



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



2025 - 2026
ANNUAL
REPORT



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A MESSAGE FROM CEO, JOHN OXLEY

Our fourth year of trading for Stockport Active CIC represents one of profound significance. It is the first year of operation as an agent of the Council; a strategic change in the relationship which deepens the organisation's role as an essential delivery partner whilst also realising a more favourable financial position through the treatment of VAT. Moreover, the growth in participation and the engagement in active wellbeing services of communities across Stockport has meant that for the first time ever, these services have required no revenue support cost from the Council.

The services **performed £625K better than budget** and £830K better than the previous year. Indeed the operation of the full extent of the services delivered a small operational surplus of £60K.

The talent, commitment and resultant performance of the organisation, vindicates the decision taken by the Council and its ambition to have a purpose-driven, community-centric and commercially sustainable wholly-owned entity as its agent. This year's performance represents a £2.3M

reduction in net cost to the Council since its inception which has largely been achieved by driving increased participation and **income growth of £4.4M**, whilst also withstanding the headwinds of increased energy and workforce costs and an ageing asset infrastructure.

The commitment to partnership and collaboration and the unequivocal focus on improving population health across the Borough, has stimulated creativity and innovation that has been brilliantly received by communities and has enabled the organisation to increasingly deliver to people furthest away from good health and to those who are most inactive.

We are in the business of health creation, with both prevention and intervention dimensions, and with our priorities firmly fixed on just getting our communities to move a little more, and derive the benefits not just in physical wellbeing, but increasingly improved mental wellbeing and social connection.

The Council's active wellbeing service delivered by the CIC balances commercial acumen

with social purpose and responsibility, and is held up as an exemplar across the sector. This approach has driven performance that has exploited the commercial potential that resides in parts of the Borough in order to support the expanding delivery of our active communities and specialist physical activity programmes that support the work of the health and social care sectors. It is why there is high quality studio and gym environments with the highest membership levels in Life Leisure's history, alongside community wellness and confidence walks, an ever-developing SEND programme, ward-based activity delivered in Stepping Hill hospital and the largest exercise referral programme across GM that delivers a **social value of £22,000 per person** for a cost of less than £200 per person – a return on investment that illustrates the undeniable value of physical activity.

This report provides a summary of an extensive array of activities and services delivered to communities across the Borough and their impact. To just give a flavour of some of

our notable events this year, June saw the opening of the new Move Well Studio at Life Leisure Avondale – the first of its kind in Greater Manchester that is publicly accessible, and designed specifically to meet the needs of people who have more acute mobility issues, including the ageing population and those with neurological conditions. In September we staged a month long campaign entitled 'Move Stockport'. Communities including schools, voluntary organisations and commerce joined us as we encouraged everyone to do 30 minutes of exercise each day.

This campaign saw the 'minutes of movement' increase against the previous year by 838,000 from 7.418M to 8.256M. An increase of 11%; equivalent to residents in the Borough exercising for almost 14,000 more hours in the month compared to September 2024 - an extra 465 hours more movement each day. And to complete the year in great fashion, March saw our team stage a Flash Mob in Mersey Way in celebration of International Women's Day – around 500 women took part in

a 'spontaneous' display of dance and movement illustrating the joy and connection that is stimulated by exercise.

We are relishing our role in the implementation of Live Well; championing physical activity as both a preventative and health intervention treatment which brings great transformational opportunity. We will continue to expand our work in Active Communities through the next iteration of PARiS which will see more effective triaging and greater reach through the development of the Active Pathway initiative, already meeting the needs of an increasing number of people from our most deprived communities, and so working to address the health inequities that exist, and, of course, we look forward to the launch of the integrated and pioneering Community Wellbeing Hub at Marple.

It remains a privilege to lead an organisation that delivers community benefit every single day, is driven by the belief in the transformational potential of our services and is rewarded by results of measurable impact.



OUR PURPOSE & MISSION

Our purpose is simple: **“We exist to improve the lives of others”**. We believe that physical activity can enhance the health and well-being of communities, and we work to positively impact the mental, social, and physical health of local people.

This drives everything we do and is as relevant for our workforce as it is for our customers. Our mission is “to develop a healthier and more active community”, and we enshrine this in our strapline “Live well, live life”.

To help us achieve our purpose, we have created three pillars:

- We **promote** daily activity
- We **connect** across the system with health, social care, education, and other partners, and deliver health intervention and preventative programmes
- We **provide** facilities and activity programmes that enable communities to take charge of their own health

CONNECT



PROMOTE



PROVIDE



FINANCIAL REVIEW

This was our first year acting as agents for Stockport Council. This means that all our customers became **Council customers** rather than Life Leisure customers. The income we collected from customers was passed on directly to the Council, and all the costs we incurred acting as agents, running the leisure hubs and providing activities across the borough were reimbursed to us by the Council.

2025/26 represents the 4th year of trading of Stockport Active CIC. Income has grown considerably compared with the prior year (c. 9%), mainly due to an increased uptake on swimming lessons, additional income from football at Stockport Sports Village, the creation at Grand Central of our second padel court and increased membership income due to the impact of the gym refurbishments we have been rolling out over the past three years.

Expenditure has remained constant despite staffing costs increasing by 10% due to higher national insurance costs, and as we made strides towards becoming a Real Living Wage employer in 2026/27.

In 2024/25, leisure operations generated a deficit of £0.77M, which was directly funded by Stockport Council. In 2025/26, with the change to acting as the Council’s agent, leisure generated a small surplus for the first time (£0.06M). Compared to the £1.95M deficit in 2023/24, this is a magnificent achievement and shows what can be achieved through income maximisation and tight cost control.

THE OVERALL FINANCIAL RESULTS OF THE NEW FINANCIAL MODEL ARE REFLECTED BELOW

| | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Income & Expenditure Summary | £M | £M |
| Income | 12.51 | 13.57 |
| Operating Costs | (13.28) | (13.51) |
| Operating Profit / (Loss) | (0.77) | 0.06 |
| Management Fee from Stockport Council | 0.77 | 0 |
| Net Profit / (Loss) after Management Fee | 0 | 0.06 |



SOCIAL VALUE

The Moving Communities platform is central to evidencing and strengthening the social value delivered by publicly funded leisure services throughout the UK. Developed in alignment with Sport England’s strategic priorities, the platform collects high-quality data from leisure centres and local authorities, offering a comprehensive view of how community sport and physical activity support individual wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic resilience.

By analysing usage patterns, demographic profiles, and user feedback, Moving Communities equips stakeholders with the insights needed to evaluate how facilities serve their local populations. This enables the identification of under-represented groups, the monitoring of participation trends, and a commitment to equitable access, all of which are essential to developing inclusive policies that create meaningful, lasting change.

A cornerstone of the platform’s social value framework is health improvement. Regular engagement in leisure activities helps reduce pressure on health services by preventing

lifestyle-related conditions, including obesity, diabetes, and poor mental health. Moving Communities translates these outcomes into measurable financial savings for the NHS and local authorities, providing a clear and compelling case for continued investment in community leisure.

The platform’s dashboard has undergone a significant transformation, offering a more sophisticated and comprehensive approach to assessing the value of physical activity participation. Central to this development is the introduction of the **WELLBY** methodology (Wellbeing-Adjusted Life Year), which measures subjective wellbeing on a 0-10 scale in response to the question: **“Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”**

This enhanced approach draws a clearer distinction between the primary value to individuals, such as improved mental and emotional wellbeing, and the broader secondary value to society, including reductions in health and social care costs. By incorporating the WELLBY metric alongside established tools such as the **QALY** (Quality-Adjusted

Life Year), the dashboard aligns with NHS frameworks and brings greater rigour and credibility to social value reporting.

The updated model also reflects the latest health outcomes data, the social cost of inequalities, and current UK government guidance drawn from HM Treasury’s Green Book and Sport England’s 2024 National Social Value Model. Together, these enhancements ensure the platform remains grounded in the most robust and up-to-date evidence available. As a result, Moving Communities has become an increasingly trusted resource for councils, operators, and policymakers, enabling targeted investment decisions that maximise returns and support active, thriving communities across the UK.

We are extremely proud to report that throughout 2025/26, the services delivered by Life Leisure, as an agent of the Council, generated over £22 million in Social Value, making a substantial and tangible difference to the health, happiness, and productivity of people across Stockport. This figure reflects the contributions of **92,920 unique participants** who met the minimum activity

threshold for generating social value under the UK’s physical activity guidelines. In total, our services and programmes welcomed close to **2 million visits** throughout the year.

£22m+

TOTAL SOCIAL VALUE

£237

TOTAL SOCIAL VALUE PER PERSON

£186,132

SAVED IN REDUCED GP VISITS

£722,198

SAVED AGAINST TYPE 2 DIABETES

2025 -2026 TIMELINE

Life Leisure Hazel Grove was rated 'very good' by QUEST

**APR
2025**

Completed our refurbishment of Avondale gym, including opening our "Move Well" Suite



**JUL
2025**

The new website went live, launching a new brand colour palette and enhancing the digital user experience .

Grand Central hub successfully rebranded



**AUG
2025**

Cheadle hub has successfully rebranded

**NOV
2025**



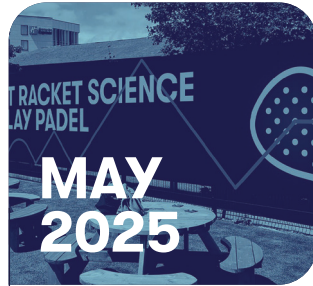
**OCT
2025**

Significant plant improvements at Romiley

**DEC
2025**

Took over the management of public tennis courts in 5 local parks, working alongside the LTA to increase participation

**FEB
2026**



**MAY
2025**

Opened a second Padel court outside Grand Central Hub in partnership with Stockport Council and Stockport Exchange.



**JUN
2025**

Awarded The Active Standard accreditation, a quality certification managed by UK Active that ensures facilities meet the standard necessary to deliver safe, inclusive and high-quality experiences to our customer.

**SEPT
2025**

'Move Stockport' campaign delivered in partnership with Stockroom, achieving 8 million minutes of movement

Strategic partnership with BRP Systems, positioning Life Leisure as the first UK customer to deliver a newly enhanced, customer-first digital and operational experience.

Romiley hub successfully rebranded

**JAN
2026**

'This is how it feels' new year campaign launched

Avondale hub successfully rebranded



**MAR
2026**

International Women's Day Zumba Flash Mob in Merseyway, over 100 customers performing

Brinnington Park hub successfully rebranded

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

During 2025/26, we completed a **three-year brand refresh programme**, aligning the Life Leisure identity with our vision and mission to improve health and wellbeing across Stockport as agent of Stockport Council. The refreshed brand places a clear emphasis on **energy, inclusivity and community**, creating a more modern, consistent and recognisable identity.

The rollout has been implemented across the entire estate, including **signage, wayfinding and in-hub environments**, designed to enhance the overall customer experience. This transformation extended beyond physical spaces to ensure consistency across **all promotional materials, tone of voice and digital marketing channels, delivering a unified**, more impactful brand presence.

A key priority throughout the programme has been to create both environments and communications that **evoke a positive emotional response**, ensuring customers feel welcomed, motivated and connected from the moment

they engage with Life Leisure, whether digitally or in-centre.

The completion of this three-year programme has resulted in a **stronger, more cohesive brand**, supporting increased engagement, an improved customer experience and enhanced commercial performance, while reinforcing Life Leisure's position as a modern, community-focused wellbeing provider.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

A series of high-impact, insight-led marketing campaigns designed to grow participation, deepen community engagement and bring our organisational mission to life across Stockport, while also supporting commercial performance.

The year commences with **'Let's get Stockport moving'**, with sub-campaigns designed to build confidence and increase participation across key activities, including walking and swimming. As part of this, **'Let's get Stockport walking'** in partnership with Age UK, promoted accessible physical activity through community-based initiatives and achieved

regional recognition, securing coverage on the BBC and highlighting the positive impact of walking on health and wellbeing, extending the campaign's reach beyond local audiences.

Summer activity included a street art activation at Grand Central, in collaboration with local artist Qubek, Stockport Council and Stockport Exchange. This campaign utilised creative placemaking to engage a new audience and mark the opening of a second Padel court. Alongside this, the Avondale refurbishment campaign successfully repositioned the upgraded facility, driving increased footfall and engagement.

September saw the first borough-wide campaign, **"Move Stockport"**, delivered in collaboration with Stockroom, Stockport Council and the NHS. Encouraging residents to undertake at least 30 minutes of daily movement in ways that suited them, the campaign generated over 8 million minutes of activity. This demonstrated strong engagement across communities, schools and

workplaces, while reinforcing key public health messaging.

The New Year campaign, **"This is how it feels"**, delivered 1172 new joiners, achieved a **54% increase** in website traffic, and generated long-term value despite external challenges.

The year concluded with **'Power to glow'**, launched in alignment with International Women's Day. A Zumba flash mob set in the Mersey way precinct drove strong awareness outcomes, including a **36.6% increase** in website users and a **57% growth** in new users, alongside viral coverage across multiple social media platforms.

Our campaigns were delivered through an integrated, multi-channel approach, contributing to increased engagement, enhanced brand positioning and measurable growth in participation, particularly among younger and more diverse audiences.





DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

We made significant progress in our digital journey, with strong growth across online platforms reflecting increased investment and a clear shift in how customers engage with health and wellbeing services.

The app remains central to this strategy, with monthly active users reaching **19,052** in March 2026, a 31.5% increase from the previous year and a gain of over **4,500** users. This growth highlights the increasing demand for convenient, mobile-first access to bookings and services.

Across the wider digital estate, the year saw **168,000 active users** and **161,000 new users**, generating over **2.3 million events** and **926,000 page views**. Direct traffic remained the strongest acquisition channel, delivering **142,000 new users**, reflecting strong brand recognition and repeat engagement, while organic search contributed a further **14,000 new users**.

A key development this year was the introduction of a structured 60-day CRM welcome journey, designed to support customers

during the critical early stages of their relationship with Life Leisure. The programme delivered measurable impact, with participants extending their stay by an average of **two additional months**, and onboarding completion rates increasing from **13% to 32%**, demonstrating the value of targeted, customer-first communication.

Further enhancing the digital experience, we introduced **Stockport Sam**, an AI-powered customer service and sales chatbot that provides instant, accessible support to help customers find products, answer queries, and navigate services, while reducing pressure on frontline teams.

Our digital growth is also reflected across social media channels, with particularly strong growth on emerging platforms highlighting our ability to engage new and younger audiences.

The next phase of our digital transformation will focus on **launching a new leisure management system**. This transition will

represent a significant step forward, enabling a more **integrated, customer-first approach** through improved personalisation, streamlined booking and customer journeys and enhanced operational insight. This next stage will build on the strong digital foundations established this year, positioning Life Leisure to deliver a more seamless and responsive customer experience.

Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on enhancing the digital experience, with ongoing investment in personalisation, usability and platform optimisation to meet evolving customer expectations.

168,000

ACTIVE USERS

2.3M

EVENTS GENERATED

926,000

PAGE VIEWS

4,500

NEW APP USERS

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Life Leisure continued to strengthen the Council’s membership base over the year, achieving a net increase of **415 members** and closing the period with a **total membership exceeding 16,800** at the end of March 2026. This sustained growth reflects a strong alignment between our offer and community needs, underpinned by effective acquisition and retention strategies that continue to drive increased engagement in health and wellbeing customers.

Our performance has been supported by well-planned, insight-led campaigns focused on building awareness and participation in health and wellbeing activities. A cohesive, consistent campaign message has enabled us to connect meaningfully with local communities and promote the benefits of movement in an inclusive, accessible way. By leveraging a mix of targeted channels, we have ensured broad demographic reach and maximised the impact of our engagement activity.

The diverse and flexible subscription portfolio that Life Leisure operates on behalf of Stockport Council continues

to support participation across all ages and backgrounds. A key development during the year was the introduction of the **Stockport Active Scheme**, which reinforces our commitment to reducing barriers to activity with **over 800 active customers**. This initiative provides targeted support and improved access to facilities, enabling more residents to become active, enhance their wellbeing, and make sustainable lifestyle changes.

To support long-term engagement, we have invested in systems and processes that streamline and automate the customer journey from the point of joining. This strategic focus on customer experience has contributed to improved retention outcomes, including a 2-month increase in average membership duration, reinforcing the value of a more connected and personalised member journey.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on expanding access and welcoming more residents into the Council’s Hubs, supporting Stockport’s ambition to be a healthier and more active borough.

We will continue to build on our strong foundations, engaging people at every life stage and deepening our impact across communities. Life Leisure remains committed to its purpose of improving lives through health and wellbeing, working in partnership to create lasting, positive change.

164,000
AVERAGE VISITS PER MONTH

10,988
NEW HEALTH & WELLBEING MEMBERSHIPS

16,748
LIVE HEALTH & WELLBEING MEMBERS

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Gathering customer insight on behalf of the Council is a critical component of Life Leisure's role as the Council's agent, providing valuable understanding of customer needs, expectations, and experiences. This intelligence informs service development, supports innovation, and underpins our commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible health and wellbeing provision. A strong feedback culture enables us to continually work with the Council to help it refine the offer, enhance customer satisfaction and support growth of the offer.

To maintain a clear and current understanding of our communities, we proactively gather feedback through multiple channels, including Net Promoter Score (NPS) surveys, face-to-face engagement, and customer comment cards. During the year, **over 5,000 customer insights were captured** through NPS surveys alone, providing a robust evidence base to inform service improvements. This structured, multi-channel approach ensures that customer voices remain central to the ongoing development of Stockport's

active wellbeing offer and that positive, meaningful impact is delivered across Stockport.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

"Fantastic, clean facility with exceptional staff that go above and beyond for customers and members. Highly recommended. Lots of affordable activities and a community hub."

"It has been a lifeline for me... Mentally and physically fit through their help... Better than any prescription."

"The swimming lessons are excellent."

"Friendly, community gym where members and staff look out and care for each other. Great equipment and a wide range of classes that suit everyone. Not at all intimidating, and everyone is prepared to support each other and offer advice. Best trainers ever!"



"better than any prescription"



"exceptional staff"



"great equipment & wide range of classes"



ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

From early years through to older adulthood, **we believe that everyone should benefit from movement** in a way that suits them. Unfortunately, not everyone has that opportunity, and the Active Communities team continue to place a strong emphasis on supporting our residents who face some of the starkest challenges in accessing movement, having accessed £105k of external funding alongside current long-term grants to achieve this.

The **Big Lottery-funded R Time project** is in its 6th year and demonstrates the effect of combining thoughtful collaboration alongside a strong and influential youth voice. A partnership with Stockport Council, Sector 3 and Life Leisure, as well as the **78 R Time network members** who provide Stockport’s youth provision, has supported **11,724 attendances**, all from the **20% most deprived areas** in the last year, which is a **growth of 31%** compared to the previous year.

Other highlights include:

- 1466 attendances from ethnically diverse backgrounds (24/25 – 868)
- 4815 female attendances (under 16): (24/25 -3536)
- Over £1 million pound of grant applications supported through Sector 3 to the R Time network members

We recognise that SEND families face additional barriers to accessing trusted, suitable activities that meet their needs. Through our Sport England-funded Place Partnership work, we have challenged ourselves to create better conditions for SEND families to become more active, resulting in improved opportunities for supported swimming lessons, targeted activities, and the continuation of strong partnerships with organisations across Stockport.

Our targeted provision, which naturally only permits smaller numbers to create more comfortable environments for SEND children and their families, includes:

- Inclusive Inflatable Swim = 145 (HG) + 214 (ROM) = 359
- Stay & Play (Mild needs) = 211
- SEND Family Play = 28
- SEND Family Swim = 685
- Sensory Garden = 273
- 24 families signposted and guided into appropriate activity through our Inclusion Officer

CHILDREN

The Children’s Therapy Service (physiotherapy team), in partnership with Life Leisure, has successfully co-delivered three pilot programmes designed to transition children’s physiotherapy from traditional clinical settings into community-based environments. These pilots, delivered across Avondale and Houldsworth Village, aimed to strengthen children and families’ engagement with physical

activity and overall wellbeing. The initiative has been well received, with strong support from colleagues implementing the Balanced System, and has been recognised for enhancing opportunities at both universal and lower targeted levels of provision. The approach also enabled closer partnership working, improved pathways into community activity, and increased families’ confidence to sustain active lifestyles beyond clinical intervention.



HAF

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and Funded Holiday provision have provided extensive support to children and families across Reddish, Offerton, Brinnington and Cheadle Heath, **delivering over 3,500 funded places throughout the year.**

The programme has placed physical activity, health and wellbeing, and enrichment opportunities at the heart of its offer, while strong links with Family Hubs have enabled a wider package of support for families beyond holiday provision. A significant proportion of attendees (over 40%) were children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or additional needs.

In response to this demand, additional funding was secured to deliver enhanced provision, including smaller-group work, tailored activities, and direct support from our SEND and Inclusion Officer. This targeted approach has been particularly impactful for families who have previously struggled to access suitable holiday provision, **ensuring inclusive access and meaningful engagement for all participants.**

STATISTICS

- 3,500+ funded holiday activity places delivered
- 4 locations: Reddish, Offerton, Brinnington, and Cheadle Heath
- 40%+ of attendees identified with SEND or an additional need
- Additional funding secured to support enhanced SEND provision
- 12 SEND places per day delivered across 4 venues in smaller, supported groups
- 288 children with SEND or additional needs supported across the year in this ‘specialist’ provision

Outside built assets, we have a strong community presence, delivering opportunities through supported movement (SMILE) and social sport programmes (I Wish I Tried).

SMILE provides seated and standing chair-based activities in a variety of private and public settings, resulting in **7516 visits** across 15 classes per week.

These settings include classes for targeted audiences, including:

- People living with Parkinson’s or MS
- Care home residents
- Patients at Stepping Hill Hospital

In 2026 onwards, we will see the brand change from SMILE to Supported Movement to clarify the purpose of the sessions and increase accessibility to a wider audience. The programme continues to provide a safe, inclusive and confidence-building pathway into movement.

The I Wish I Tried programme seeks to encourage people to try sporting activities to regain their confidence in moving more, whilst also creating strong social connections with other participants. With over 17 classes per week across Stockport, these low-demand, high-flexibility opportunities have enabled **5707 visits** to activities such as walking football, badminton, and walking netball.

77,484

VISITS TO COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

3500+

FUNDED HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PLACES DELIVERED

288

SUPPORTED CHILDREN WITH SEND OR ADDITIONAL NEEDS

HEALTH INITIATIVES

The number of years spent living a healthy life is decreasing, and that's why initiatives which aim to increase the number of years spent in good health are vital for residents. Our long-standing Physical Activity Referral Service in Stockport (PARiS), in partnership with Public Health at SMBC and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, continues to receive a high number of referrals, and 2025/26 were no exception.

2414 referrals were received for PARiS, with an increased uptake rate from the previous year from 67% to 71%. The increase in uptake rate can be partly attributed to the enormous effort from team members, as well as to restructuring our wider health and wellbeing teams, which reduced waiting times for the service from 6-7 months to 2 weeks.

Our walking programmes cater to all abilities - supporting people who find walking challenging through to those who can comfortably take part in a two-hour Wellness Walk and have gone from strength to strength in the past 12 months.

412 walks have been delivered this year across both our Confidence Walks and Wellness Walks programme, with many delivered in partnership with AgeUK to support older adults in finding both movement and social networks. The success of Life Leisure's walking programme has attracted much attention, so much so that it featured on BBC News and Radio coverage, highlighting the impact it is having on the **3000+** yearly attendances.

We are acutely aware of the importance of bringing movement to people rather than focusing solely on in-hub activity. With support from GM Moving through the Place Partnership approach, Life Leisure took 10 activity packs to 11 clinical wards at Stepping Hill Hospital to help engage the patients and the workforce in supported movements using equipment from the packs.

With support from the NHS Stockport FT Public Health Nurse, this approach has begun to embed meaningful movements within the wards, contributing to greater awareness of the importance of

physical activity for patients in unfortunate circumstances.

As we move into the year ahead, we will continue to build on the learning from our Active Pathways programme, funded through Sport England's Place Partnership. This work places greater emphasis on coaching and supporting people to build confidence and readiness before they begin physical activity. Building on the early success of 40% of participants accessing Active Pathways from the 20% most deprived areas, we will find ways to enhance the personalisation of people's support based on both their physical and wellbeing needs.

KEY OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

| OUTPUT OR OUTCOME | 2025/26 |
|---|---|
| No. of Completers | 1169 |
| No. Of Referring Organisations | 105 |
| Most prevalent medical reasons for referral | Mental health, obesity and MSK conditions |
| Average points improvement in mental health (measured by wemwbs) | 5.5pts (11% from baseline) |
| Average improvement in self-reported health (measured by EQ5D) | 15pts (31% from baseline) |
| Average increase in physical activity levels (measured by IPAQ) | 1571 METS (323% from baseline) |

OUR WORKFORCE

Our workforce is central to Life Leisure’s ability to deliver high-quality, inclusive and impactful services for the people of Stockport. As a delivery partner to the Council, our workforce priorities are deliberately aligned not only to our organisational aims, but also to the ambitions set out in the **Stockport Council Plan** and the **One Team People Plan**. Through this alignment, we play an active role in supporting wider borough-wide outcomes while ensuring Life Leisure remains a great place to work.

This year, our focus has been on creating a supportive, purposeful, and principles-led working environment where colleagues feel connected to our mission and motivated by the contribution they make to our communities. The One Team People Plan places strong emphasis on wellbeing, belonging, growth and meaningful work. These principles strongly resonate with Life Leisure’s own People Priorities and have guided our activity throughout the year.

A key highlight was our annual **Life Leisure Summit**, which brought our teams together from across the organisation

to celebrate success, recognise collective achievements and invest time in personal wellbeing. The event provided an opportunity for teams to step away from daily operational pressures and focus on themselves, reinforcing our commitment to employee health and wellbeing. Workshops included accessible physical activity sessions such as yoga, pilates and padel, alongside a **Be One Mindset** session focused on personal growth and self-reflection.

Building on this, we piloted a **Be One Mindset programme** for our workforce to help strengthen resilience, challenge stigma and reframe mental health in a positive and proactive way. This pilot supported colleagues to develop practical tools for managing change, maintaining wellbeing and sustaining performance, all of which are increasingly important within a fast-paced and customer-facing environment. This initiative strongly supports Life Leisure’s commitment to workforce wellbeing.

Alongside wellbeing, we have continued to embed our **Vision 2030** across the organisation, particularly with managers, to

strengthen understanding of our long-term direction and the difference our work makes. By reinforcing this shared vision, we aim to enhance a sense of purpose and connection, ensuring colleagues can see how their individual roles contribute both to Life Leisure’s success and to wider borough outcomes. This aligns closely with the Council Plan’s ambition to create opportunities for everyone and to enable a motivated, empowered workforce that delivers for residents.



our people

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, Life Leisure will continue to strengthen its focus on **employee engagement, attraction** and long-term workforce sustainability, ensuring we have the skills, capability and capacity needed to deliver for Stockport's communities. A key priority will be developing clear and accessible **career pathways** for colleagues, helping people to grow, progress and build fulfilling careers within Life Leisure.

Central to this ambition is the continued development of the **Grow Academy**, which will play a pivotal role in supporting learning, talent development and internal progression across the organisation. Through the Grow Academy, we will invest in structured development opportunities that support both operational excellence and personal growth, enabling colleagues at all stages of their career to build confidence, capability and aspiration.

Alongside this, we will focus on attracting new talent who share our values and purpose, strengthening our position as an inclusive employer of choice within the borough.

By connecting engagement, development and attraction activities to our Vision 2030 and the Council's People Plan ambitions, we aim to create a motivated, resilient and future-focused workforce that is proud of the difference it makes every day.



PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

Making a meaningful difference to the lives of Stockport's residents remains at the heart of everything we do. We continue to build on our network of partnerships spanning the Borough and across Greater Manchester, ensuring our services are accessible to every corner of the community.

As an agent of **Stockport Council**, we deliver leisure and wellbeing services shaped around the needs of our residents, taking them directly into the communities where they are needed most. Our approach is firmly rooted in the **One Stockport Borough Plan** and the **Stockport Active Communities Strategy**, and we continue to work alongside a range of partners to drive forward our shared aims, supporting the council in achieving its objectives as well as our own.

Our delivery model focuses on neighbourhoods rather than assets, allowing us to reach people directly where they live and offer solutions relevant to them. We are proud to be a collaborative partner across both public and

voluntary sectors to enhance the wellbeing and activity levels of residents, and our **Active Pathways programme** is a key component of an aligned delivery model across the Borough. Active Pathways brings together information on a wide range of physical activity sessions in one inclusive space, making it easier for individuals to access the service which best supports them. This collaborative approach to support more holistic wellbeing objectives will enable enhanced provision and services across our communities.

We are proud to be an active partner within **Stockport's Family Hub** delivery model, with each of our facilities recognised as a key community asset. The buildings we manage on behalf of the Council provide welcoming spaces where families can connect with support services alongside our health and wellbeing offer. Working collaboratively across health, social care, education and the voluntary sector, we have continued to strengthen referral pathways and co-locate services this year, ensuring families can access

help in familiar and trusted surroundings.

Across all our work, we embed the **GM Live Well** principles, empowering residents to make positive, lasting changes to their health and wellbeing. Our partnerships span local authority through to the voluntary and community sector, reflecting the whole-system approach that GM Live Well champions. From physical activity and healthy eating to mental wellbeing and social connection, we support residents to navigate services that help reduce health inequalities across Stockport.

Throughout this year, we have led local pilot initiatives on behalf of the council, delivered a range of commissioned services through **Public Health**, and facilitated **HAF-funded projects** during school holiday periods to support children and families most in need. We have also continued to work in close partnership with the **SMBC's Detached Youth Team** and **Sector 3 on R Time**, our co-produced youth intervention programme, which offers structured and meaningful

opportunities for young people who are at risk.

As a founding member of **GM Active**, we continue to play a leading role in transforming how local leisure providers serve their communities, supporting active lives for all, tackling health inequalities, and embedding active wellbeing within the wider health and social care system. Through GM Active, we also support the **Prehab4Cancer** programme locally, the first integrated care rehabilitation and recovery programme of its kind in the UK, offering vital support to cancer patients throughout their treatment journey.

ONESTOCKPORT
Family Hubs

Sector³
STOCKPORT IN SYNERGY

Stockport
ageUK

GM ACTIVE
WE MOVE AS ONE

 **STOCKPORT**
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

FACILITIES & ENVIRONMENT

Life Leisure manages a portfolio of facilities across Stockport on behalf of Stockport Council. Whilst a number of these facilities are ageing and require ongoing investment for upkeep and maintenance, our primary commitment remains the provision of safe, clean, and welcoming environments for our customers. We work closely with Council colleagues to develop and deliver a long-term estate strategy.

During the past financial year, £695,225 was allocated to planned preventative maintenance and associated remedial works, with a further £582,039 invested in facility improvements. This collaborative approach with the Council ensures that projects are prioritised to support the long-term sustainability of the estate.

Notable investments during the year include the refurbishment of the plant room at Romiley, encompassing the replacement of filter media and wider improvements to the heat exchange system and surrounding pipework. Additionally, a new padel court was opened at Stockport

Exchange, operated via our Grand Central hub. This facility has proven to be a considerable success and remains on track to achieve full cost recovery within the originally projected 14-month period. Across the wider estate, customer-facing areas have continued to be refreshed, including the replacement of a significant number of shower facilities at pool sites to enhance the overall customer experience.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Reducing Life Leisure’s environmental impact and lowering consumption of gas and electricity, our second-highest operational cost, remain key strategic priorities. Based on 2024/25 data, total consumption stood at approximately 8.6 million kWh of gas and 2.3 million kWh of electricity. Through targeted efficiency measures, we achieved reductions of 3% and 6% respectively, delivering a saving of £30,337 against budget despite setting some challenging targets at the start of the year. A further 12-month supply agreement has been secured

with our energy provider, and purchasing options remain under review. Whilst energy tariffs have moderated from the peak levels seen in 2022/23, they remain considerably above pre-2020 levels, with total energy expenditure of £1,273,774 in 2025/26.

DECARBONISATION AND NET ZERO

In partnership with Stockport Council, Life Leisure is actively working towards the ambitious targets set out under the Stockport Climate Action Now (CAN) framework, which aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038. In support of this objective, feasibility studies for decarbonisation projects have been completed at our Cheadle, Hazel Grove, and Romiley hubs. During 2026, we intend to submit a funding application to the Public Buildings Retrofit Fund to bring these proposals forward.

A series of capital investments has been made to advance this agenda, and combined efforts with the Council have resulted in a saving of 40 tonnes of CO₂ over the course of the year. Further opportunities will be pursued

throughout 2026/27, with a focus on enhanced system controls, in-depth site audits, and improved heat recovery.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Life Leisure remains committed to minimising its environmental footprint through the continued development of recycling initiatives. Dedicated recycling contracts have been established

to reduce landfill waste, resulting in the recycling of 8.3 tonnes of paper and 2.8 tonnes of plastic across the estate during the year. We have invested in customer-facing recycling collection points and introduced biodegradable cleaning wipes within our Health and Wellbeing spaces, with a commitment to expanding our recycling activity year on year.

£582,039

INVESTED IN CAPITAL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

£30,337

ENERGY SAVING AGAINST BUDGET

40

TONNES OF CO₂ SAVED FROM REDUCED CONSUMPTION

provide

AQUATICS

PUBLIC SWIM

Swim ticket revenue reached approximately £780,000, with more than 325,000 tickets sold across lane, fun, inclusive, and general swim sessions. Dedicated provision is also maintained for local SEND and community groups, reflecting our commitment to ensuring our pools remain accessible to all members of the community.

During the year, we achieved the Swim England Water Wellbeing accreditation, a recognition awarded to facilities that deliver inclusive, health-focused aquatic sessions. This accreditation underscores our ongoing commitment to improving health and wellbeing through aquatic activity.

All our pools are now listed on Poolfinder, offering clear and comprehensive information on accessibility, sessions, and facilities. This enables individuals to easily identify the most suitable swimming options for their needs.

To maintain the safe and effective operation of our facilities, we delivered seven National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) courses and

welcomed 34 newly qualified lifeguards to our team. Ongoing monthly training is provided to 259 qualified staff members, ensuring consistently high safety standards across all sites.

SWIMMING LESSONS

Our swimming lesson programme currently supports 6,108 learners enrolled across 946 classes per week - a 3.5% increase in class provision year on year. Lessons are tailored to a wide range of demographics and abilities, including 30 adult lessons and 26 SEND lessons per week. Our Rookie and Junior Swimfit programmes continue to provide structured progression pathways for children who have completed the Junior Lesson curriculum.

School swimming provision is delivered to 82 Local Education Authority schools and four independent schools. This year, 77% of pupils achieved the National Curriculum standard of swimming 25 metres, with 73% demonstrating efficient stroke technique and 74% meeting water safety and personal survival criteria. Standards and consistency across school swimming have been further strengthened through the

introduction of the Swimphony platform, which supports quality assurance across all delivery.

To sustain and grow our teaching capacity, we delivered three Level 1 and four Level 2 qualifications, adding 28 new teachers to our team. Our teaching workforce now comprises 32 Level 1 and 62 Level 2 qualified teachers, supported by seven mentor teachers and five Pool Coordinators.

In line with the Water Wellbeing initiative, our teaching staff have received training in inclusion, disability awareness, and working with adults managing long-term health conditions. We have also introduced discounted holiday swimming courses for children eligible for Free School Meals, ensuring our programmes remain accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of our community.

COACHING

Our coaching programme, Stockport Metro, continues to serve as a high-quality talent pathway for swimmers at every stage of development. The programme supports 366 members, comprising 254

junior swimmers, 62 masters swimmers, and 50 synchronised swimming members, spanning academy level through to high performance. Athletes have access to all five pools, with over 5,800 coaching hours and 800 land-based training hours delivered annually, providing a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to performance development. Competitive opportunities are carefully matched to each stage of development, ranging from local competitions for academy-level swimmers to national events for those performing at the highest level.

The programme is built on a clear, structured development pathway. The Stroke Development Programme bridges the transition between junior swimming lessons and entry into the coaching structure, while the Talent Programme supports younger swimmers who demonstrate accelerated progression through the junior lesson curriculum.

Our synchronised swimming programme offers pathways from recreational participation through to national competition. The masters programme continues to grow, with flexible

training options available across morning, lunchtime, and evening sessions, enabling swimmers of all backgrounds and commitments to access high-quality coaching.

STATISTICS

Total Aquatics Income - £4,368,653

6108 on Life Leisure Swim Lessons

Total Classes - 47300

Schools - 86



HEALTH & FITNESS

Member insight has shown a clear desire for a more immersive training experience, whether through group exercise or independent gym use. Investment in contemporary, well-designed spaces has strengthened both member acquisition and retention. Our refurbished hubs continue to provide vibrant, welcoming environments that encourage physical activity. Members benefit from a broad range of options, including access to 17,000+ iFIT coach-led cardiovascular workouts, dedicated strength training zones, and purpose-built functional R1G areas for those preparing for Hyrox events.

In July, the Avondale Hub underwent a comprehensive transformation, delivering a modernised gym environment enhanced by increased natural light to create a more open and inviting space. A significant addition to this refurbishment was the introduction of Greater Manchester's first Innerva Suite, a range of power-assisted equipment designed for individuals who may not be comfortable using conventional gym facilities. Launched under the banner of 'Move Well', the initiative has successfully

provide

increased engagement among older adults and operates in partnership with the NHS, receiving referrals into coach-led sessions.

Group Exercise has continued its strong performance, averaging 1,850 classes per month, generating approximately 34,000 participation opportunities for Stockport residents. Mind and Body, Dance, and Fitness Style classes remain the most popular formats, with occupancy regularly exceeding 80% of capacity and collectively representing 30% of the total group exercise programme.

The quality of a new member's early experience is a key determinant of long-term engagement. In 2025/26, a more tailored onboarding journey led to a 15% increase in the proportion of new members completing the onboarding experience compared to the prior year, reflecting the positive impact of a structured, personalised welcome programme.

Personal training revenue has continued to grow, driven by increased session delivery by internal health and fitness coaches. This contributed to a 45% rise in income compared to 2024/25, with the programme demonstrating consistent year-on-year momentum.



575,120

TOTAL GYM VISITS

306,683

TOTAL ATTENDANCES OF GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES

22,550

CLASSES DELIVERED

45%

PT INCOME INCREASE

2026 ONWARDS

The great thing about the simplicity of our purpose – ‘we exist to improve the lives of others’ – is that it has no finish line. We’re blessed with an insatiable organisational desire to innovate, to re-imagine and to challenge convention so that our services, programmes and activities reach more people and have a positive benefit on the health and well-being of all communities.

This forthcoming year will see us launch the Council’s new integrated Community Hub in Marple and we look forward to developing great collaboration with health care professionals and library service professionals to provide a unique series of services.

We will launch our new software platform that will enhance the ability for our communities to book activity, choose their membership, track their exercise, whilst using emerging technology that will enable them to develop their own personal health and well-being plan, and encourage their adherence to physical activity. And we will develop a digital-only proposition ensuring that opportunity to move about a

little bit more is not dependent upon visiting one of our Hubs.

We will be expanding our work in Active Communities through the next iteration of PARiS which will see more effective triaging and greater reach through the development of the Active Pathway initiative.

We will be continuing our commitment to invest in the asset infrastructure across Stockport so that our spaces and places have well-equipped and attractive environments that meet the needs of people at a neighbourhood level.

All this set against the backdrop of creating the conditions for everyone in the Borough to ‘Live Well’.

We are only limited by the ceiling of our own ambition and this organisation’s ambition is unbound.



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

| | |
|------------|---|
| AC2 | 121,684 Leisure Key & Stockport Active visits (88,709 visits 24/25) |
| AC4 | 355,149 swimming lesson visits and 6181 swimming lesson pupils (340,885 visits and 6070 pupils 24/25) |
| AC5 | 77,484 visits on outreach programmes and activity (66,613 visits 24/25) |
| AC6 | 1814 people started on the SPA service (1780 – 24/25) with 1255 completing the service (1042 - 24/25) |

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE & REACH

| | |
|------------|---|
| CE1 | 1,963,372 total throughput (1,854,888 24/25) |
| CE2 | 1,014,735 visits from specified target groups (872,500 visits 24/25) |
| CE3 | Quest – Very Good |
| CE4 | Average Net Promoter Score = 42 (National Benchmark = 42) (48 in 24/25) |
| CE5 | 40% retention rate over 12 months (34% in 2024/25) |

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

| | |
|------------|---|
| FC1 | £1,277,262 invested in facility improvements and maintenance (24/25 £2,899,577) |
| FC2 | Overall energy consumption: 8,395,994 kWh Gas – a 3% reduction year on year and 2,192,625 kWh electric – 6% reduction |

ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

| | |
|------------|--|
| OG1 | Social Value = £22,020,872 |
| OG2 | 4 apprentices employed (4 apprentices 24/25) |
| OG3 | Stockport workforce = 76.6% (76% in 24/25) |
| OG4 | 2588 training hours completed (3843 hours 24/25) |
| OG5 | 98% retention of workforce (97.4% in 24/25) |

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL

| | |
|------------|---|
| FC1 | Income less expenditure: £56,071 surplus (24/25 £769,448 deficit) |
| FC2 | Subsidy per visit: £NIL (contribution per visit £0.03) |
| FC3 | Value of external grants secured: £477,192 (24/25 £626,566) |
| FC4 | % cost recovery: 100% (24/25 94%) |





