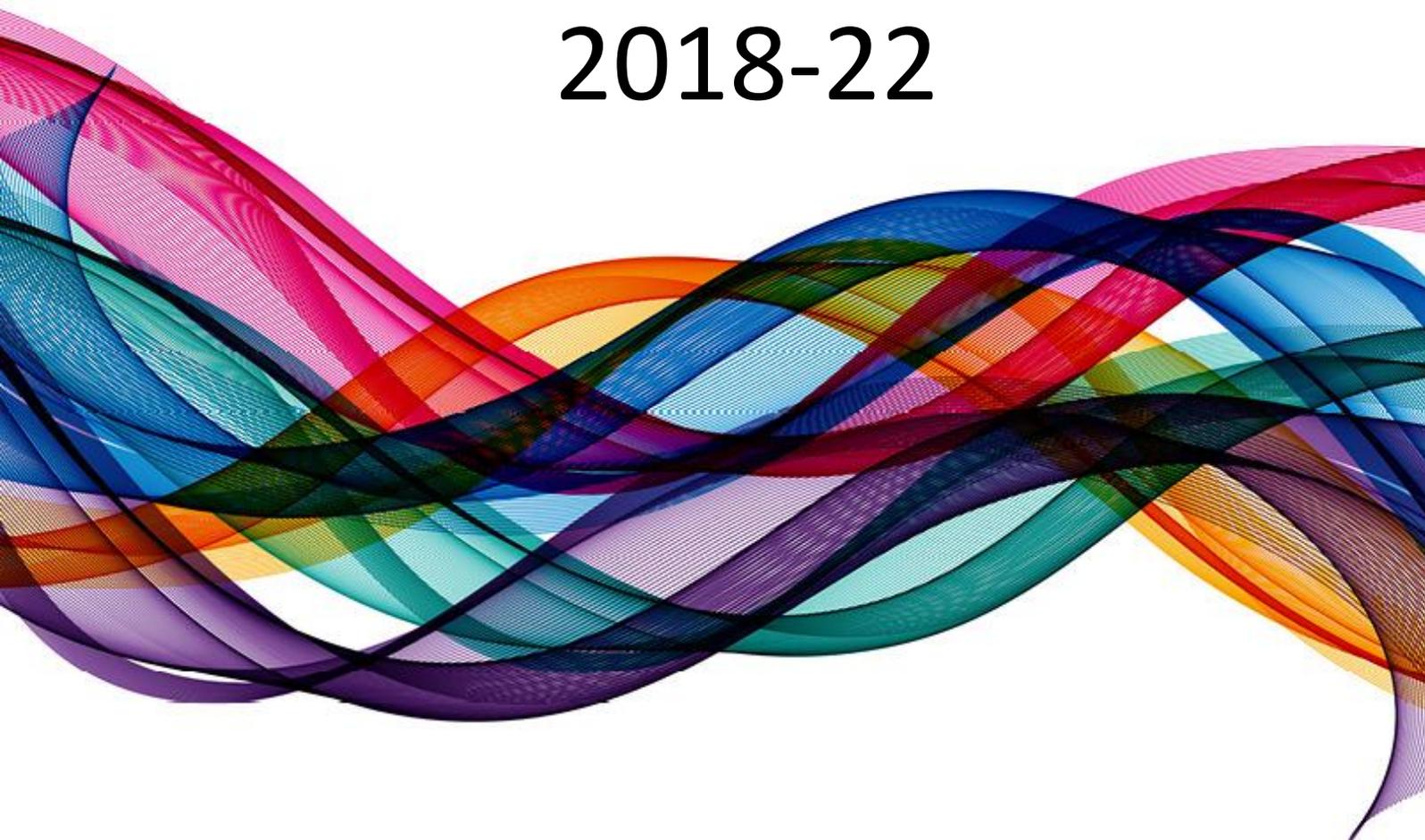




Active Black Country Business Plan

2018-22



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Introduction

Active Black Country is a small committed partnership, operating as the strategic lead for Sport and Physical Activity across the Black Country. We are a core team who are passionate advocates of the health, social and economic benefits of sport, physical activity and play for our residents.

The Active Black Country (ABC) business plan focuses on a four-year period from 2018-2022 with a purpose of achieving the objectives set out in the 'Towards an Active Black Country strategy (2017-2033).

Active Black Country, as the Active Partnership (AP) for the Black Country, was successful in securing funding from Sport England for the period 2018-21. The award was made following a submission by Active Black Country in response to the redefinition of the role of APs by Sport England.

The revised role sees a shift to a local strategic function, focused on testing approaches to tackling physical inactivity amongst under-represented groups and impacting on wider socio-economic outcomes.

ABC is hosted by the Black Country Consortium (BCC Ltd) as its accountable body and employer. As a not for profit Company, limited by guarantee, BCC Ltd is a small, multi-disciplined team working to promote economic prosperity, health and well-being in the Black Country. In collaboration with the Black Country Local Authorities and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), it supports the delivery of the vision and objectives set out in the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

Section 1 – The Context of our work

1.1 The Black Country Region

The geographical region called the 'Black Country' covers 365 square kilometres, and is made up of 30 towns and four strategic centres.

Sitting at the heart of England, it forms the west part of the West Midlands Metropolitan Area and is the largest conurbation outside of London. Comprising the three separate Metropolitan Borough Councils of Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell and the City of Wolverhampton Council, and with a long tradition of manufacturing across the region, it has a proud and diverse history with a belief that it is a place not defined by its borders, but by its people.

The Black Country has a unique local government unitary infrastructure, featuring a City and 3 Metropolitan Authorities. An overarching body, Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA), is well established and alongside the Local Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP) play key roles in the political administration and economic regeneration across the Black Country.

The region is undergoing a transformational period in its history with regeneration seeking to change the face of its urban environment and improve the lives for those who live, work, play and learn within it.

Today the Black Country is home to 1.18 million people, accounting for one fifth of the West Midlands region's population, and, after years of decline, is now growing and estimated to reach 1.2m by 2020. The diverse population has more women living here than men, and 26% of the population from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) origins, compared to the national average of 9%. It has a wide selection of faith groups across the region but a marked difference in representations in communities across the four boroughs.

The correlation between deprivation, unemployment, physical activity levels and higher health inequalities is well defined, with over half of residents living in the top twenty percent of areas of deprivation, the health of people across the Black Country is largely negatively driven by socio-economic status.

Active Black Country recognise that a person's socio-economic status can be a barrier to participation in sport and physical activity; unemployment is a key indicator of social exclusion which can promote poor participation contributing significantly to poor physical and mental health. Infographic 1 denotes how deprivation promotes inactivity.

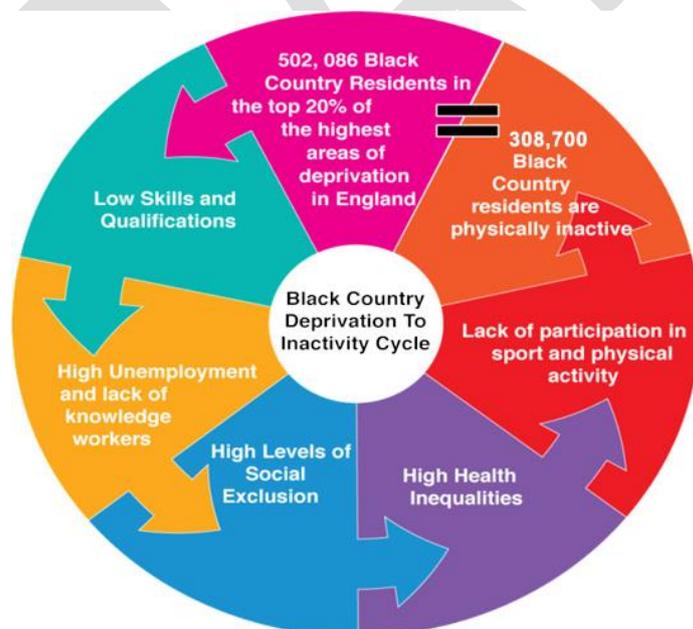


Diagram 1: Black Country Deprivation to Inactivity Cycle

Active Black Country recognises the scale and complexity of the challenge across the Black Country and acknowledges there are complicated and acute reasons as why many people aren't participating in sport or being more physically active. No single organisation holds the answer and that we can

seek to tackle the issues through building a movement of people who share our ambition, agendas and passion to drive change.

1.2 Current Operating environment

Our current operating landscape is complex yet provides a number of opportunities and our role is influenced by national, regional and local political, economic, social and lifestyle factors including: -

- Devolution and the changing face of Local Government through the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- The revised Primary Role for CSPs needs now to be embedded and used more strategically, austerity at local level means current funding is not filling the gaps across the sector, alongside a measurement framework that is still emerging.
- A declining and stretched budget due to a decrease in lottery sales that have brought about a reduction in funding from Sport England into the sector.
- Further austerity due to continued reform across the Public Sector proposing changes to the way the Health Service is run and an increasing focus on 'prevention not cure' agenda.
- A perceived drift away from a sport to a physical activity agenda may hinder the health of the traditional Community Sport Club sector, vital to many local communities.
- The 2022 Commonwealth Games across the region with a significant focus on the Sandwell Aquatics Centre and local commitment to a strong cohesive Legacy from the 2022 Games.
- The recent Local Enterprise Partnership review that is seeking reform to the constitutional model of LEPs.
- Development of the Local Industrial Strategies seeking to drive growth and productivity whilst improving outcomes for all our communities, businesses and residents.
- Brexit, which linked to the Government's Local Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges and in the context of the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which will replace EU and Growth Deal funds.

Section 2 – The Context of our work

2.1 Our Purpose, Vision and Mission

Active Black Country role is uniquely of the Black Country, driven by the demographics of the region, the environment in which we work and our organisations beliefs and values.

Purpose and Role

Our organisation has a passionate belief that physical activity and sport can change people’s lives and that it is every resident right to be physically active and play sport.

The partnerships core purpose is to **understand** the regions communities and residents, **connect and collaborate** to align strategic priorities and **influence** policy and investment to realise Black Country residents right and positively influence the lives of those who live, work, learn and play in the region, focusing on those who live in our most deprived areas.

How we fulfil our role ;

<p>Understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering, facilitating understanding of our resident’s needs, barriers and motivations to being physically active and play sport. • Impact evaluation, performance measurement and intelligence on sport, recreation, physical activity and wider health and well-being for the benefit of our communities and the people in them.
<p>Connect and Collaborate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with and through local agencies to increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity. • Acting as an ‘honest broker’ to define the collective priorities for the Black Country and enabling change at all levels through the creation of a compelling narrative which brings diverse partners together across the region and capitalises upon its’ assets.
<p>Influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based strategy and policy development; project and programme design and feasibility; programme management • Promoting and providing programmes and services for sport, recreation, physical activity, informal education and other leisure time activities for healthy recreation. • Promoting and providing facilities and services for recreational, sporting or other leisure time activities in the interests of the people of the Black Country. • Promoting and providing education, training and coaching courses which promote physical health and fitness. • Advocate and promote the Black Country

Vision

That it is easier for Black Country communities to be physically active and to be safe, secure and passionate about sport.

Mission

To change people's lives through the power of sport and physical activity across the most deprived areas of the Black Country through collaboration, influence and creation of opportunities that enable residents to have healthier & happier lives.

Ambition

The partnerships have 3 high level ambitions;

1. Enable our 318,000 inactive residents to be active.
2. Develop local insight and learnings which, when applied, will drive a reduction in the number of inactive people and evidence the broader socio-economic impact of sport and physical activity.
3. Build the credibility and belief of:
 - The Black Country as a region.
 - The role of Active Black Country with national, regional and local partners to tackle inactivity and develop sport.
 - The role that sport and physical activity can play in addressing the wider determinants of ill health and economic prosperity of the region.

Summary

We are clear about our role as an 'enabling' organisation, performing in a strategic role, facilitating effective and deep collaboration between the four local authorities, communities and other identified stakeholders. We co-ordinate joint working, where it adds most value, to tackle issues and contribute to better outcomes for Black Country people who face severe and multiple disadvantage.

Section 3 – Towards An Active Black Country**3.1 Strategic Priorities and Objectives**

Our 'Towards an Active Black Country' Strategic framework is a positioning document which sits at the heart of the partnerships approach.

We will realise our ambition and mission by having clear priorities and objectives, these will be refined throughout the cycle of this Business Plan.

The framework currently features 6 overarching strategic priorities;

- 1. Getting more people active and playing sport.**
- 2. To build a deep understanding of the Black Country and its people.**

3. **Focus on communities: develop our understanding of needs and identify community-based solutions**
4. **Align strategic priorities and generate resources and investment to ensure a well-connected local system.**
5. **Develop and upskill the Black Country workforce.**
6. **Champion physical activity and sports social, health and economic impact.**

The strategic framework has 10 specific strategic objectives and provides the platform for the work we will do, connecting the local networks, co-ordinate the offer, influence policy and enabling the Black Country as a sub region to access investment where it can have the biggest strategic impact.

There are currently 10 specific strategic objectives under the Place, People and Business headers.



Diagram 2: Towards An Active Black Country Strategic Priorities

We will realise these strategic objectives through:

- Priority Themes, Audiences and Places
- Working through our 10 step Black Country Place based approach
- Having a clear set of values and way of working

3.2 Our Priority Themes, Audience and Places.

Priority Themes

To play our role we recognise we need to work though others and need to get the infrastructure right so we can change and shift from siloed services to a collaborative place-based model so we can play our part in realising every Black Country resident right to be physically active and play sport.

The partnership has restructured the core team to work across 4 priority themes;

- Education
- Community
- Health and Wellbeing
- Workforce, Employment and Skills

The partnership will develop a range of detailed priorities across each of the theme areas across the partnership, these will be developed by the ABC Core Team and principally by the Partnership Officer for each priority theme.

Priority Audiences

Over 502,086 people live in the most deprived areas and communities across the Black Country and are most likely to be physically inactive.

To realise our ambition, we have further broken our priority audience down into 3 segments, comprising: -

- Children and Young People
- Unemployed Adults
- Employed adults in lower income roles (NS SEC 5-8)

Priority Places

The partnership will work across priority areas, identified through Socio Economic and Health data, to target resource and investment into these areas whilst retaining regional work to ensure equitable coverage in the areas of school programme delivery, community sport club and workforce programmes.

Implementation

The partnerships mission statement provides a headline statement of 'how' we will realise our vision and an annual implementation and operational plan is produced to drive forward the programme of work to meet the strategic priorities and overall vision and ambition and business objectives for the partnership.

To ensure we have an effective organisation we have developed overarching business objectives that cover the period of this business plan, these are maintained through our continuous improvement plan.

Section 4 – Our Governance Framework

4.1 Our Assurance Framework

Active Black Country operates with a transparent governance framework, defined within its Assurance Framework, which illustrates the clear separation of powers, terms of reference and statement of responsibilities of all.

Our recently revised Governance structure clearly articulates our successful hosting arrangement and ensures we are compliant with the Code of Sport Governance Tier 3 requirements. Our ongoing

commitment to these robust governance standards ensures we are strongly positioned to deliver a fit for purpose organisation.

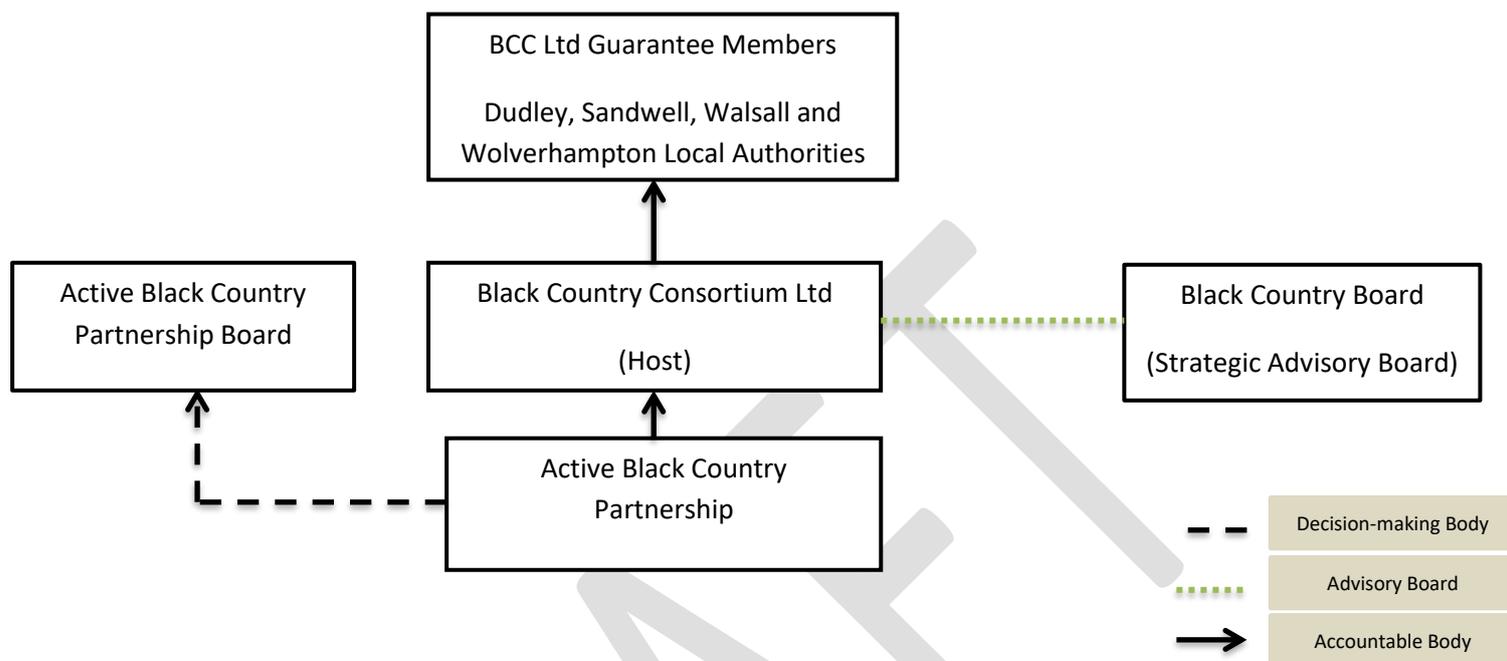


Diagram 6; ABC Governance Structure

4.2 The Active Black Country Board

The Active Black Country Board functions as the decision making body of Active Black Country and has overall responsibility for the strategic co-ordination and planning of ABC's activities, as well as holding it to account for the effective delivery of its operational plan.

Operating with Non-Executive Director status, Independent Board Members have voting rights for the Active Black Country Board but do not hold voting rights as Non-Executive Directors within the 'host' organisation BCC Ltd. Independent Board Members are comprised of an Independent Chair, Vice Chair (as Senior Independent Director) and capacity for up to 12 Independent Board Members (inclusive of Co-opted Independent Members) who hold portfolio responsibilities including an Inclusion and Safeguarding Lead.

Two individuals are nominated to the Board on an annual basis as representatives from all four of the Black Country Local Authorities. They are usually selected as a Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing via the Association of Black Country Local Authorities (ABCA), and a Local Authority Public Health Director via the ABCA Chief Executives.

The ABC Board invites advisory members to attend Board meetings as they are recognised and valued as providing high quality non-biased, direction to the Board and ABC partnership. They do not operate as Independent Board members and therefore hold no ABC Board voting rights.

The Chair of the Board delegates responsibility for the day to day management of the Active Black Country to the Active Black Country Director.

4.3 The Host organisation – Black Country Consortium Ltd

BCC Ltd is a not for profit Company limited by guarantee whose purpose is to champion the urban renaissance aspirations of the Black Country. It is governed by its Guarantee Members who hold full voting rights, constituted by the leaders of the four Black Country local authorities and by a board of ordinary members, represented by its key partners from leaders of industry, education and the public sector, who hold Non-Executive Director voting rights.

BCC Ltd works to its local Assurance Framework document which ensures the governance requirements set out in the National Assurance Framework are adhered to.

Delegation of the day to day business of the Company is given to the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Officers of the organisation who operate as the Executive Directors.

The hosting organisation importantly enables access to a skill set of expertise and knowledge not available to other CSPs and adding exceptional value for money to its hosting arrangements.

Service level agreements with BCC Ltd enable a clear definition of the service, standard of delivery and capacity, resource and costs required to meet the need of ABC and achieve the overall strategic aims of both organisations. The following key areas are addressed through separate SLAs:-

- *Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU)*
EIU are recognised as best in class at understanding and evidencing the socio-economic challenges and opportunities in the Black Country and the wider West Midlands area supporting a wide range of partners including BC LEP, City Deal and the West Midlands Combined Authority with their local insight capacity.
- *Marketing*
This resource enables the ability to co-ordinate the key overall communications and messages with our strategically aligned partners, deliver a visible brand profile and support our stakeholder engagement processes through a clearly defined marketing plan.
- *Finance*
As host organisation, BCC Ltd act as accountable body and therefore are responsible for the application for awards and accept grants in its own names, with the terms and conditions of any grant being binding on Active Black Country. The Finance function therefore hold responsibility, in partnership with the ABC Director, for the management of the financial and risk management procedures relating to Active Black Country's business.

- *Corporate Services*
The team are employed by BCC Ltd as the hosting organisation and as such, are able to benefit from its robust corporate human resources approach.

4.4 The Active Black Country (ABC) Partnership

Active Black Country is an unincorporated organisation who appoints a team of staff, employed by the Host (BCC Ltd), to provide leadership, direction, and operational management of the strategic framework.

The ABC Director is responsible to the Chair of the ABC Board and a direct report of the BCC Ltd (host) Chief Executive Officer with responsibility for carrying out the primary role of the CSP, effectively supporting the ABC Board and leading and developing a team to achieve strategic and operational objectives that contribute towards Black Country sport, physical activity and socio-economic priorities.

Section 5 – Our People Framework

5.1 Our Values

Our people will be equipped and engaged in our new ways of working and supported to continually grow and develop. To support this the below articulates our Values to ensure we continually reflect and demonstrate our mission.

- *Freedom with Responsibility:* We recognise the potential, value and contribution all our people make. Our people are encouraged to be themselves and be a responsibility-taker making decisions every day to achieve their goals.
- *Community focused approach:* We aim to understand the unique and diverse make-up of our local communities and place their needs at the fore-front of our strategy.
- *Simplicity:* We aim to work with clarity being straightforward, honest and transparent in our behaviours, actions and outcomes.
- *Passion:* We recruit, support, motivate and develop people who all share a belief in the power of sport and physical activity as a tool. Our passion is evident in all that we do.
- *Striving for high performance:* We have ambition to develop ourselves, our organisation, our partners and the Black Country.

5.2 Our People Management Framework

Our refocus towards our strategic planning, organisational development, leadership and management, and establishment of a performance culture within the partnership, demonstrates our commitment to delivering a sustainable fit for purpose organisation.

We have developed a competency-based framework which integrates various formal and informal activities, aligned to our overall Strategic Framework, which ensures our people understand what's expected of them, how to achieve high standards of performance and the resources and support available to support their engagement and development.

At Board level we have adopted a skills led approach to ensure the overall composition of the board meets and reflects the diverse nature of the local community we seek to advocate, as well as ensuring we are able to succession plan for skills shortages and gaps which exist and develop. Our reviewed practices such as e.g. criteria based recruitment, selection and appraisal review processes have enabled the organisation to further develop an effective, engaged and contributing Board steering the strategic direction of the partnership.

The team are employed by BCC Ltd as the hosting organisation and, as such, are able to benefit from its robust corporate human resources approach; based on a transparent and accountability-based culture, the people capacity is supported through e.g. flexible working practices, employee consultation processes, a corporate appraisal process and best practice HR policies and procedures.

The Active Black Country People Management Framework has been developed and is outlined below, the framework draws together support from BCC Ltd and the new approach taken with team development from an ABC perspective.

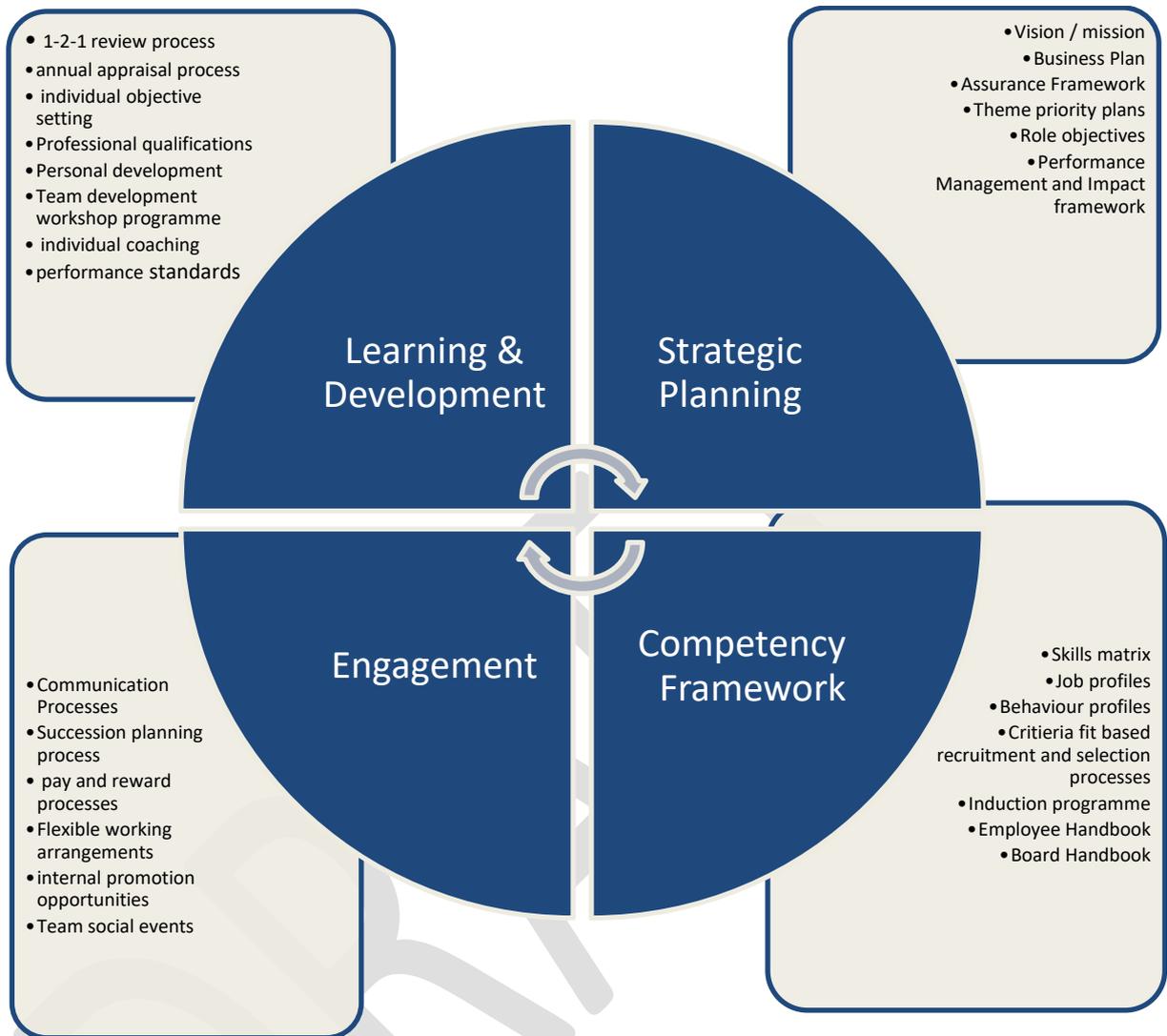
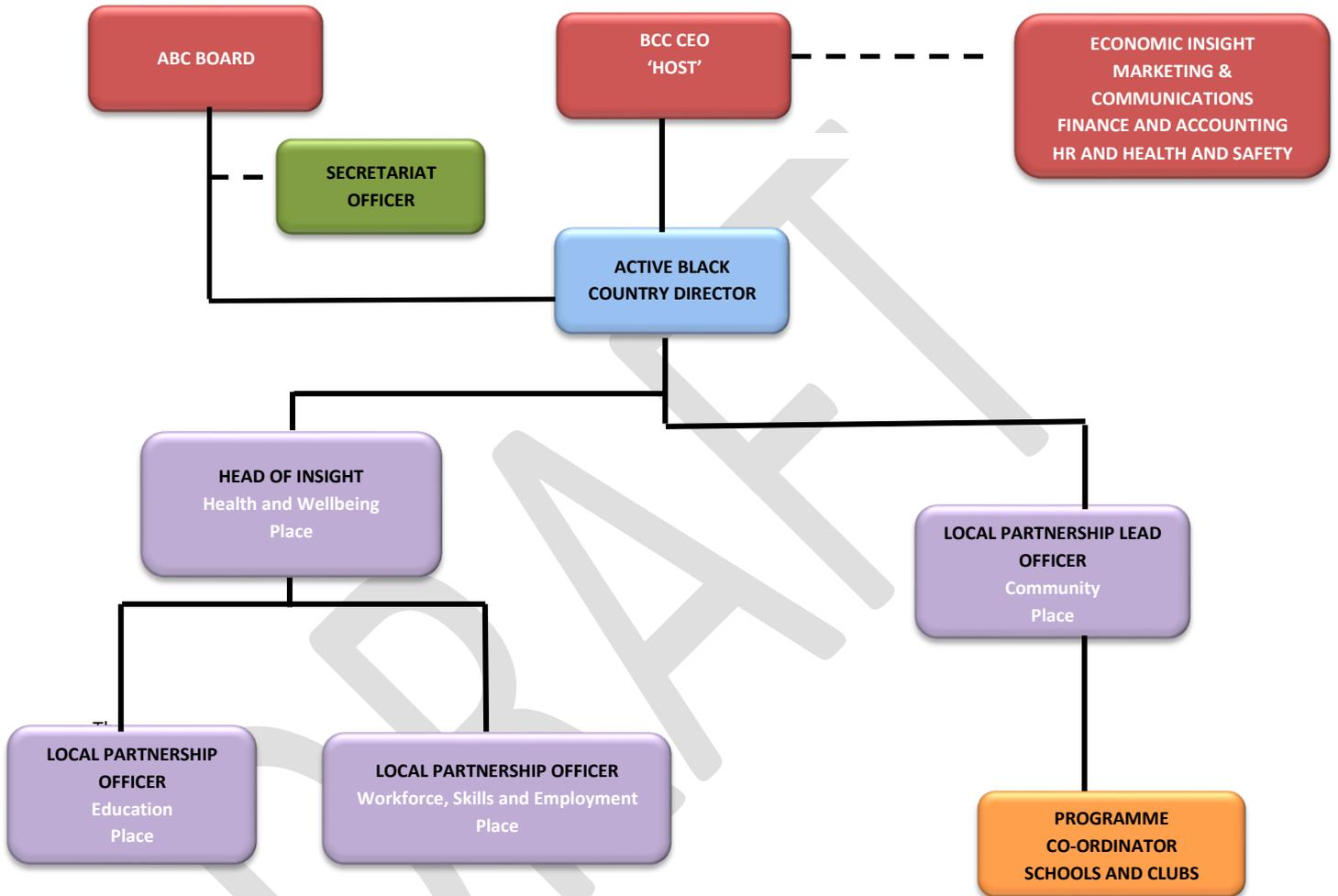


Diagram 7: ABC People Management Framework

5.3 Our Organisational Structure

The structure in place supports the rationale for our place based theme approach.



Section 6 – Marketing

6.1 Marketing Approach

The ABC marketing approach has undergone a complete review, with new reflection of the key stakeholders in line with the strategy and the main objectives; this has challenged existing or traditional relationships such as NGBs whilst balancing identification and prioritisation of new relationships across the partnership's themes.

The revised staff structure seeks the partnership officers to develop our understanding of our local place, build mutually valuable networks and focus our priorities on meaningful interventions which impact on our primary audiences.

The approach requires each area of the business to inform centrally in a more pro-active way about developments, events, news and activity in respective areas in line with strategic and business objectives, these are then 'fed' into BCC Ltd Marketing team against a set work programme.

Section 7 – Financial Framework

7.1 Risk

Active Black Country is committed to the effective management of risk at every level in the development and implementation of its strategy and operation. The ABC partnership currently utilises BCC Ltd's Risk Management Policy and risk registers to ensure the effective operation and staff safety. This was adopted in May 2017 to provide a temporary policy to aide transition in 17/18 into the new Primary Role.

The ABC Board Vice Chair sits on the BCC Audit Committee and provides a link through to the partnership.

Due to the significant changes across the partnership over the past year and the new strategic objectives, ambitions and growth of the partnership over the next 3-4 years the ABC policy needs to be refreshed and define the ABC Strategic Framework's risk management objectives, approach, responsibilities, and procedures and risk appetite.

7.2 Finance

ABC's primary funding is delivered through Sport England and we are subject to the award conditions met through any successful applications for funding. This includes, but is not limited to, our compliance with Tier 3 of the Code for Governance in Sport and achievement against the revised performance measurement improvement framework.

The ABC partnership currently has a significance reliance on the Sport England funding, which poses a level of risk over being reliant on one funding source.

The draft budget and forecast for the period have been prepared by the ABC Director.

ABC Financial Priorities



7.3 4-year finance plan

The forecasts below take into account the known funding from Sport England and other sources, with estimates used to show projected other income at this stage..

Income

- The Sport England Primary role funding which has been secured for the period 2018-2021, this is subject to award conditions and continued compliance with UK Code of Governance for Sport.
- In December 2017 Sport England confirmed there is a slight reduction (£3m) in the budget envelope for CSPs following decline in National lottery sales.
- Active Black Country received a 7% cut to the original anticipated Primary Role budget and has a total of £789,569.00 available between 2018-2021 to carry out the Primary Role.
- To mitigate the impact of this reduction ABC is able to profile their 3-year award across 2018-2021 to best meet local need.
- There is additional programme investment that ABC has to apply for, including a number of education programmes, workforce and club development; these funds are restricted in their purpose.
- There is some additional income through Strategic Commissioning and Fees and Charges for workshop delivery that is secured.
- Key to leveraging additional investment is the use of the Economic Intelligence Unit at BCC Ltd. We currently have a performance management contract for Sandwell MBC. The ambition is to replicate this across the other 3 Local Authority areas.
- Reserves carry forward in the 4-year profile has been maintained until a more substantial discussion regarding growth and investment targets, which will identify further surplus/deficit at the end of financial years.

Expenditure

- The projected capacity expenditure is currently projected to rise in line with 1% pay increases applied other than that
- There is a drive to further efficiencies and we have driven a reduction from 8% in 2016/17 to 6% in 17/18, with a target of 5% in 18/19.
- Direct expenses have been reduced with a drive to ensure the maximum amount of funding is delivered to the 'front line' to support our delivery.
- Overheads are controlled and proportionate to operating and project costs
- Variable are maintained for costs, the lease for the Deckhouse is under review.
- Non-pay costs are a % contribution to the overall BCC depreciation of assets.

Summary of Financial Forecast 2018-2022

The below table summarises the current forecast for the 4-year period.

Headline	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Sport England Funding				
Primary Role/Programme	563	553	421	345
Strategic Commissioning	16	30	30	30
Fees and Charges	2	3	5	5
Grant Funding other		75	75	
Secondment		52		
Total Income	581	713	531	380
Delivery Expenses	160	163	104	20
Capacity	361	423	375	313
Overheads Fixed/Variable	52	52	52	52
Total Expenditure	573	638	487	385
Surplus/Deficit	8	0	0	-5
Reserves	79	70	70	70

The initial anticipation is a surplus in 18/19, a balanced budget for 19/20 and 20/21 and a small deficit in 21/22 - mitigated by all Partnership Officers contracts currently ending March 21.

There is uncertainty attached to forecasting the budget over this length of time and some key assumptions have been incorporated into the projection these principally being:

- Sport England investment will continue post 2021.
- Other funding sources will be obtained, these will supplement and be ancillary to existing funding.

Future re-forecasts will be incorporated into ABC Board business and at agreed reporting points throughout the year. An annual budget for approval will be prepared in March, this will incorporate surplus/deficit accrued.

Section 8 – Performance Management Framework

8.1 Performance Measurement

The emerging Performance Management Framework supporting the development of the ‘Towards An Active Black Country Strategic Framework’ allows for an intelligence led approach to sport and physical activity development across the region. Enabling ABC to develop targeted, intelligence-led priorities which underpins the delivery of the Strategic Framework and realise other strategic objectives.

The revised Performance Management Framework quantifies the ambitions for the area based on agreed headline strategic outcomes indicators based on the partnership’s strategic objectives. The logic chain model will be utilised to demonstrate clearly the linkages from inputs via levels of investment to outputs and the impact of this activity on the outcomes required.

An integrated dashboard will provide an essential view of financial measures with the non-financial objectives. Sport England are introducing a new ‘Performance and Improvement Management Framework’ during 2018/19 and it will be prudent to consider the components of this as part of the reporting process as a whole.

Conclusion

We therefore recognise at Active Black Country that the next four-year period enables us to articulate our clear sense of purpose whilst testing approaches, learning what works, building key competencies, and helping to drive local conditions which enable a genuinely collective approach to tackling inactivity.

The plan provides an overview of our intended approach to implement a clear confident strategy, with the next 4 years critical for our sector nationally, regionally and locally. The impact that sport can have on individuals has to be evidenced to ensure a lasting legacy for individuals, communities and most importantly the impact that sport and being active can play in people’s lives.