

# ACTIVE LIFESTYLE CHALLENGE



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## DEEP DIVE OUTPUT

### **The Challenge: How do we encourage active lifestyles in Britain?**

A summary of the GeoVation Problem PowWow output 26 September, 2013 London, which identified:

61 “raw” problems (before any duplicates removed or synthesised)  
6 themes  
55 insights

The GeoVation Challenge focused on the following 6 themes:

1. FIRST HURDLES
2. KNOWLEDGE & COMMUNICATION
3. ENABLING NEW BEHAVIOURS
4. PLANNING & MEASURING
5. FINANCIAL BARRIERS
6. INFRASTRUCTURE, ASSETS & RESOURCES



# I. FIRST HURDLES

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## I.1 Small steps

### PROBLEM

How do we encourage people engage in, and realize the health benefits of, small pockets of exercise throughout the course of a normal day's events?

### WHY IT MATTERS

A study published by The Lancet shows that if inactive people increased their physical activity by just 15 minutes per day, they could reduce their risk of death by 14% and increase their life expectancy by three years. The study compared inactive people with active people who engaged in a range of different levels of physical activity.

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## I.2 Rain rain, go away

### PROBLEM

How do we sustain informal outdoor participation, especially in winter months, in a country with weather like the UK has?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The total rainfall for the UK during 2012 was 1,330.7mm (52.4in), just 6.6mm short of the record set in 2000.

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## I.3 Bad stuff happens there

### PROBLEM

How do we reduce the nervousness some people feel towards using open space (fear of dogs, traffic safety, cultural barriers etc.) for themselves or their children and create adequate security measures in order to reduce the perceived risks of incidents people associate with going into open spaces?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Research from London shows that 39 per cent of women feel unsafe in the capital's green spaces, and 89 percent say more staff would help them feel safer.

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## I.4 The Fear Factor

### PROBLEM

How do we reduce fear of doing more regular activity outside (fear of: looking stupid; losing; hurting yourself; the unknown; lack of knowledge) when they often may not even recognize that fear is the problem?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Over 80% of parents surveyed by MORI in 2000 said that 'children today get less exercise because parents are afraid to let them go out alone'.

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## 1.5 Sit, don't stress

### PROBLEM

How do we engage those with high levels of stress in an agenda that focuses on activity when a key symptom of stress is fatigue and disinclination to exercise? How do we make it easy for busy people (whether families, employed or unemployed, couples, singles) to engage with the notion of regular physical activity as part of their hectic lives?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The total number of cases of stress in 2011/12 was 428 000 (40%) out of a total of 1 073 000 for all work-related illnesses<sup>7</sup> The most common barriers identified by adults include work commitments(45% men and 34% women) lack of leisure time(38% men 37% women) and lack of motivation (21% men and 25% women).

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## 1.6 Sport is formal. Period.

### PROBLEM

How do we change people's beliefs that sport is too formally structured and not for them? Why does it matter?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The majority of people in UK are not taking part in sport and this is often because they find the structures a 'turn off'.

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## 1.7 The word 'sport'

### PROBLEM

How do we get around the fact that many people will not engage with regular physical activity simply because something has the word 'sport' in it? How do we better sustain and even grow informal sporting activities?

### WHY IT MATTERS

If Sport is seen as something that you have to be skilled to do, it can be off-putting to those who lack the confidence to get involved. 35% of adults don't participate in sport because they don't have someone to do it with. There are many people who are very happy with the notion of regular physical activity but who do not want to be part of a sport. It's the equivalent of Geocaching (the recreational activity that over 6 million worldwide do) versus Geodashing

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## 1.8 Where do I play?

### PROBLEM

How do we make it really easy for people to find places to play informal sport?

### WHY IT MATTERS

An estimated 7% of urban park users in England go there for sporting activities – which represents about 7.5 million visitors a year.

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## 1.9 Outdoors inhibitions

### PROBLEM

How do we develop regular physical activity opportunities for people for whom a lack of confidence, or inhibition towards exercising in public, is a challenge?

### WHY IT MATTERS

60% of adults indicate they're not more active because they "just don't like sports"

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## 1.10 Specialists not socialists

### PROBLEM

How can we enable people to engage informally in running, walking and cycling when there's a perception that specialist 'kit' is needed and it's not fun?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Many people are put off a sport because of the equipment that is needed to do it and their belief that with technical kit goes boredom and no social interaction. Yet there are many ways to affordably access sports, without 'elite' kit and good sports people are not all boring.

# 2. KNOWLEDGE & COMMUNICATION



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## 2.1 Confused exercise

### PROBLEM

How do we help people navigate the plethora of information that exists on the internet and in the news about what exercise to do and how long to do it for?

### WHY IT MATTERS

People generally want clear, straightforward, definitive advice on what to do that's easy to comprehend quickly. If information is not well designed, this is not possible.

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## 2.2 Active 'prescriptions'

### PROBLEM

How can we make it easier for those who can influence the nation's health to connect people to the right activities to motivate and those who become unwell and would benefit if physical activity was a regular part of their life?

### WHY IT MATTERS

In the UK currently only 39% of men and 29% of women aged 16 and over are meeting the UK Chief Medical Officers' minimum recommendations for physical activity in adults. Open spaces, that could in theory be used by anyone, are. If we could create ways to better connect to those who not using them, we would have wider take up of activity, better utilized resources and create value for taxpayer.

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## 2.3 Disconnected communities

### PROBLEM

What is the problem? How do we address assumptions being made about people's connection to the internet and ensure we are in touch with those in hard-to-reach communities regardless of whether they are online or not?

### WHY IT MATTERS

There were 52,731,209 internet users in the UK (representing 84.1% of the population) in mid-year 2012 (June 30, 2012), according to Internet World Stats.

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## 2.4 Long Term Value

### PROBLEM

How do we encourage better recognition of the value of physical activities (such as bushcraft) by those who could enable more of it to happen?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The estimated direct cost of physical inactivity to the NHS across the UK is £1.06 billion. Based on coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, colorectal cancer and breast cancer.

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## 2.5 Everyone's a winner

### PROBLEM

How do we change the view of people who simply see sport as being not for them because 'sport has winners'?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Sport is about reaching personal goals through progression, not by being part of an elite sport, and therefore should be for everyone.

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## 2.6

### Where are the non-sport Billys?

#### PROBLEM

How do we connect people who are considering regular physical activity with others they can do it with (whether they know them or not)?

#### WHY IT MATTERS

People may have a non-sporty network that they could more easily connect with around opportunities for physical activity. If so, they might be better motivated to do some activities in the first place and in turn motivate others to engage too.

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## 2.7

### Harness the passion

#### PROBLEM

How do we capitalize on those with passion around a given activity and enable them to create an experience that will attract others?

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Most successful activities in local communities are born of a few key people who are motivated to make a difference. The health and well-being of a community can be positively impacted if the right resources are made available to those with passion to use them.

# 3. ENABLING NEW BEHAVIOURS



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## 3.1 Let them play

### PROBLEM

How do we enable parents and other key influencers of young people to see the value of regular physical activity regardless of ability level so that they child stays engaged?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Self-reported levels of Physical activity in children aged 2–15 England 32% boys and 24% girls – Wales 63% boys and 45% girls – Scotland 76% boys and 67% girls)

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## 3.2 Inclusive for all?

### PROBLEM

How do we change the structures in sport so that it makes it easier for those in society most in need, to engage and provoke behaviour change? How can we make activities that take place in open spaces such as parks more inclusive for all?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Many people need support and help to get started in exercise which certain structured approaches can get in the way of. Outdoor space may be able to help address this inequality. Ethnic minority groups are particularly deterred by barriers due to ethnicity, including fear of racist attacks, unfamiliarity with green space landscapes and open space cultures, a lack of attractive facilities or activities, an uncomfortable feeling of ‘otherness’.

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## 3.3 Inactivity is inequality

### PROBLEM

How do we combat the social and physical barriers (poor health, deprived areas, lack of access) that prevent someone engaging with the activity?

### WHY IT MATTERS

We are short of ways to connect those in need of activities. Some activities, once engaged with, will create substantial benefit but barriers to the opportunity get in the way resulting in wasted effort, human potential and everyone being worse off.

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## 3.4 Gimme the reason!

### PROBLEM

How do we help people not currently engaged in activity to know what they can do in any open spaces and be motivated and see a reason to take part in regular physical activity outdoors?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (accounting for 6% of deaths globally). This follows high blood pressure (13%), tobacco use (9%) and high blood glucose (6%). Overweight and obesity are responsible for 5% of global mortality.

# 4. PLANNING & MEASURING



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## 4.1 Who's got the data?

### PROBLEM

How do we address the fact that no one body has responsibility for sustaining and measuring participation in informal sport?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The first ever public satisfaction survey of Britain's parks and green spaces compiled by GreenSpace with almost 20,000 people contributing represents the biggest ever survey into what people think of Britain's parks and green spaces.

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## 4.2 It's heart rate, stupid

### PROBLEM

How do we devise a better (more useful, more applicable, more helpful, more accessible) measure of activity than 1 x 30 (one thirty minute session of moderate sport per week)?

### WHY IT MATTERS

1 x 30 is widely used and linked to many funding targets but disconnected from reality in many ways. Raising heart rate can be achieved in many ways not only via sport. Wider societal health and knock on benefits would be achieved if 1 x 30 wasn't the one universal measure.

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## 4.3 Assists and goals.

### PROBLEM

How do we create a metric that recognizes it is good to go from nothing to something in terms of participation?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The 1 x 30 measure conflicts with hardest to reach and most in need but those who set metrics do not see value in measuring from nothing to something. A metric indicating sustained activity is a potential outcome would add more value as it would show right direction of travel.

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## 4.4 Planning for informality

### PROBLEM

How do we better deliberately plan to use open space to the point where people understand that they need to "use it or lose it" and enable more people to have an emotional investment in the parks and open spaces they are close to?

### WHY IT MATTERS

We are not communicating the benefits of using open spaces in new ways to non-sporty groups. If not careful, and cases for ongoing maintenance and investment can not be made, open spaces people have often seen as 'always being there' without using them, may disappear. There needs to be stronger ties between the community of stakeholders and a given open space they are a part of somehow.

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## 4.5 Mindfulness of provision

### PROBLEM

How do we better join up the planning and development process so that interventions in this field are not sporadic and better meet the purposes for which they were created?

### WHY IT MATTERS

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, a \$355 million makeover, centred on the acquisition and improvement of green space parks and trails, has generated 1,280 full-time jobs and 555 part-time jobs. Property values are up more than 124%, tax revenues are up 99% and the number of businesses is up 117%.

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## 4.6 Don't do that here!

### PROBLEM

How do we reduce the amount of local authority housing stock that is unused because necessary repairs or maintenance has not been carried out?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Park spaces can be too overtly formal or streets can be too overtly functional which can restrict the amount of space that's 'available' for users.

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## 4.7 Who's participating?

### PROBLEM

How can we gather better data on who is using open spaces for informal sport?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Informal sport often has no attendance system, creating gaps in knowledge about: resource use; what resources would be suitable for given numbers; evidence of need for activities; matching supply (of right activities) with demand; opportunities to market to people.

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## 4.8 Token consultations

### PROBLEM

In consultations, by councils and contractors, how do we better engage potential users, including young people, in how to make best use of the open spaces around us and therefore provide activities and facilities that meet their needs?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The acknowledged decline in the quality of care of the urban green space resource in England can be linked to declining local authority green space budgets over the past 10 – 15 years. A study in Chicago found that people living in apartments tend to use nearby public spaces more if they were 'natural' than if they were man-made. This increased the use of the green spaces led in turn to a greater amount of socialising among neighbours.

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## 4.9 No more products

### PROBLEM

How do we prevent money being wasted on new types service led interventions that have no real impact on the inactive part of the population?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Sports-led interventions have had limited, if any, success in engaging people who are inactive. An „informal' approach to sport is 'softer' than we think.

# 5. FINANCIAL BARRIERS



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## 5.1 Where's the subsidy?

### PROBLEM

How do we create a similar level of subsidy for creating and maintaining informal regular physical activity resource that exists for formal sports activities such as pitches?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Up to 98% subsidies are paid to support pitches and other sports facilities. This locks out a huge potential population of informal users if the same approach were applied to resources and infrastructure that enabled informal sport

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## 5.2 That'll be £1700 please

### PROBLEM

How do we make the cost of using Forestry Commission space (or other owned open spaces) more affordable for all?

### WHY IT MATTERS

There is always a cost of some sort to making use of public space (in the case of the Forestry Commission it can be as high as £1700). This is a barrier to those wishing to put on events that will attract people not engaged in physical activity.

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## 5.3 Stealth park tax

### PROBLEM

How do we ensure charges in parks (new ones introduced or ones that exist being raised) do not prevent participation and use of them?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Increased cost to use a park displaces activity to sites that may not be suitable for those activities (at best) or may not be properly 'policed', which in turn can lead to social issues.

# 6. INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSETS



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## 6.1 Too far to go

### PROBLEM

How do we enable those who are blocked off from, too far away from or unable to access through other difficulties, to get to the open spaces we want people to use?

### WHY IT MATTERS

If open space is not easy to get to people won't make the effort to get to it, not matter how engaging the activity taking place there is.

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## 6.2 Non-city cyclists

### PROBLEM

How do we make cycling in cities and urban environments a more appealing activity for all?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Boris Johnson's cycling commissioner: "Cyclists may make up 24 per cent of the traffic across central London, but they still get much less than 24 per cent of policy-makers' attention". That's no longer good enough.

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## 6.3 What about the sticks?

### PROBLEM

How do we create opportunities to participate in regular activities where there's reduced infrastructure and/or access to resources compared to urban areas?

### WHY IT MATTERS

There needs to be equal opportunities for people in rural areas to ensure health and well-being is available to all.

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## 6.4 Safe access routes

### PROBLEM

How do we 'remove' real or perceived access barriers to open spaces?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Physical barriers (like a major road) or perceived barriers (like a difficult journey on public transport) can reduce accessibility and therefore use and participation.

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## 6.5 Not my problem

### PROBLEM

How do we counteract the inflexibility in management contracts of facilities which stifle innovation and undermine user requirements?

### WHY IT MATTERS

There is a lack of understanding in the actual use or requirements of use of those who use open space by those who manage them or let the contracts to manage them.

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## 6.6 Vote with your feet

### PROBLEM

How do we enable better use of green spaces and reduce the rate of abandoned sports pitches (particularly cricket) while enabling mass participation in informal sport?

### WHY IT MATTERS

There is a high cost associated with maintaining formal sports space against the opportunity to deliver lower cost / higher volume participatory activities.

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## 6.7 Ability to access

### PROBLEM

How do we make it easier to manage all aspects of running open spaces to their maximum potential?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Optimal utilization of limited resources – through smarter timetabling, flexibility for different activities, matching consumer demand, understanding of cost – will get the maximum number of people to attend.

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## 6.8 No obvious owner

### PROBLEM

How do we address the lack of obvious ownership – no caretaker, no permission giver to play, use, learn – of various open spaces?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Not having a 'go to' person can result in either abuse of the facility or under utilisation of the potential of the assets, the space itself, the potential of the community or all of the above.

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## 6.9 Cutting grass cutting

### PROBLEM

How do we ensure that the further 10% cut in central Government funding to local authorities does not create more inequality in opportunities to use open spaces.

### WHY IT MATTERS

If parks and green spaces are well managed, research has shown that communities use their local spaces more, have better relationships with their local councils and take some pride in the area where they live.

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## 6.10 Where are the volunteers?

### PROBLEM

How do we find the volunteers who will provide a regular commitment to organize, supervise informal activity for young people?

### WHY IT MATTERS

Volunteers are a hugely important resource to sport in England. According to the latest Active People survey, over 3 million people volunteer regularly in sport.

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## 6.11 Wrong facilities

### PROBLEM

How do we better provide for those who have a desire to do some informal activity (e.g. young people wanting to BMX or skate) when there is no facility for them to do so?

### WHY IT MATTERS

It has been estimated that some 7% of urban park users in England go there for sporting activities.