



Summary

- Devolved government and public service reform provide a supportive context and therefore the conditions, to test a new approach across Greater Manchester
- If learning is important, fund for learning, not KPIs
- A huge amount of trust is required from those involved at a national, regional and local level
- There is a role for people to 'hold the space', advocate for and protect different ways of working but being able to tell the story of HLS/the LP is vital
- A clear vision plus key conditions for system change need to be in place for HLS to be effective

GreaterSport

| Overview

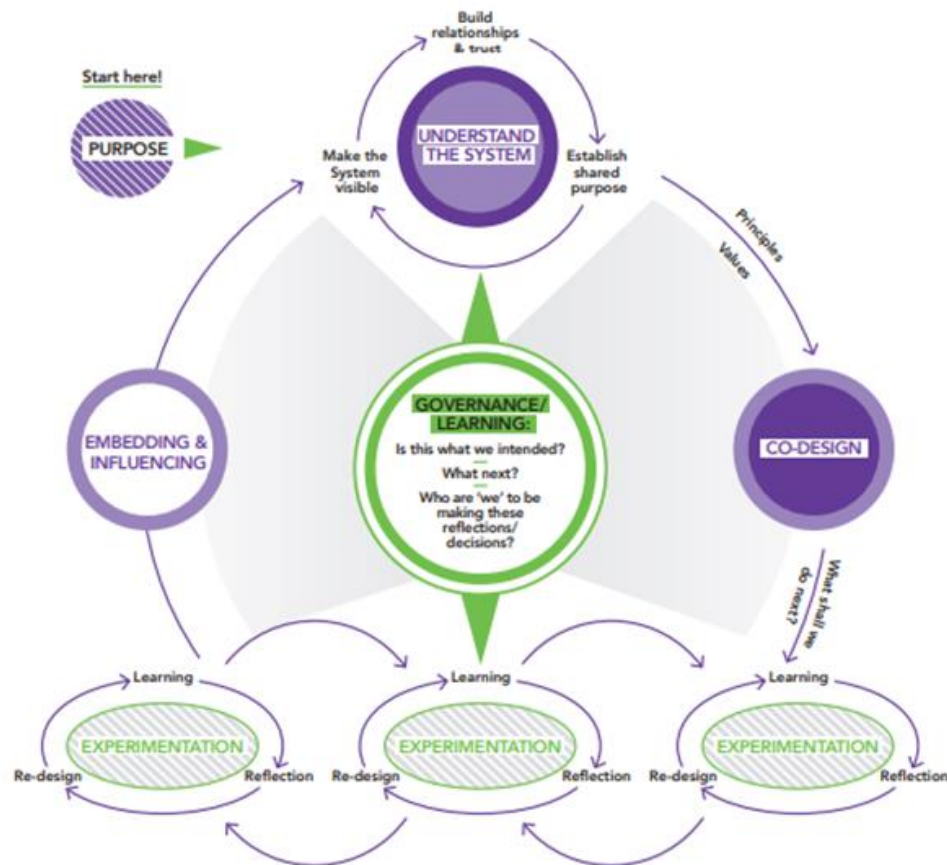
GreaterSport is the Active Partnership for Greater Manchester (GM) and supports the region's ambition to take a whole system approach to increase physical activity, as laid out within the GM Moving plan. Part of this plan includes the Sport England funded, Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) - renamed in GM to "Local Pilot" to reframe the approach away from just *delivering* a project. In 2017, Sport England selected 12 locations as Local Delivery Pilot's to test if physical activity levels could be improved by working across a whole system to increase activity levels within a place.

Greater Manchester is the largest LDP and is creating system change across the region of GM and within each of the ten boroughs of GM, and Glossop.

This is unlike any programme funded by Sport England before, with the emphasis on 'test and learn', understanding local places and people, and working collaboratively with all partners. This commitment was supported by changes to investment, relationship management, monitoring and evaluation.



| Story of Change



The approach has been similar to that of Human Learning Systems (HLS), without using the framework explicitly.

Our ambition is to redesign physical activity back into all parts of life, and make it something everyone can be included in and enjoy to reduce inequalities. To do this, a whole system approach is required, working with all the factors that influence how active a person can be e.g. transport, planning, education. A case for change was developed to demonstrate how physical activity could benefit broader outcomes and show the return on investment for increased physical activity at a population level. Budgets within the local authorities were shrinking, and this offered an opportunity to work more efficiently across sectors,

reduce the cost of inactivity on healthcare and see benefits across the system in GM.

To define the process, 'system leaders' were engaged from the beginning at a partnership event. With senior leaders bought-in, people wanted to be involved.

The opportunity presented by the Local Pilot granted permission to embed whole systems working to increase physical activity levels in Greater Manchester. The significant investment into the region opened conversations with senior leaders and put physical activity on the agenda in meetings where it previously might not have been possible.



The Process of Change

- What work did you do to 'Understand the System' (to make it visible to the actors within it, to build relationships and trust between those actors, to help those actors create a shared purpose)

Several contextual factors supported cross-system working:

- Greater Manchester's health budget is devolved from national government;
- There's a history of working together to collaborate; and
- The first GM Mayor, Andy Burnham, whose mandate brought together public, private and VCSE sectors
- In addition, key partners involved in GM Moving and Sport England committed to work collaboratively through a jointly agreed memorandum of understanding

The Local Pilot was a different way of working for everyone and required the core team (made up of various partners working across GM but led by GreaterSport) to build relationships with key contacts in each of the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester, and Glossop. This took time and required constant dialogue and engagement to reach a place of trust.

The first test of trust came with the first evaluation submissions in April 2019. The core team in GM told localities they would be assessed to secure investment. There was immediate resistance from locality leads, leading to some conversations to collectively redesign the process. This resulted in a change in evaluation submission, from assessment to the current process of collective reflection. Locality leads saw the core team being true to the principles set out initially. Adapting the process showed localities that the core team visibly listened and responded to feedback, building trust.

Key learning from this was the importance of having guiding principles decisions could be checked against.

What co-design work did you do to develop your collective actions?

For the Local Pilot's initial design in Greater Manchester, the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector identified target audiences. Different parts of the system (for example, health) were engaged through events to gather input from various perspectives.

An event was held (the LDP Live Event), marking the launch of the LP, in which all localities were convened to discuss what the Local Pilot was not. Each place then described how they would use their allocation according to their place's needs.

Each locality has continued its engagement with local people and the VCSE sector, reflecting one of the guiding principles to '*engage with key audiences and a commitment to co-design with public services and the VCSE sector*'.

In each locality, a steering group was set up comprising of cross-sector representatives who influence diverse sectors. Some of these partnerships are the first time representatives from specific sectors (e.g. planning or housing) have engaged with the physical activity agenda.

Nationally, each Local Delivery Pilot across England is invited to a Community of Learning event held by Sport England to share learning across other Pilots and create a supporting network of critical friends. The Local Pilot in Greater Manchester has provided insight and learning, fed into government agendas and other workstreams within Sport England.

- What experiments did you do to try out these actions?

Each of the eleven localities within GM has a considerable budget to 'test and learn' whether a sustainable increase in physical activity can be achieved by bespoke system changes depending on the structure, relationships and geography of a place. Over the last two years, each locality has experimented with approaches to get people more physically active: working with different partners, using insight in different ways, approaching commissioning differently, adjusting marketing



techniques and testing different ways to engage communities.

■ **How did you embed the learning from these experiments in the system as a whole?**

There has been an emphasis on learning from Sport England through the Local Delivery Pilots. Another core principle for the GM Local Pilot was to take a test and learn approach, '*embrace innovation*'; to take the opportunity to do things differently. Local leads were encouraged to try new things and experiment with new ways of getting people active.

This helped embed a learning culture within the system; locality leads are encouraged to share learning and ask for support at fortnightly forums. 3 and 6 monthly reflection sessions take place in which each of the ten localities within Greater Manchester plus Glossop peer-review one another's progress, and facilitate collective learning and sense-making.

Sport England have embedded learning by requiring 6 monthly process evaluation reports, to understand *how* changes have happened, alongside 12 month impact evaluation reports to describe *what* has changed. These are all sent to a central evaluator. Community of Learning events happen regularly in which all LDP areas come together to share knowledge.

Monthly 'Deep Dive' sessions explore programme theories from the process evaluation through real-life stories and theoretical explainer videos, created by the evaluation team at Substance and Sheffield Hallam University. Facilitated breakout sessions allow for sense-making and practical learning to be shared amongst peers.

■ **How did you govern this whole work as a learning process?**

Alongside legal contracts, rather than submitting metrics and measures to be assessed against key KPIs, localities join a reflection session every three months to feed in their learning. A range of people associated with the Local Pilot, including strategic leads, are involved. However, the people who may have been directly impacted at a community level are not involved in the governance process. This is

different from other Local Delivery Pilots across the country who have engaged differently at a community level. It has been not easy to include the community in everything due to the scale of the pilot across the whole of Greater Manchester.

What does working in an HLS way look/sound/feel like for you? (What are you doing that is different)?

Across the organisations, sectors and at every layer of the system, from national government to small community groups, we see the impact of new public management and the effects of asking people to report and measure against KPIs agreed centrally. Working in a HLS way gives us the freedom to test and learn, co-develop solutions with partners and communities, be innovative and take time developing networks and relationships – and all the other things that we know make change happen but can't be measured in a number. It's exciting, and refreshing to be trusted by funders to make decisions based on our local context.

| Barriers and Tensions

What are the difficulties and frustrations you have encountered with taking an HLS approach?

This is a very different way of working for most, and it took a while for those within the Local Pilot to accept that 'system change' takes time, as it relies on strong relationships which require trust.

An approach without clear metrics works for some of Greater Manchester's localities (who welcome freedom to experiment, try new things, and think creatively). These are places where the strategic vision is already strong, and there is greater trust through established relationships. For places in GM without some of these conditions or lacking the capability to critically reflect, not having KPIs or similar measures can feel overwhelming, and progress is slower in these places.

What has working in an HLS way enabled for you?

An insight into an alternative approach to governance and measurement. Permission to test, experiment and fail.



Opportunities to meet and share learning with others engaging with HLS – to discuss shared challenges and opportunities.

Why work in an HLS way - who benefits, and how do you know?

HLS allows us to measure what matters and to seek opinions from a range of perspectives. It has helped us understand how we are making changes, and therefore value learning, rather than just proving that we have. We all benefit.

Ultimately, and importantly, the people we serve benefit from us working in a HLS way. By focussing on learning rather than metrics we can:

- Remove red tape and unnecessary process for funding applications which allows more diverse groups to bid for funding
- We can quickly adapt activity provision based on feedback from local people – ensuring the service is the right one, rather than the one that gets most people through the door
- Take time to build relationships across sectors and with local communities and create more sustainable change

being able to show the evidence base that led to decision-making is important

- Senior leader buy-in
- Guided by principles rather than contracts

| Enablers and successes

What does HLS require, both of you and of others (such as funders, commissioners, regulators/national government) which is different from previous ways of working?

- Trust
- Relationships
- Commitment to doing things differently
- Straightforward narrative to explain to other potential funders
- Protectors – people with power or influence granted by their position to hold space and allow for innovation
- A mindset shift about what needs to be measured and where the value lies
- Community to support and hold nerve
- Evidence to give confidence in the approach – even if you're treading on unfamiliar territory,



WHAT NEXT

What will you be doing next to develop your approach, and how will you be using the human learning systems framework as a guide?

We continue to embed learning into the Local Pilot by adapting the three and 6-monthly reflection sessions and building-in critical reflection practices. We are exploring other ways to embed learning into governance processes, including seeking ways to engage with people outside of the Local Pilot to reflect on the work to ensure a range of perspectives inform and direct the approach.

Nationally, Sport England has published a narrative for Local Delivery Pilots to allow learning and practice to be shared outside of the programme to create system change within their sphere of influence.





Appendix

The Principles of Investment for Local Delivery Pilot

1> Must be an identifiable need:

- Supported with an **evidence base**
- **Targeting the physically inactive** (ensuring a focus on population health level interventions and targeting the most 'at risk' proportionately)
- Must **align to one or more of the target audiences** (and the insight that has been developed about them)

2> Builds on individual and community assets to add value to what is already going on, i.e. the conditions are right

3> A plan for engaging with the key audiences and a commitment to co-design with public services and VCSE engaged

4> Must follow a **Whole Systems Approach** (the blue and white circles diagram)

5> Should demonstrate **how it addresses social and health inequalities** as a cross cutting theme

6> **Embrace innovation** and calculated risk in the interests of doing things differently

7> Is **part of a coherent plan for physical inactivity in the locality** underpinned by:

- A whole place approach to public expenditure in physical activity.
- A **focus on growth and sustainability**

8> Committed to the **GM and National Community of Learning** approach

9> Distributed Leadership (**everyone's a leader**)