

From Silos to Systems

How local government
reorganisation and devolution
create an opportunity for place-
led collaboration

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Context setting

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Why talk about this now?

- Local government is changing, in different ways and at different speeds across the country
- The arrangements which support our sectors do not amount to a system
- It is inefficient and ineffective
- With reorganisation comes the imperative to rethink and create a locally differentiated but nationally coherent system.



THE STATUS QUO DOES
NOT UTILISE THE TOTALITY
OF THE DWINDLING
RESOURCES IN THE
SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY

WE LACK A VISION AND A
PLAN DEVELOPED
TOGETHER BY THE SYSTEM
THAT RESOURCES IT

Creating a subsidiary system

- The different players in the reorganised system need to work as one system
- A shared sense of what improving active wellbeing involves
- Informed by both national, regional and local priorities
- With clearly defined roles
- The drivers are not a hierarchy



RE-IMAGINE THE
SYSTEM SO IT IS
FIT FOR
PURPOSE

We need to.....

Optimise the public resources in the system, align priorities and co-ordinate funding across the tiers of government

Right-size policy problems to spatial levels and move decisions as near as possible to those affected by them

Be responsive to local need and opportunities, agreed with local stakeholders including the public

Address inequality

Be evidence-based, with measures of success that are proportionate to collect

Be transparent so the public can hold the decision-maker accountable

Be long-term to facilitate sustainable outcomes

The principles

- Governance – subsidiarity and alignment through the tiers
- Data – evidence that is proportionate to collect and useful with national consistency and locally responsive measures
- Strategy – a collective vision, developed by the whole system, and a plan for how we deliver it together
- Investment – designed to resource the plan
- Delivery – as part of the fabric of place, with growing collaboration between local stakeholders
- Accountability – to citizens, through local democracy and transparent scrutiny



Learning from others and preparing for change

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Key learning from previous new unitaries' approach to bringing leisure and active wellbeing services together



- The good – North Yorkshire Council
- The bad and ugly – Council 'X'



What can legacy Councils and emerging shadow authorities start doing now?

1. Establish a shadow Active Wellbeing Board to anchor early governance
2. Complete an honest assessment of what will be inherited
3. Start to plan contract extensions, renewals and any future procurement exercises early
4. Begin integration planning around core systems, processes and workforce.

Getting the basics right



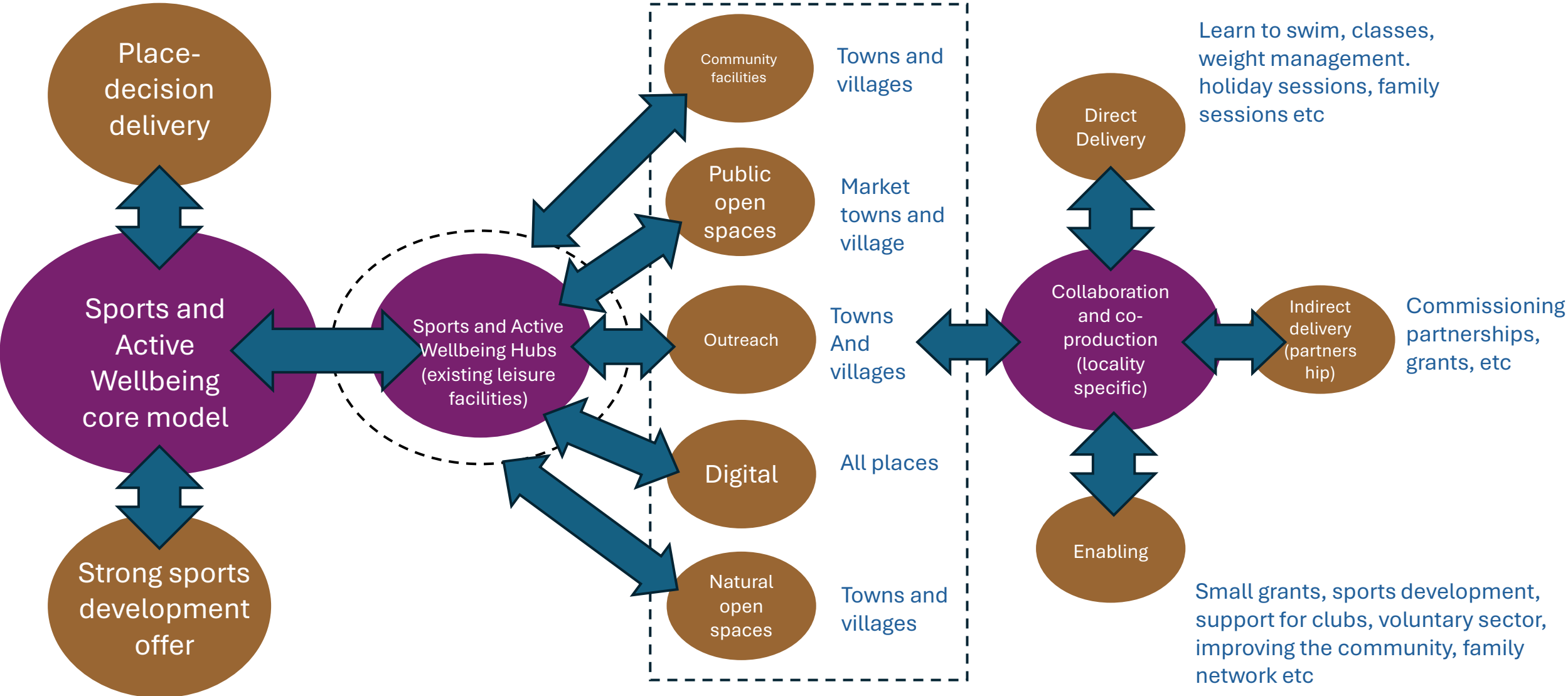
Service model redesign



What

Where

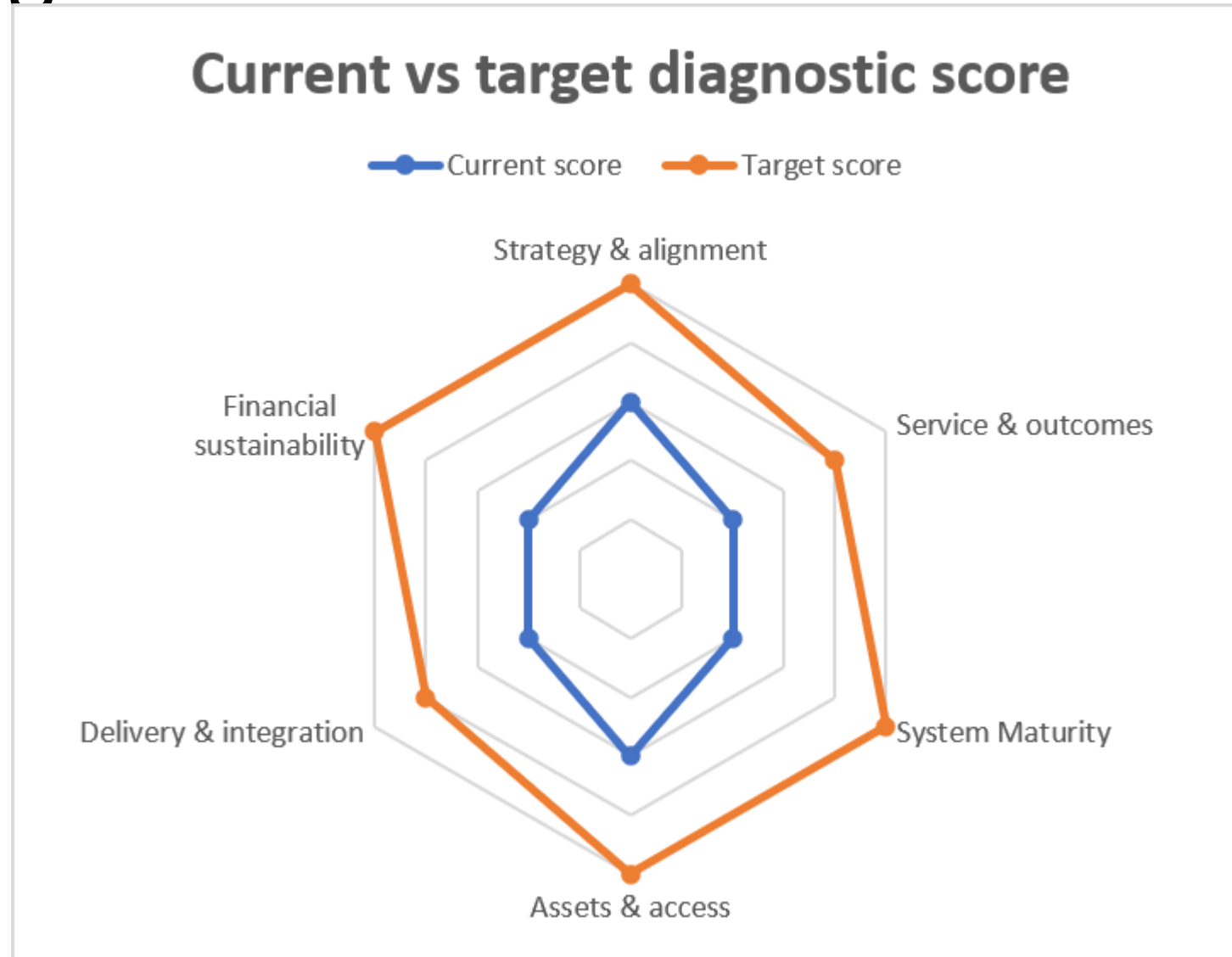
How



LGR Readiness Diagnostic

Key areas to explore:

- A: Strategy and alignment
- B: Service and outcomes
- C: Assets and access
- D: Delivery and integration
- E: System maturity
- F: Financial sustainability.



National perspective

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Developing our five-year plan

**Building
on first five
years of
*Uniting the
Movement***

Focus energy, resources and
ideas where impact is greatest

Act on what we've learned
over the past five years

Strengthen foundations of
community sport and
physical activity

**Priorities:
Targeted**

**Children &
young people**
+ low-affluence
households

**Active and
health ageing**
for LowSEG
adults aged
45+

People living
in places within
top 25%
greatest need

**Priorities:
Universal**

Workforce
diversity, skills
and experience

Ageing, at risk
infrastructure

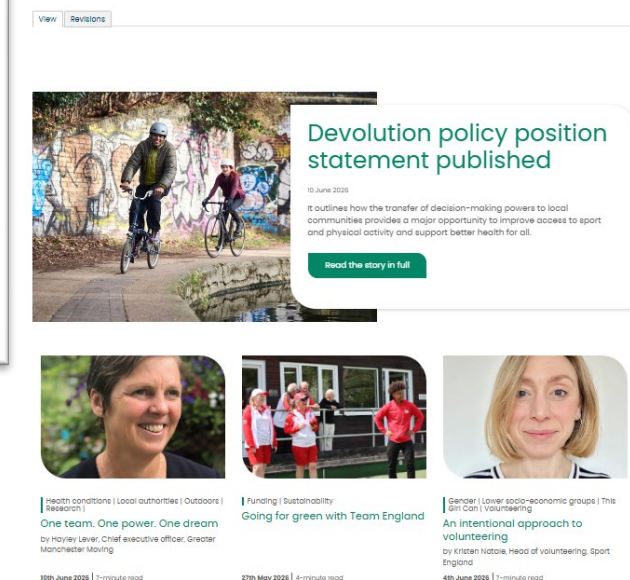
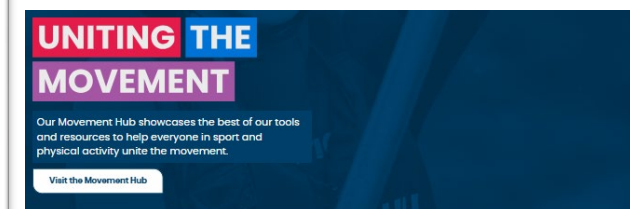
Data, insight
and **digital**
enablement

**Non-
negotiable
foundation**

Sports Council role
Statutory and essential functions that provide strong
foundations for system to grow, innovate and improve

National role in supporting LGR & devolution

- Launched our [Devolution Position Statement](#)
- Cross-sector partners and stakeholders at different spatial levels
- LGR and devolution – different pace, priorities, opportunities and risks across the country
- Support partners in place and add value to local conversations
- SPA embedded across 8 competencies



National role in supporting LGR & devolution

- Provide a strong national voice
- Champion partnership and collaboration
- Provide national frameworks, guidance and support
- Support leadership, governance and accountability
- Build capacity, knowledge & capability
- Embed learning and evidence

Our approach to PBWS working

- We recognise and value that **every place is different**.
- Local approaches will have some similarities to other places, but it will also be **shaped by specific needs and context**.
- Aiming for change that lasts, means **working across multiple layers** at the same time, not relying on a single approach.
- Use this as an opportunity to **bring more partners in**, and to embed physical activity into their work so it becomes the norm.
- **Progress isn't linear** — learning should shape future actions and decisions.
- Our approach to investment recognises that this work can be challenging and involves **doing things differently**
- We'll provide **support, guidance and resources** and create spaces to share, learn and connect.

Principles from the learning

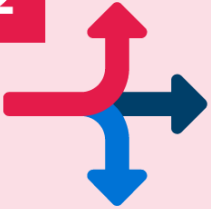
1



Progress moves at the speed of trust

- Start with building relationships and trust
- It takes time
- This can't be skipped to move programmes forward

2



Stubborn on the vision, flexible on the detail

Be flexible along the way and let investments be guided by need

3



Holding our nerve

Believing in ourselves and staying true to our goals is essential to prevent defaulting to old ways of working

4



Bridging the empathy gap

- Engaging communities
- Pushing aside preconceptions and adapting the way we communicate
- Support change emerging from communities

5



Say 'yes' to mess

- No simple answers
- Flexible approach that can respond to evolving needs, ideas and opportunities

6



Going where the energy is

Find places where common purpose and enthusiasm exist and start there

7



We can't solve the problem with the same mindset that created it

- Doing the right thing can be challenging
- Challenge assumptions, cultural rules and ways of thinking about physical activity

8



It doesn't have to be perfect to be better

- Take on real barriers to physical inactivity and their root causes
- Don't rush to provide solutions or interventions

Contacts and further resources:



- Devo statement, resources, case studies & FAQs:
www.sportengland.org/devolution-statement
- LGR / Devo email: devolution@sportengland.org
- SE Place work: Keep in Touch page
- Lucie Unsworth – Strategic Lead Place Relationships
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Table Exercise

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Table discussions

On your tables, please consider **one** challenge of the 'system' and opportunities to simplify it – with the aim of moving towards a more place-led approach.

One table can volunteer to work through a quick diagnostic exercise in relation to preparing for change, and reflect back to the wider group.



Challenges with restructuring the system

- Day to day delivery, local government reorganisation, and devolution are taking up a lot of senior headspace. **How do we create thinking time to devise a new approach?**
 - Central government still has to account to Parliament for how public money is spent. Citizen's Assemblies and Neighbourhood Boards bring in residents. MPs and Councillors are elected representatives. They often operate in parallel rather than together. **How do we design accountability as a shared system – where democratic voice, elected leadership, and public assurance are explicitly connected?**
-

LGR Rapid Diagnostic Exercise

1. Agree on a new Unitary Authority* and its constituent Councils

2. Starting point (What are you inheriting?)

Task: Capture 3–5 key points

Examples: Services, physical assets, contracts, systems, workforce etc..

3. Score your inherited system* (1–5)

Area	Score
Vision & strategy	1–5
Service & outcomes	1–5
Assets & access	1–5
Delivery & integration	1–5
System maturity	1–5
Financial sustainability	1–5

3. Biggest gaps (top 2–3)

Where are you still operating in silos?

4. Biggest risks (up to 3)

What could derail your transition?

5. One system shift

If you could influence **one thing**, what would it be?

Thank you!
