In response to the current call for evidence, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) would like to make the following points:

**Participation**

Scotland’s greenspace resources are a great but currently under-utilised asset for physical activity for all ages. Regular use of local greenspace can help people obtain and maintain a level of physical fitness, the absence of which can be a barrier to engaging in sport. There are many community-based green exercise programmes and projects which encourage people to be more physically active, with key examples including health walks, green gyms and community gardens. An example of research which identifies the impact of a community-based Health Walks programme is found here: [Walk Glasgow SRoI](#).

As our previous submission noted, there is a strong evidence base for the range of health benefits of using local greenspace for physical exercise that now exists. Better planning, design and management of places to provide accessible, high quality greenspace, path networks and attractive landscapes close to where people live, work and learn can contribute to increasing physical activity levels. The SNH-led action programme to develop Scotland’s Natural Health Service has been developed to unlock the potential of these assets in support of the Scottish Government’s physical activity for health agenda – for more information see: [Scotland’s outdoors, Our Natural Health Service](#). Critically, this programme was developed in response to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework, its recognition of the importance of greenspace and that increasing levels of physical activity required a more holistic approach which was wider than sport and tackled a range of both life settings and life stages.

**School estate**

The school estate is clearly an important resource for increasing physical activity through PE. However, a whole school approach to this challenge would also look at the use of the grounds and nearby greenspace for regular outdoor learning and play which has been shown to increase physical activity levels alongside attainment. There is also a role for active travel links to the school which would allow more students to walk or cycle to work safely.

Local greenspace is therefore a potential resource which can complement traditional schools grounds. Using the national greenspace map, SNH has explored the location of greenspace within 5 minutes walk of schools within or serving SIMD areas. Of the circa 650 schools identified, only 4 did not have potentially usable local greenspace close by. As part of the “Learning in Local Greenspace” project, we are working with partners to support 100 of these schools across Scotland to demonstrate how these greenspaces can be used by the school for regular outdoor learning, with benefits for attainment and health and well-being of students and the local community through increased physical activity and contact with the natural world.