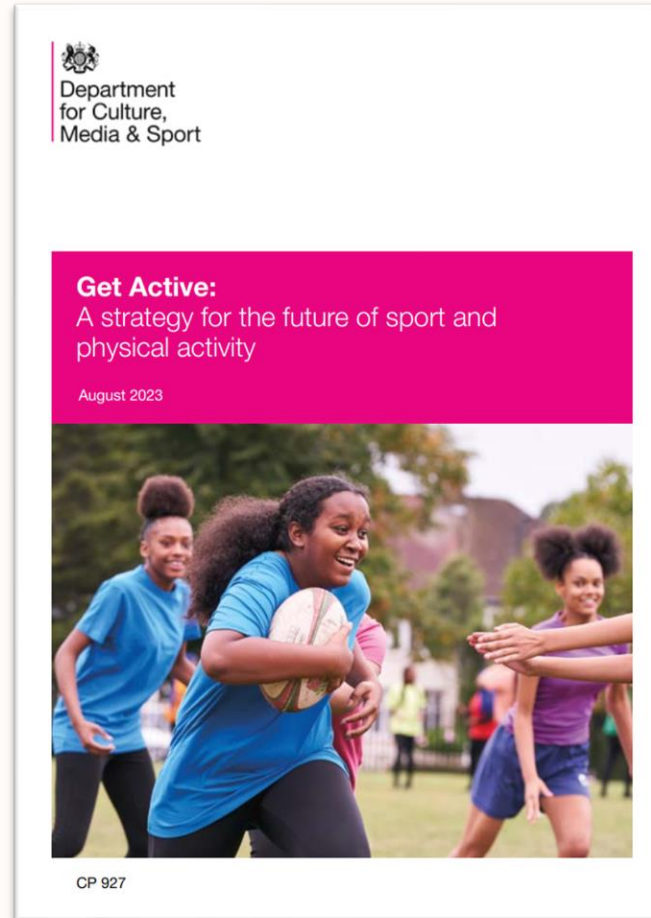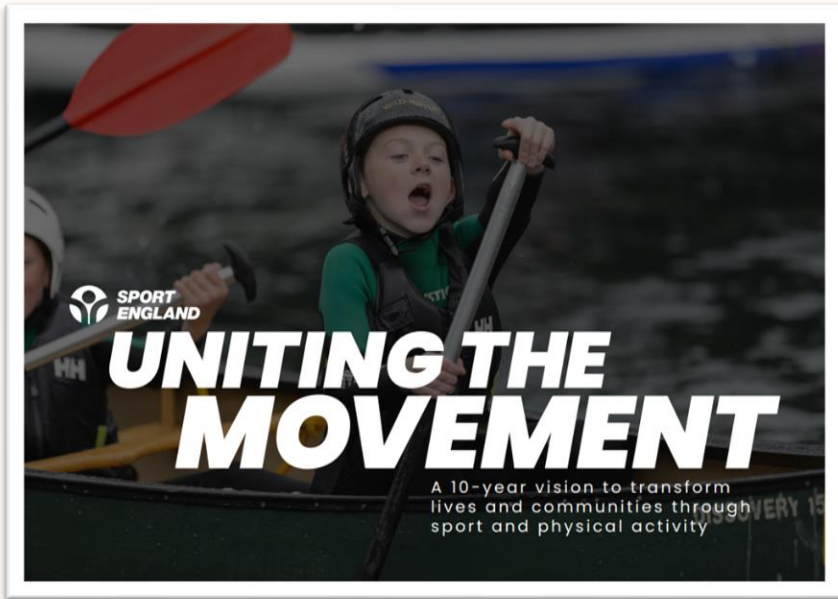
Move Northamptonshire

What do we need to do to realise this ambition?

Making this shared ambition a reality within the next five years requires concerted effort from all. It will take sustained, co-ordinated and innovative approaches, as well as changes in how we do things. This includes, greater collaboration, sharing learning, pooling resources and joint accountability.

At the heart of the Framework is the fact that people's circumstances change. Our lives don't stay the same.

Work gets busy, young families divert us and older parents need caring for. Life continuously alters and what keeps you active at 22 is unlikely to be the thing that keeps you active in your 70s. Therefore, the 'ways we support' activity need to be adapted, as we move through life. The Framework refers to these ways we work as 'Enablers'; the areas to focus on that could impact people throughout their lifetime.

Active Ageing

The benefits of staying active into later life will help achieve the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for older adults and support them to stay independent for as long as possible.

Great Start

Our early years have a profound effect on the rest of our lives. A great early experience of physical activity, sport and play can set us up for a sustained healthy active lifestyle.

Tailored Choices:

Understanding that people's circumstances are ever changing and we all need bespoke, easy to access, opportunities that suit our current situation and lifestage.

Active Environments

We need housing development, local neighbourhoods, transport options, built infrastructure, green and blue assets networks that make the choice to be active the easier option.

Integrated Offers

Integrating physical activity into other services, systems and places will avoid it being seen as an add-on. If being active is embedded into how our workplaces, our health services and our education provision function then we can make being active daily much easier.

First-rateCommunication

The benefits of active lifestyles are well understood, even if it's not enough to change social norms. To transform this understanding into sustained behaviour change our messaging, campaigns, marketing and 'calls to action' need be excellent.

Shared Ambition

"By 2028 healthy active lifestyles will be integral to ALL people's lives in Northamptonshire, irrespective of background, age, race, gender or geography."

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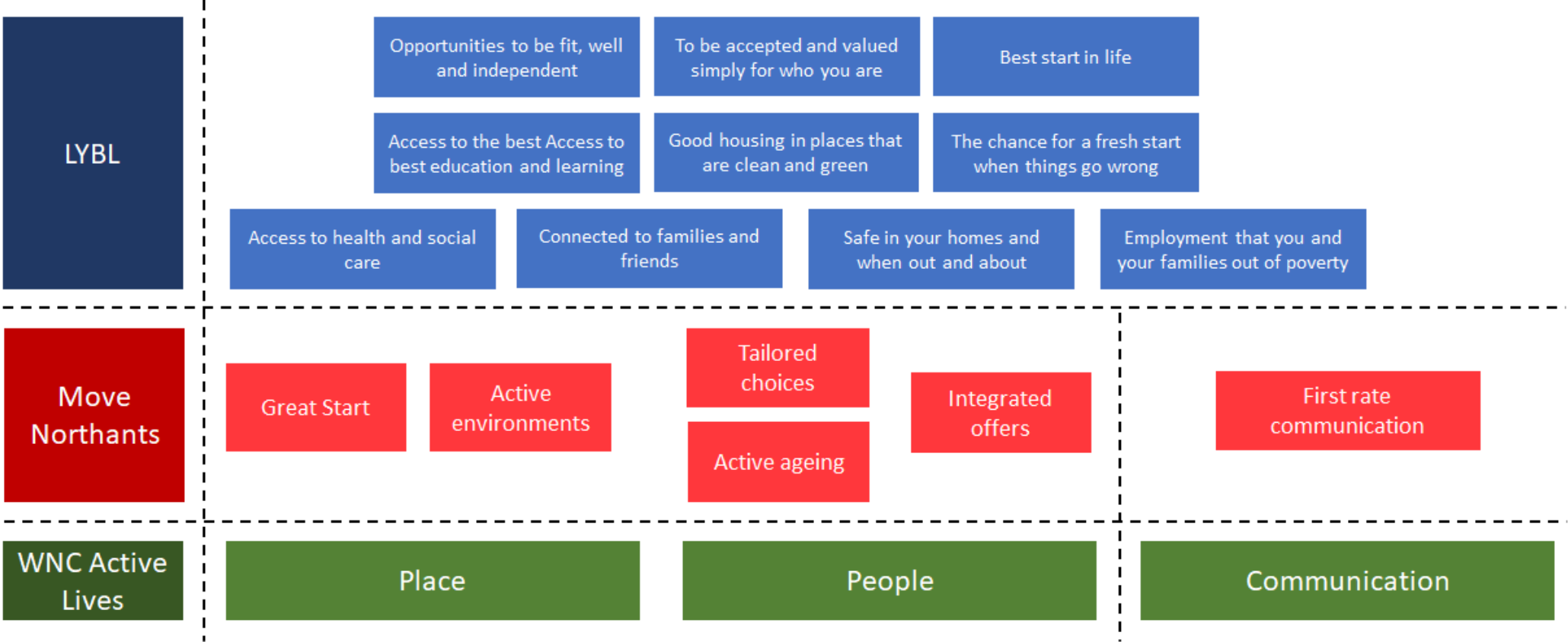
Active Lives Strategy Vision

Vision:

More than just a strategy document owned and delivered by a few.

A 'live' flexible and adaptable strategy that encompasses priorities and their connected outcomes into everyday delivery of work plans across the council and partners.

Creating organisational behaviour change influencing more active lives.

Aligning Strategies

LYBL			
	Opportunities to be fit, well and independent	To be accepted and valued simply for who you are	Best start in life
	Access to the best Access to best education and learning	Good housing in places that are clean and green	The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong
	Access to health and social care	Connected to families and friends	Safe in your homes and when out and about	Employment that you and your families out of poverty

Move Northants			
	Great Start	Active environments	Tailored choices
			Active ageing
			Integrated offers
				First rate communication

WNC Active Lives	Place	People	Communication

Next Steps

WDoH Active Lives Workshop → Service Conversations → Padlet Consultation → Identify priority workstreams

↓ Communicate purpose of strategy, progress, opportunities to engage

↓ Onboard workstreams as they are identified/become a priority workstream

↓ Present outcomes as contribution to LYBL and Move Northamptonshire

↓ Continuous evaluation

Policy Context – International

Urban green space must be considered as a part of the whole urban planning process and the wider green infrastructure network.

Urban green space interventions are most effective when a dual approach is used.

Planning and design of urban green space interventions should actively involve the local community and the intended end users.

Urban green spaces are most sustainable when they are supported and implemented by various sectors and stakeholders.

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

Urban green spaces:
a brief for action
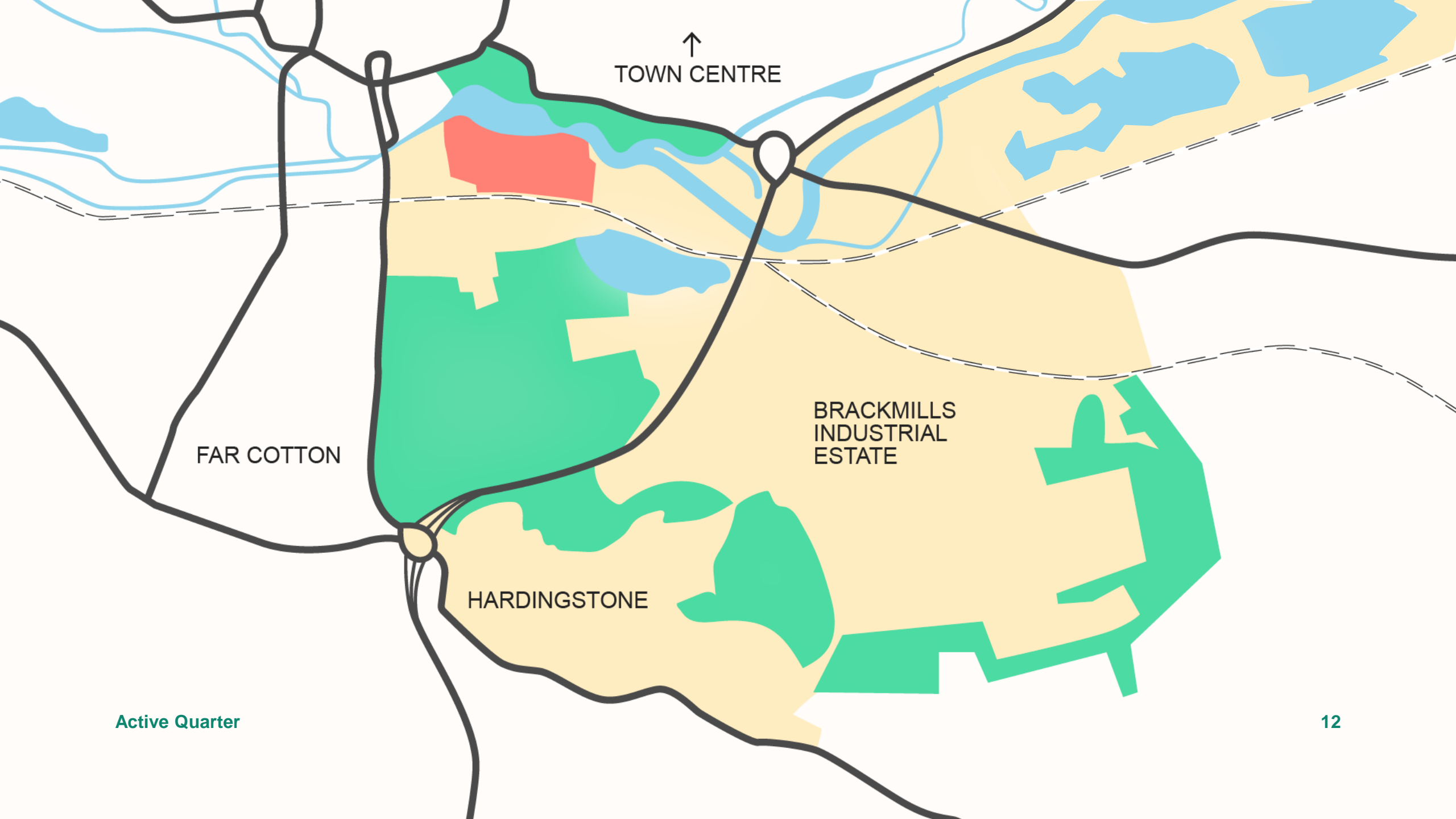
TOWN CENTRE

FAR COTTON

BRACKMILLS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

HARDINGSTONE

Vision

▶ By bringing together outdoor spaces in the Active Quarter, we hope to make it easier for everybody to enjoy being outdoors.

▶ Partner organisations can work together more easily – improving the quality and accessibility of these spaces.

▶ Through this project, we hope to improve opportunities for health, active travel, economic growth, education, and civic pride in Northamptonshire.

Active Quarter

Ambitions

Place

The core infrastructure within the area.

Identity

The communication and marketing.

People

The way people use the place and engage in activities set up within the area.

Place

▶ Recently opened award-winning Northampton Bike Park.

▶ Waymarked Trail with 3km routes around Delapré Abbey and wider park.

▶ New outdoor table tennis tables on the University Waterside campus.

▶ Wheelchair accessible angling platforms around the water-skiing lake.

▶ Accessibility audit of Brackmills cycling and walking infrastructure.

▶ Government funding to improve footpath accessibility within Delapré Park.

3km walking route around Delapré Abbey and the wider park →
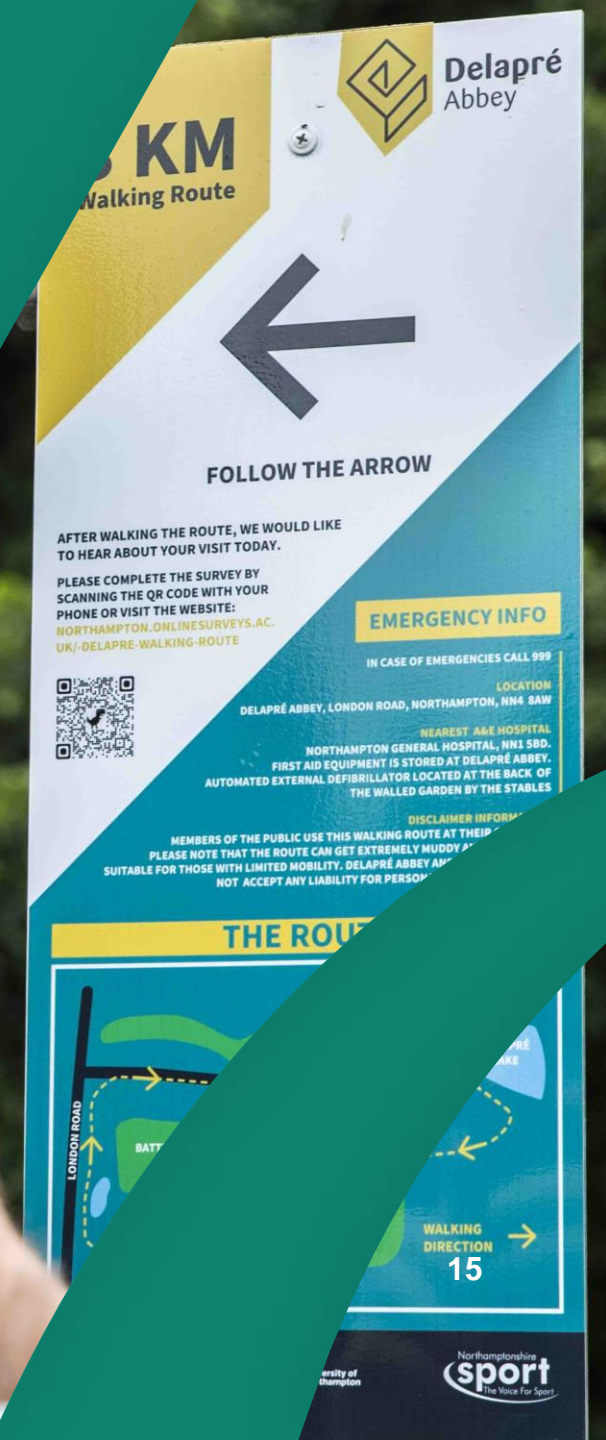
Identity

▶ Informal Stakeholder Group formed to increase communication and co-ordinate efforts.

▶ An Emerging Talent Centre developing girls and women's football established in partnership with Northampton Town FC, Northampton FA and UON, hosted at Waterside.

▶ Pilot work in partnership with UON Graphic Design students in the design of possible Active Quarter logo, brand and digital assets.

▶ £5K funding to develop a website, comms assets, and an interactive map.

Interactive map of the Active Quarter →
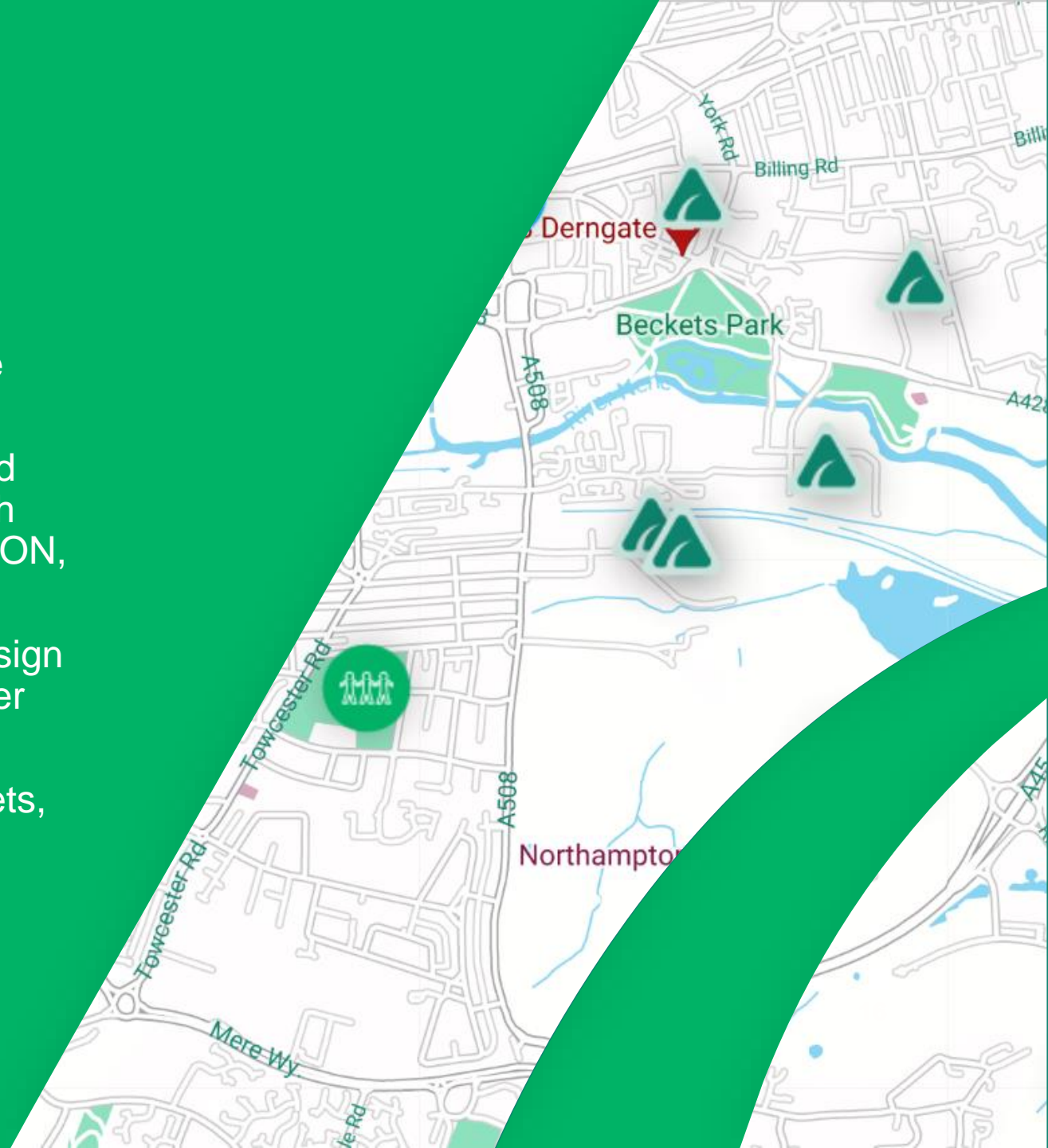
People

- A co-produced 'Thriving Communities' Social Prescribing project in partnership with the General Practice Alliance one of 36 delivered in the country.

- Go-along interviews with park visitors to understand why they value these spaces for their health and wellbeing.

- Online consultation to develop an operational plan for a cycling and walking social prescription programme.

- Feeding back findings and actions with the local community to demonstrate how their voice is being used.

Updating residents at Far Cotton and Delapré community safety day →

Active Campus

UON and West Northants Public Health joint funded project.

Purpose: To support staff health and wellbeing through increased physical activity.

- Diverse & Accessible Programme

- Encourage Participation & Engagement

- Build an Active Community

Bookings per month 2022/2023

Active Campus

▶ "I have been participating in deskercise when I can online…This has **improved my flexibility** no end, reduced stiffness and really lifted my spirits, **enhancing my wellbeing** and ability to communicate much more positively."

▶ "Active Campus is a great initiative, it allows staff to **disconnect, destress** and engage in something different. So far, I've tried fitness fusion, Bootiful and yoga. All are great for your wellbeing. I've noticed the **benefits both physically and in my mental health**."

Active Campus

Challenges

- Funding

- Location / space

- Capacity

- Equal access

- Awareness

The Power of Partnerships

▶ Thriving Communities
  - ▶ National Academy of Social Prescribing
  - ▶ Community Co-Creation

▶ Department for Transport / ATE
  - ▶ Walking and Cycling Social Prescribing
  - ▶ Adaptive Approach (Perseverance)

▶ 19th Century Stables
  - ▶ Co-Located Approach
  - ▶ Partnership Funding

Northampton's Delapre Abbey leads the way in improving the health of thousands of people

Medical experts reveal of funding is being used to get people out enjoying nature

By David Summers
Published 15th Oct 2021, 10:12 GMT - 3 min read
Updated 15th Oct 2021, 10:14 GMT

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BREAKING

with the health of up to 3,000 people set to be improved and enhanced.

Earlier this year £50,000 from the Thriving Communities Fund, made possible thanks to Arts Council England, the National Academy for Social Prescribing and partners, was awarded to the Northamptonshire nature-based wellbeing programme – with the funding focused firmly on helping communities cope with the impact of COVID-19.

The wellbeing programme's lead organisation is Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust, supported by partners General Practice Alliance Federation, Northampton Leisure Trust, Northamptonshire Sport, University of Northampton, Action for Happiness Northamptonshire, and Warts and All Theatre.

Dr David Smart, clinical director of General Practice Alliance and Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust trustee, explained: "This funding has enabled us to bring partners together with our local social prescribing services to develop a wellbeing programme, with a range of new activities building on those already taking place in the beautiful grounds of the Abbey.

Northampton cycling plan gets government funding boost

7 February 2022

The new cycling provision project plans to create cycle routes and free access to cycling in Northampton

A project aimed at addressing cycling provision and "reducing isolation" has been boosted by a government grant.

The scheme, backed by West Northamptonshire Council, has been given a £93,000 feasibility grant from the government's Active Travel Fund.

It aims to create free access to cycling, new cycle routes and put on guided rides in Northampton.

Council cabinet member Matt Golby said the plans would help Northampton become an "active and vibrant" town.

The project is a joint endeavour between West Northamptonshire Council, Delapre Abbey, the University of Northampton, Northamptonshire Sport, British Cycling and health colleagues.

It will aim offer enhanced cycling routes linking the abbey with the university, Brackmills and the town's Norbital cycle route.

- Cycling and walking plans 'lack ambition'
- Walking and cycling face losing out in TfL cuts
- City gets £80k to develop healthy activity scheme

Mr Golby, who is the council's cabinet member for wellbeing and health integration, said: "We're aware cycling provision in our area needs some attention and this will be a good start towards addressing that."

As bike recycling workshop will be created as part of the redevelopment of former stables at the abbey.

The government money will pay for a study of the plans.

#ASTABLEFUTURE

- ▶ Co Located Approach
  - ▶ Wellbeing Uses and Users
  - ▶ Understanding Need (Low/No Cost Use)

- ▶ Wider Impacts
  - ▶ Visitor Economy
  - ▶ Jobs and Business Growth

- ▶ Organisational Resilience
  - ▶ New Income Model
  - ▶ Long Term Funding for Wellbeing Programme
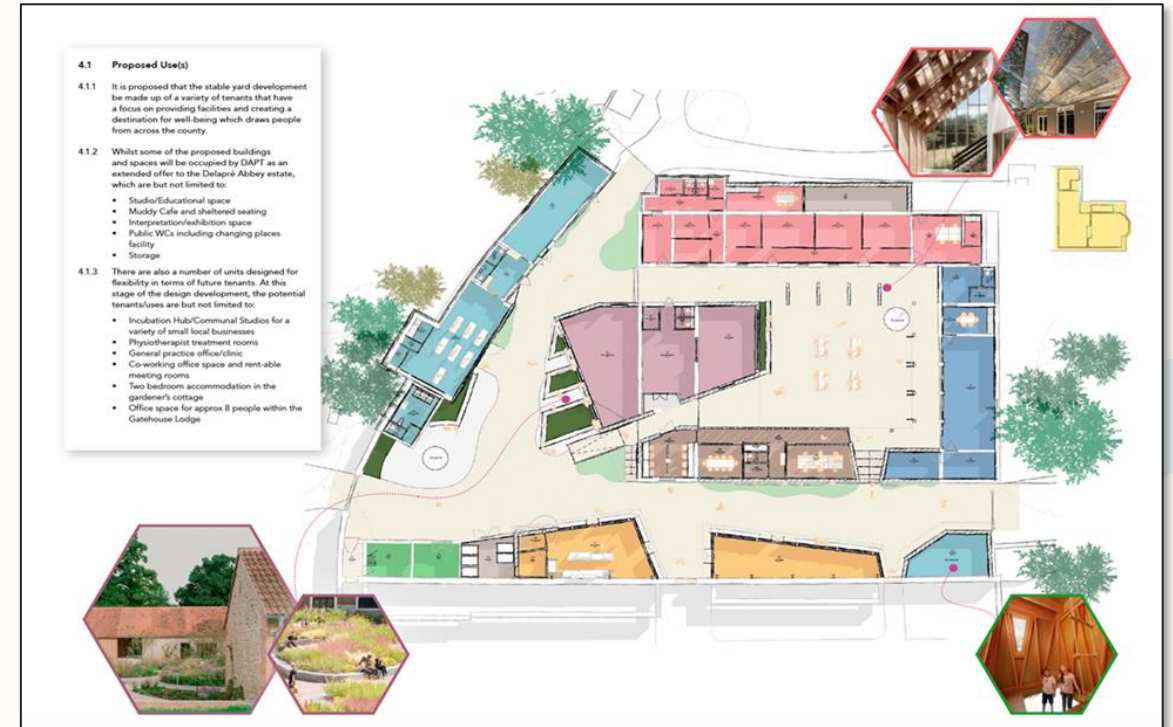
Integrated Approach

Natural England (2023) Green Infrastructure Framework provides a process journey for local authorities to follow.

The Active Quarter partnership uses this journey to guide strategic planning.

We are currently building community and elected member partnerships to ensure we have 'end-user' representation.

We will then co-develop a strategy for the Active Quarter, so decision-making is informed by community wants and needs.

Stage	Steps to take	Related GI Principles
1. Partnerships	Establish a lasting partnership approach with a diverse and inclusive set of stakeholders from the outset. To co-plan, develop and deliver a vision for green infrastructure in the area.	How 1: Partnerships and Vision
2. Vision Informed by Strategic Context	Review: • The National Green Infrastructure Principles • The current local, regional and national planning policy and planning practice guidance • How green infrastructure fits into the local planning framework Create: • A high-level vision for green infrastructure in the area.	How 1: Partnerships and Vision How 3 Plan Strategically
3. Evidence	Understand the existing green infrastructure network and needs by: • Assessing quality, quantity and connectivity of current green infrastructure assets. • Analysing how green infrastructure is delivering benefits to meet needs and priorities including understanding what people want, and what is most important to them. • Identifying gaps in provision, inequalities in distribution and opportunities for new or enhanced green infrastructure provision • Noting the pressures and drivers of change Identify priorities which green infrastructure could help address, which could be related to: • Thriving nature and biodiversity gains • Health and wellbeing benefits • Supporting community prosperity and increasing community cohesion and pride • Improving water management	How 2: Evidence

Aligning to WNC Strategy

Clean and green

- High quality parks
- Accessible greenspace for all

Thriving villages and towns

- Regeneration of our core town centres
- Safer communities with less anti-social behaviour

Economic development

- Building on our rich heritage

In your opinion, how could the Active Quarter deliver the WNC strategy statements?

Community Engagement

Touring exhibition to engage local community groups, residents, and ward councillors in conversations about our local greenspaces.

Feedback the findings of our research and how it has been used for action.

Build trusting relationships with residents.

Co-create a vision for the Active Quarter.
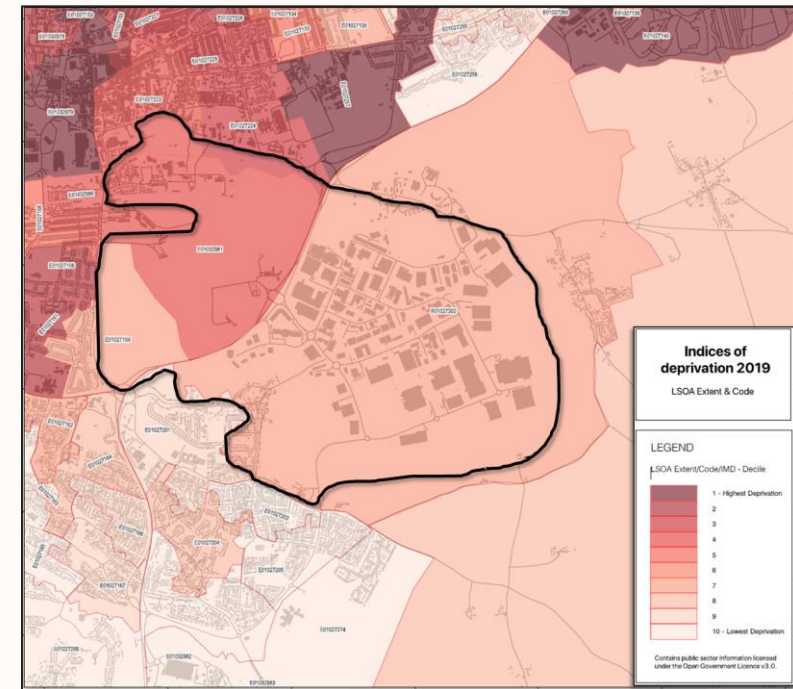
Target Groups: CORE20PLUS5

Core20:

- Top 20% Most Deprived – IMD 2019

Inequalities identified in the literature:

- Minoritised Ethnic Groups
- Disability groups
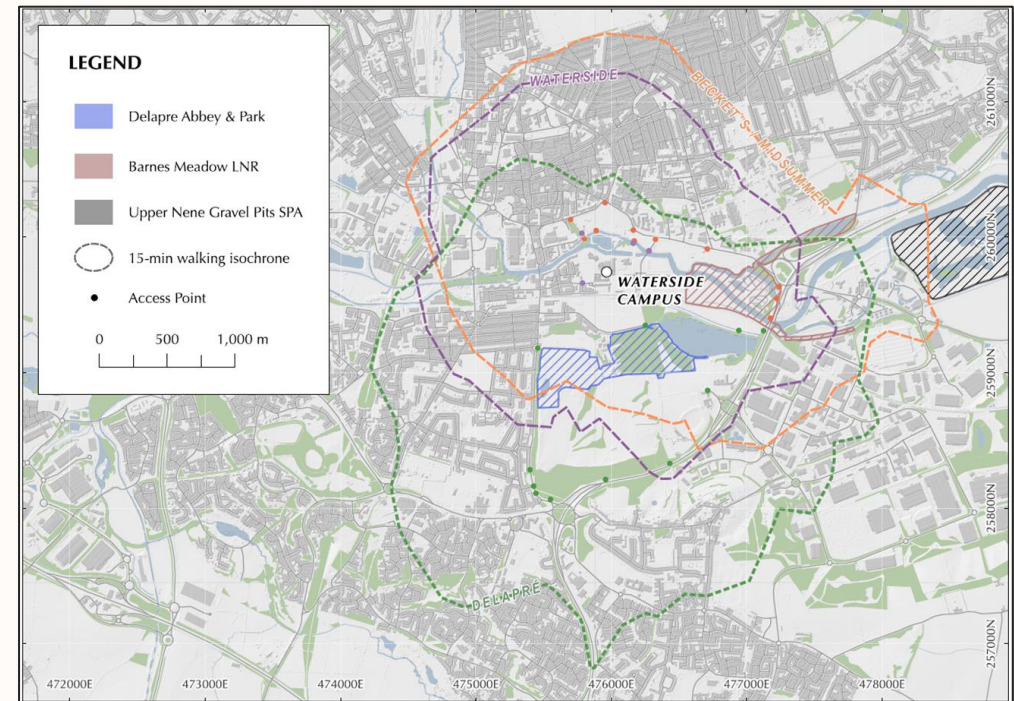- Women and girls

Northants Areas of Focus:

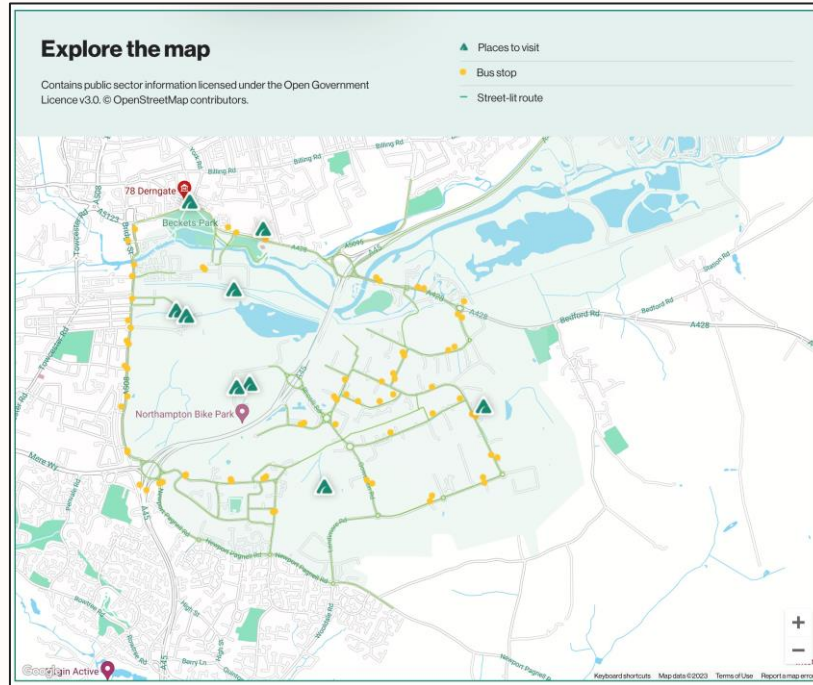- Mental Health; Hypertension; Cancer; COPD; Maternity

Target Groups: Distance

This graph displays which residents are within a 15-minute walk of the Active Quarter.

Using Natural England's (2023) Green Infrastructure Framework access standards.

LEGEND

- Delapre Abbey & Park
- Barnes Meadow LNR
- Upper Nene Gravel Pits SPA
- 15-min walking isochrone
- Access Point

0   500   1,000 m

WATERSIDE CAMPUS

Gathering Evidence

"**More benches**. There are some dotted around by the house but some stopping points with benches would be fantastic."

"**If I knew I could go to that bench**, sit down and then come back again it would make me do it more, definitely."

"Personally, **I'd like to see a few more seats**. This is one of the longer walks we're doing today and there is that seat there, there's not another chance now until we get all the way back to the walled garden."

Website

Monitor and Evaluate
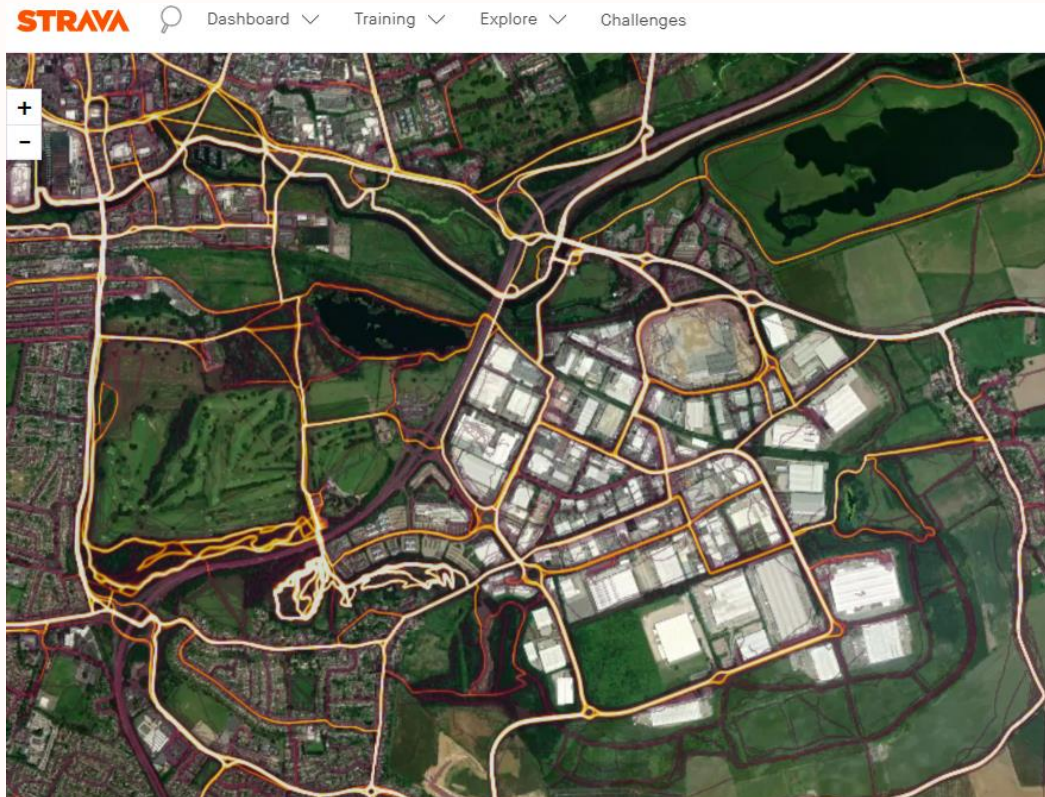
We aim to increase visits to the Active Quarter through:
- Physical infrastructure improvements,
- More activities, and
- Marketing,
  which responds to community needs.

Visits to greenspaces are not currently monitored, even though there are international and national policies to increase access to greenspace.

The Active Quarter partnership can monitor access to greenspace through exclusive use of Strava Metro, as well as other methods.

Reflection

▶ How can we be stronger together?

▶ In your opinion, how could the Active Quarter deliver the WNC strategy statements?

▶ Pledge: How could you contribute to the Active Quarter in your role?

Thank-you