



City on the Move - Southampton Gets Active

A move to get all people living and working in Southampton more active and fitter and healthier as a result was the key theme of a recent event held at Southampton Solent University.

The initiative led by Director of Public Health, Dr Andrew Mortimore, and supported by colleagues at Southampton Solent University brought together key individuals in health, education, charities and local government at both county and city level in a 'round table' event to have a holistic discussion of how we can get the city of Southampton more active.

The aim of the day was to investigate how different organisations and individuals could work together to help embed physical activity into the city agenda. Examples of good practice were shared and ideas were exchanged as to what methods might be used to get the city more active.

Dr Mortimore, summing up the day's activities said: "Thank you for all the contributions today. We have learned that while the environment may be a challenge, this is something we can tackle. Where there is no evidence base to study, we should ask 'What is likely to help' and we have seen and heard some excellent examples today. We need a long term vision with short term actions, and it needs to start today."

Councillor Dave Shields, Chair of the Southampton Health Well Being Board pledged to act as a lead partner in the process and to help move the ideas and concepts that came out of the discussions. He said "Encouraging residents and offering opportunities to become more physically active is a key component to our strategy to prevent illness and admission to hospital. It is vitally important to the wellbeing of our residents that they find a way to fit more activity into their day. I will help in whatever way I can to move this agenda forward to make the city a fitter, healthier and happier place to live and work."

The meeting heard from Greg Baker of the Saints Foundation about a project they are running to help Saints' fans of 35 years and over get more physically active, through weekly fitness classes at St Mary's. In the first six weeks of the classes, the initial group have already lost nine stone between them and are feeling better and more healthy as a result.

Simon Arthur and Pauline Brooks of Freemantle Academy told the meeting of their approach to making their students aged between two to eleven, more aware of why nutritious food and physical exercise are key factors in being healthy. The Academy provided a wide range of sporting and other opportunities for the students, both in and out of school hours and the youngsters were also allowed to become involved in the Academy's kitchen, helping catering staff to prepare meals from fresh locally sourced ingredients.

John Dales of 'Living Streets', a national charity which aims to help to make streets safe, attractive and enjoyable places for pedestrians, gave examples of ways that people of all ages can be encouraged to walk more, whether by walking children to school or walking or cycling to work instead of driving.

The delegates used the technique of 'Appreciative Inquiry' to work together to discuss the issues and to work on a forward plan to find ways of helping people in the city become more physically active by making the most of the open spaces, using sporting facilities and just getting 'on the move'. Those who attended all pledged to take action in whatever area they could to improve levels of individual physical activity in the city.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE MEDIA OFFICE ON 023 8201 3150 or press.office@solent.ac.uk

About Southampton Solent University

Southampton Solent University offers more than 19,000 students over 200 qualifications ranging from HND to PhD, in subjects such as maritime education and training, fashion and design, media and television, music, health, sport and leisure, business, IT and technology. The University was awarded the 2013 Quality Assurance kitemark for quality and standards of teaching and learning. Solent was voted one of the most creative universities in the UK in a Which? University 2014 poll of students. Solent Business School has been awarded the Small Business Charter Award, which is supported by the Association of Business Schools and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and 'gold approval' by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).