

**NORTH AREA COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

**8 JANUARY 2009**

**SPORT AND LEISURE IN SUNDERLAND NORTH**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the North Area Committee with information relating to provision of sport and leisure services

**2.0 NATIONAL CONTEXT**

2.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government in April 2008 published the New National Performance Framework for Local Government (see below) that replaces all other sets of sport performance measurement. Whilst only a very small number of performance indicators exist which focus directly on sport and physical activity, as a city we continue to support and add value to a wide range of areas and indicators such as positive activities for young people, volunteering, regeneration, education, health and community safety targets.

NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation

NI 57 Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport

NI199 Children and young people satisfaction with parks and play areas

2.2 The national review of sport and physical activity by Sport England has culminated in the need to ensure we have one joined up 'Single Delivery System' for sport in order to plan, deliver and evaluate improvements in participation from grassroots through to excellence. Within the Single Delivery System, the County Sports Partnership is the strategic lead for regional sport in Tyne and Wear, and supports local authorities' work with its partners in a range of areas to increase participation levels. Sunderland currently hosts the Partnership.

**3.0 SUNDERLAND CONTEXT**

3.1 At a local level, the Single Delivery System requires a mechanism to plan, prioritise funding and ensure a vibrant network of delivery exists. To achieve this, it is a requirement by Sport England that each local authority establishes a Community Sport Network. Sunderland has responded to this challenge by recently establishing the ActiveSunderland Board, which will drive forward participation in sport and physical activity at a local level. The aims of the Board will be to drive forward the implementation of local priorities, including the prioritisation of funding and the increase in physical activity participation levels.

3.2 The council's Sport and Leisure service are working towards the delivery of a universal 'core offer' to all residents. All residents will have the opportunity to participate in four core areas of physical activity. This core offer comprises of:

- Sport
- Wellness
- Aquatics
- Play

3.3 In addition to this 'core offer', a range of shorter term targeted services are provided in partnership to reach a specific age group or target audience, predominantly to

inspire adults and young people to participate in physical activity with a view to improving their overall health and wellbeing.

- 3.4 A range of specialist services are also delivered on behalf of, and fully commissioned by other partners, such as the Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Home Office.
- 3.5 The Council has embarked on a significant investment and modernisation programme of its facilities to support continuous improvement in the manner in which services are delivered to reach the previously mentioned targets. Given this changing context nationally and indeed locally, it is important the service has a structure which is fit to perform and work in partnership.
- 3.6 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy adopted by the Sunderland Strategic Partnership in September 2005, defines the development of sport and physical activity into three main processes:
- Increasing Participation in Sport and Physical Activity
  - Improving Facilities in Sport and Wellness
  - Developing New Facilities
- 3.7 As Members will be aware the Council has reviewed the ways subsidy is targeted and a new pricing framework was introduced on 1 April 2008, based on an individual's "ability to pay". Where a resident is on a low income and can least afford to pay, sports activities can be accessed at a cheaper rate, particularly where price may previously have been a perceived barrier. This is driven by the Council's aim to ensure that we encourage more people to take part in sport and physical activity and to minimise barriers to participation amongst those individuals on low incomes. The pricing framework is linked to a new membership card called 'Life', which is available for adults, children and young people. All 'Life' card holders receive discounts and special promotions, and all children and young people aged between 3 and up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday can receive their card FREE.
- 4.0 AREA WORKING AND PROVISION IN NORTH SUNDERLAND**
- 4.1 As detailed above, the 'core offer' is viewed to consist of **Sport, Wellness, Aquatics and Play**. In addition, there are a number of city programmes and projects which are cross cutting in nature and draw opportunities together to ensure provision is 'connected' at a local level. Many of these programmes are increasingly offered with local partners on an area basis. Progress in the delivery of leisure activity within North Sunderland is detailed below:
- 4.2 Sport**
- Sport Unlimited** is a nationwide £36 million investment to get younger people taking part in sport and physical activity that most interests them outside of school. This three year programme offers young people a 10 week block of taster sessions, which aims to get young people to continue with the activity once the weeks are completed. The programme is funded by Sport England in partnership with the Youth Sports Trust through the County Sports Partnership and is delivered locally by partners, from City Council facilities and the three School Sport Partnerships. The programme will make a significant contribution toward the Government's target of giving young people the opportunity to do 5 hours of PE and sport a week at school or in the community.

The city has received £45,011 to run the initial first stage of the programme until April 2009. The programme is still in the initial development stages, all secondary schools across the city, City of Sunderland College and the University have been offered access to the programme. It is estimated that 100 young people in North Sunderland will take part in the programme in the first two terms of the delivery programme.

### **Positive Futures**

Positive Futures is funded primarily by Home Office via Catch 22 and has been externally funded and well received for over 7 years. The programme offers sports activity programme focusing primarily on the 10 -19 year olds, who show signs of disengagement. The programme is unique to the Southwick area of the city and is currently operated from Southwick sports hall. Positive Futures primarily receives referrals from the police and a range of agencies, to use sport to support young people who often have challenging backgrounds. It is an intensive inclusion programme, which targets and challenges groups and individuals around social responsibility, self awareness and drug prevention. A three year community sports coach, part funded by Sport England has added value to the scheme over the last two years, delivering activities in outreach venues which help identify and feed young people into the positive futures scheme and range of activities. The scheme currently supports 250 young people and a range of positive outcomes are measured. Key partners include Sunderland North Alternative Curriculum, Castle Green School, Cheadle Centre, Southwick Primary and Grange Park Primary.

The funding allocation is review annually, which can restrict development. This scheme will be the subject of a national evaluation research study funded by Sunderland's Beacon Legacy funding.

**Diversionary Activities for Young People:** additional funding from the Working Neighbourhood Fund has been used to deliver the successful components of the original Targeted Youth Engagement (TYE) project and work towards a more sustainable model of provision. The programme was designed to support youth organisations and community groups to encourage young people to participate in physical activity and to provide pathways for sustained use of leisure centres, community clubs or programmes. This is also linked with the promotion of the city's Lifecard to ensure a more sustainable model for youth activity.

In Sunderland North, the project worked with Sunderland North Community Business Centre the commissioned youth work providers in the area, utilising the skills of their youth workers to engage and encourage almost 60 young people to participate in activities across the north, in Bunny Hill, Sunderland Aquatic Centre and Seaburn Centre. The young people were offered activities mainly in the Wellness Centres but also used the pool at the Aquatic Centre. The young people participated in excess of 900 hours of high quality positive activities.

The project enabled Sunderland North Community Business Centre to upskill 3 of its youth workers who now are able to deliver the activities, sports and fitness elements of the Asdan award.

### **Active Sunderland Bus Project (awaiting a Sport England decision on funding of £347,000 for three years)**

The Active Sunderland Bus Project scheduled for roll out early 2009 is about targeting non-participating adults on an area basis with a combination of:

- Lifestyle 'check and testing' services using a newly fitted SAFC Foundation bus
- A range of beginner's activities which offer extra 'handholding' and support

- Partnership working to develop new volunteers.
- Training and support for new volunteers
- Smart monitoring of increased participation.

The area based approach will be a partnership, harnessing the skills and energy of local agencies, where suitable, from community centres to sports clubs. The funding enables each area to be allocated a part time Activator who will help to lead some activities, network and support the programme development across the locality. It is anticipated that in North Sunderland, the three year funded programme would offer an estimated ten additional hours of activity each week targeting 20 new participants every 15 weeks.

### **Football in Sunderland North**

Participation in football within Sunderland North remains popular, despite significant challenges with the current quality of provision.

It is identified in the 2003/2004 Playing Pitch Strategy, that Sunderland North has an excess number of football pitches. However, it is recognised that the quality of some of the pitches and ancillary facilities is an issue and need improvement. Football sites in the North include Community North, Billy Hardy Sports Complex, Marley Potts, Fulwell Quarry and Thompson Park

Work is underway to complete a city investment strategy which will identify priorities for investment, meet FA requirements and hopefully attract investment from the Football Foundation.

### **Sport in Schools**

Sport in Schools is a mentoring programme to up skill primary school teachers in sports coaching. Qualified sports coaches provide high quality sports and physical activity experiences for the young people, whilst sharing good practice with the teaching staff. Sunderland North has received 97.5 hours of subsidised sports during the summer term. Schools involved in the project included English Martyrs, Southwick Primary School, Carley Hill education centre, Bishop Harland and Castleview Comprehensive School.

### **Seaburn Centre**

The Seaburn Centre is located on the seafront, east of Sunderland city centre and was opened in August 1989. The facilities include a sports hall, indoor soft play area, Wellness Centre and also an outdoor pirate's play park.

Following a restructuring exercise in 2007, the Centre now provides facilities for sports hall block bookings and events. Usage in the first six months of this year (April – September) has been in excess of 18,000.

During the 2008 school holidays, the Centre provided 'dance mat' sessions to children. Over 50 children participated in the sessions. These dance activities are recognised as a means of reaching young people who may not normally visit the Centre and a different and 'trendy way' of exercising.

As Members may be aware, the Centre also accommodates the SAFC Kickz Programme which following its initial success, has now progressed from operating on a Friday evening to a Wednesday. Partnership work with SAFC Foundation has developed a three year programme. The programme aims to tackle youth disorder and anti-social behaviour in the area. From January 2009, it is also expected that the programme will include use of classroom space, as well as regular daytime usage of the sports hall. This will enable the scheme to increase the numbers

attending and further enhance the varied programme which they offer in partnership with a number of organisations including Sunderland City Council.

In addition, Sunderland University are currently utilising the Centre for curriculum, exams and social opportunities for their students.

### **Community North Sports Complex**

The Community North Sports Complex lies on the north west city boundary and is part of the programme of work undertaken by the former Sunderland City Challenge in the 1990's. As well as serving the immediate community of Downhill, the Complex also provides opportunities for participation in a wide range of sporting, recreational and leisure activities for the residents of other areas and beyond.

Community North Sports Complex consists of a changing pavilion to support a floodlit artificial grass pitch, six grass football pitches, a hard court multi use games areas and play area. There is a small fitness room within the pavilion.

The Complex is viewed as having good facilities, but suffers from anti-social behaviour and vandalism problems. The quality of the changing facility is of a high standard and some of the outdoor grass pitches have benefited from improvements. The demand for the facilities beyond weekend football is limited. On weekends however, the site does 'come into its own' with hundreds of children participating in mini soccer.

Work is currently underway to investigate methods of improved service delivery at the site, which may include partnership working with the voluntary / private sector.

## **4.3 Wellness**

The aim of the Wellness Service within the city is to improve individual's health and well-being through the provision of physical activity opportunities, lifestyle advice and education. Working with Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (STPCT), the local Voluntary and Community Sector and the Wellness Service is developing a citywide network of Wellness Centre 'hub' sites, 'spoke' sites and Community Wellness venues to provide opportunities for all.

Through the development of programmes and interventions the Wellness Service is targeting those individuals who are not yet engaged in physical activity, ensuring there are a range of preventative services, targeted interventions and specialist support services at a local level. Underlying the Wellness Service is the robust monitoring and evaluation framework that ensures evidence can be supplied to demonstrate the positive impact that the Wellness Service is having on the health of the city.

### **Wellness Centres**

The Sunderland North Wellness Centres are located at the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, the Seaburn Centre and Bunny Hill.

Services delivered from the Wellness Centres include:

- Physical activity opportunities
- Healthy eating advice
- Smoking cessation support
- Weight management advice
- Stress management advice
- General well-being and lifestyle advice
- Information on support services

In the first six months of this year (April – September 2008) there have been the following attendances at the Wellness facilities

Seaburn Centre – there has been over 17,000 visits to the Wellness Centre and over 2,500 attendees at the Wellness Classes

Bunny Hill - there has been nearly 20,000 visits to the Wellness Centre and 3,000 attendees at the Wellness Classes.

Sunderland Aquatic Centre - there has been over 44,000 visits to the Wellness Centre and 10,000 attendees at the Wellness Classes.

### **Community Wellness Programme**

The Community Wellness Programme was primarily designed to increase the provision of the Wellness service, enabling residents of Sunderland to access Wellness facilities at a local level. Community Wellness venues are currently located at Fulwell Day Centre, Wearmouth Community Development Trust and the Downhill Centre. The scheme currently has over 140 residents attending Wellness education and training courses.

The functionality of the Community Wellness Programme allows other initiatives to 'bolt on' to the main theme with ease. There have been two recent additions which compliment the core offer of Community Wellness sessions. The first new programme offers seated and low intensity exercise for older adults and the second, is the expansion of the exercise referral scheme into community venues, thus providing greater choice for the referred client and increased capacity for the programme.

**Case Study:** Megan Cleary has been attending Community Wellness sessions at Downhill Centre for approximately 7 months.

Megan was 12st 8lbs when she started the programme she is now 11 stone and feels much fitter and healthier. Megan has toned her body and her fitness levels have improved, she can run without getting out of breath. Megan attended the Community Wellness programme at the Downhill centre she knew the key to losing weight and improving her health and wellbeing was to exercise. "I feel the age I am now, as before I felt much older and unconfident, the community wellness programme has really improved my life"

### **Exercise Referral Programme**

From 3 November 2008, a new city-wide exercise referral and weight management programme will be operational providing greater choice of activities for patients. Exercise referral activities currently take place at the following venues in Sunderland North: Sunderland Aquatic Centre, Bunny Hill Centre, Seaburn Centre, Fulwell Day Centre and Wearmouth Community Development Trust.

The Exercise Referral Programme (formally known as the HELP programme) is a physical activity referral system which enables health professionals to recommend a course of exercise for patients with a variety of medical problems. The programme ensures that people at risk are identified sooner and referred to the appropriate health, diet and physical activity advice that will make a difference to their long term well-being.

The Exercise Referral and Weight Management programme is delivered by three partners: Sunderland City Council (Sport & Leisure), NHS Teaching Primary Care Trust and City Hospitals Dietetics Dept. The programme lasts for 15 weeks (10

weeks for weight management) and patients are supported through an individually designed exercise programme by a team of fully qualified exercise referral consultants.

Further developments of the programme include opportunities for referred clients to include walking and swimming on referral from 2009.

### **Classes for over 50's**

Exercise classes for people over 50 started in September 2008. Classes are tailored to the needs of individuals and include both seated and standing exercise. The classes improve mobility, balance and co-ordination which decrease the likelihood of falls and increase ability to continue to live independently into old age.

The 'Sit and Be Fit' classes take place at Fulwell Day Centre on a Monday and Thursday 3.30-4.30pm, and a Friday 12.00 – 1.00pm and are part of the Community Wellness Programme. The sessions are reasonably well attended, averaging 20 people per session.

As people become fitter, participants can progress from this programme to other community activities and Wellness Centre programmes, ensuring they continue to exercise and improve their general health and fitness.

### **Cycling on Referral**

A new cycling on referral programme commenced on 3 November 2008, providing referred clients an opportunity to take part in physical activity to compliment their Wellness or community based programme.

## **4.4 Aquatics**

As Members are aware, the Sunderland Aquatic Centre is the city's newest and most ambitious regeneration project, which opened to the public on 18 April 2008.

The Centre is open to everyone and there is a full programme of fun family sessions, 'learn to swim', aquafit classes, diving courses, parent and toddler sessions, and many others. The Centre has been developed by the City Council with support from partners and features the regions' first 10 lane x 50m pool, a diving pool, 2 wellness exercise studios, a split-level Wellness Centre, cardio-cycle zone, kinesis zone and free-weights zone. The Centre is available for everyone to use, from beginners to young athletes and those who simply want to splash about in a big pool.

The Centre is also host to Sunderland Swimming Club and the regional Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) Beacon squad. A close working relationship with the ASA is already established to help support talented swimmers both locally and in the region.

As detailed above, the facility is accompanied by an extensive Wellness Centre, and therefore opportunities exist to ensure aquatics supports Wellness pathways, such as the GP Referral Programme.

As well as offering community access, the Centre is establishing itself as a regional venue, not only in terms of club and ASA swimming galas, but also attracting such events as BBC Children in Need (November 2008) and the North East Sports Awards (December 2008).

The city is privileged to be hosting the official opening of the Sunderland Aquatic Centre by The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) on 22 January 2009.

Members may be aware of the announcement in June 2008, by the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, in relation to a free swimming scheme to be delivered in partnership with local government. In November 2008, Cabinet endorsed acceptance of the Government's two year funding grant offer to enable the delivery of a two year experimental programme of free swimming to the target group of 60 years and over and 16 years and under. Free swimming supports the Council's objectives in relation to increasing participation, improving health, tackling obesity and addressing anti-social behaviour through providing accessible positive activities. The Government funding, made available over the next two years may have potential to move the Council towards achieving its aspirations in relation to increasing participation. It is anticipated that the new initiative will be implemented from April 2009.

### **Stadium Park Phase 2**

Following the successful completion and launch of the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, work is now underway to investigate the feasibility of developing the rest of the land adjacent to the Aquatic Centre.

Any further development should be complimentary to the existing facilities and be based on identified need, partner aspirations and the requirements of the draft development framework for Stadium Village.

Initial indicators point toward the development of an integrated health, recreation and education facility.

## **4.5 Play and Urban Games**

In 2007, the Play and Urban Games Strategy (adopted in 2004) was revised to meet emerging government guidelines - 'Moving Forward 2007-2012'. The strategy was based upon citywide consultation on the needs and wishes of young people; these are captured on a young people's friendly DVD version interviews.

The new strategy, based upon clear GIS mapping, sets out clear aspirations to improve access to high quality play and urban games facilities 1km from the doorstep. Just 15% children and young people had access to high quality provision citywide at the point the strategy was adopted. This has already improved to 19%. MORI satisfaction rates have progressively improved from the original strategy in 2004 from 37% to 43%.

The recent Play Pathfinder award of £2.1million (combined with a further £2million citywide from developer contributions and city funds), recognises the citywide progress and qualitative consultation led by children and young people will accelerate the delivery still further. The funding is however conditioned by extremely challenging deadlines which require a pragmatic approach towards engagement and delivery. Failure to deliver the first year's sites on schedule by March 2009 and the second year programme by 2010, has potential to result in funds being clawed back.

Since 2004 the following play developments have been undertaken in Sunderland North, Carley Hill, Cricklewood, Fulwell Wheeled Sports Park and through the Big Lottery Fund Thompson Park. Over the next two years the Play Pathfinder programme will see four new developments and refurbishments, which are prioritised by the Play and Urban Games Strategy. These are Roker Park,



Southwick Extended School, Rothley Court, Community North Sports Complex. Further details on these projects are provided at **Appendix 1**.

Pathfinder will also enable some educational projects to be delivered. Building upon feedback from young people, current discussions are underway around connecting the eco-rangers work with some of the current play provisions to use a high profile campaign against 'anti-social' litter in play areas, such as dog fouling, graffiti and needles.

Completion of the Pathfinder programme will see an estimated 6,438 additional children and young people having access to high quality equipped sites in Sunderland North. The Play Pathfinder programme will realise an additional investment of over £403,000 into Play and Urban Games facilities in the North.

The strategy has identified 28 sites citywide for development and improvement by 2010. Work will start shortly to determine the process for prioritising sites beyond 2010 and the Committee will receive a further report on this issue in due course.

**In the meantime, the Committee is requested to provide feedback on locations they consider would benefit from future investment in play provision.**

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 The Area Committee are requested to note this report for information and provide Officers with feedback in relation to content and specifically in relation to the issue highlighted under section 4.5.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 The following background papers were relied upon to compile this report.

- Leisure Facilities Research 2004
- New National Performance Framework for Local Government 2008
- Active Sunderland Bus, from application to Sport England 2008
- Leisure Centre statistics from Centre records
- Play Pathfinder Terms and Conditions 2008

## Appendix 1

### Play Pathfinder Projects in Sunderland North

Project	Number of Young People Accessing High Quality Play
<p>Full refurbishment of <b>Roker Park</b> play provision, to include water and sand play.</p> <p>The consultation and development of this project has been undertaken with significant partnership working with the Friends of Roker Park and CEED.</p> <p>Completion due March 2009</p>	2,563 within 1 km
<p>Development of <b>Southwick extended school site</b> and subsequent removal of Grosvenor Street site.</p> <p>Monkwearmouth Community Development Trust will undertake consultation work on this project.</p> <p>Completion due March 2010</p>	1,683 within 1km
<p>Removal of <b>Rothley Court</b> equipped play area into a green play area.</p> <p>Sport and Leisure undertaking consultation work.</p> <p>Designs completed.</p> <p>Reduced maintenance burden of low play value sites. Creation of natural play environment.</p> <p>Completion March 2009</p>	33 within 100m
<p><b>Community North Play Area</b> to be relocated within the Complex</p> <p>Sport and leisure with the support of SNCBC are undertaking the consultation work.</p> <p>Sketch designs completed.</p> <p>Completion due March 2009.</p>	2,159 within 1km