

WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

26 NOVEMBER 2008

SPORT AND LEISURE IN WASHINGTON

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Washington 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 18th birthday can receive their card FREE.

4.0 AREA WORKING AND PROVISION IN WASHINGTON

- 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 Washington 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 Washington will take part in the programme in the first two term's of the delivery programme.

Diversionsary 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 Washington, the programme worked with the Millennium Centre to offer extended activities over the 2008 summer period, linking with the Centre's mainstream programme. Taster sessions were introduced, encouraging young people to participate in activities which they may not have had the opportunity to do so. 13 young people gained there Junior Sports Leaders Award, The Dance mat sessions catered for 50 young people, 7 young people joined the gym and 40 young people participated in football sessions.

The project enabled Oxclose District Young Persons Project to upskill 3 youth workers who now are able to deliver activities and sport elements of the Asdan Award.

Active Sunderland Bus Project (awaiting Sport England 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 Washington, 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 Washington

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

It is identified in the 2003/2004 Playing Pitch Strategy, that Washington 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. The strategic sites for investment in football facilities are located at the large multi pitch

sites of Northern Area Playing Fields, Northumbria Centre and Southern Area Playing Fields.

Washington has benefited from the recent improvement works from a City Council £200,000 Strategic Investment allocation and the Southern Area pavilion is in the process of having a shower block extension. This funding was to address immediate and essential works only on sites which would benefit from small allocations. An allocation of funding is available to Northern Area pavilion, but this has been placed on hold until the outcome of the fire damage earlier in the year. In addition, work is underway to complete the city's investment strategy which will meet FA standards and hopefully attract investment from the Football Foundation. As a local strategic site the Northern Area pavilion would be considered during the development process for further refurbishment works or a rebuild.

Leisure Facilities Research in 2004 identified a number of well used, but increasingly deteriorating resources including the Northumbria Centre. The research identified that feasibility into the future operation of Northumbria should be considered, particularly due to the relatively vibrant market of private sector providers in football.

Since 2006, the City Council have completed a range of 'soft-market' testing and supply analysis in relation to the Northumbria Centre. Over the last twelve months, detailed work has been underway to consider the best approach to improving the quality of the provision. There continues to remain interest from commercial sector operators regarding opportunities to develop a football business in Sunderland. The most appropriate solution for the Northumbria Centre to improve facilities is to explore a partnership arrangement, whilst also encouraging acceptable contributions to the city's social objectives. This will be a priority for progress in 2009.

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. Washington has received 95 hours of tuition during the summer term. Schools involved in the project included St Josephs Primary, Columbia Grange, Blackfell and St Bede's Schools.

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 Washington Wellness Centre is located at Washington Leisure Centre.

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) there have been over 28,000 visits to the Wellness Centre and over 7,000 attendees at the Wellness Classes.

Spoke Sites

Spoke sites are generally smaller venues that operate under the Wellness Service umbrella by offering the same joined up programme. Spoke sites are currently available at Washington Millennium Centre and Biddick School Sports College

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 Washington, Washington Leisure Centre and Washington Millennium Centre with plans to extend the programme to Biddick School Sports College in 2009.

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.

Cycling on Referral

A new cycling on referral programme commenced on 3 November 2008 (from the Arts Centre), 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 Washington Leisure Centre is the main site for public swimming within area. There are two swimming pools within the Centre, the main pool and learner pool. The maximum numbers who may use the pools jointly at any one time is 200. The learner pool is used for swimming lessons, mother and toddler classes in addition to general public use.

Various times are also allocated to school usage. Aquamania is a 77 metre featured waterslide situated on the south wall of the main swimming pool. The programme of swimming pool activities includes:

- Casual swimming attracting 50,533 attendances between April-September 2008 (an increase of over 5,000 on the previous year)
- The Learn to Swim programme attracted 14,658 attendances between April-September 2008 (similar to the previous year)
- Aqua Fit sessions
- Sessions for children and young people
- Support for Key Stage 2 curriculum swimming. Washington currently has 6 schools using its pool
- The Centre has recently introduced a very successful Rookie Lifeguard Training Programme for young people. The sessions teaches basic lifesaving skills to children aged 9 - 16yrs

Swimming participation at the Centre was promoted during the October 2008 half term, with 5 days unlimited swimming. Young people and concession holders were able to 'swim unlimited' during half-term for only - juniors £3 and adults £5.

The aquatics provision is accompanied by an extensive Wellness Centre and sports hall activities. For example, the Centre have recently introduced a successful cardio cycling session into the programme, with 10 extra weekly classes being added to the Group Training programme.

In addition, the Centre provides a range activity for under 5s. In the October half term, the Centre ran taster sessions for 'bouncing babies', which is a trampoline based activity for the 2 - 5yrs age group. A 'tumble tot' session for 2 - 5yrs was also organised, with the aim to improve co-ordination and flexibility of the children.

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.

As Members may be aware, it was identified in the 2007/2008 Culture and Leisure Review report on swimming ('Not Treading Water'), that funding should be identified and attracted to support improvements in the Washington Leisure Centre. It is recognised that Washington Leisure Centre is an aging facility and in need of investment. Options for Centre improvements will require significant funds. Whilst this item is not scheduled for 2008, it clearly remains an emerging priority for such investment. Consideration of how improvements can take place will be part of the next phase of Sport and Leisure's facility planning.

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 Washington, Rickleton, Duke of Albany and through the Big Lottery Fund, Barmston play area. Over the next two years the Play Pathfinder programme will see five new developments, which are prioritised by the Play and Urban Games Strategy. These are Albany Park, a new Wheeled Sports provision in the area, Glebe Park, Holly Park and Sulgrave. 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 8,900 additional children and young people having access to high quality equipped sites in Washington. The Play Pathfinder programme will realise an additional investment of over £541,000 into Play and Urban Games facilities in Washington.

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. taken into consideration.

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 Washington

| Project | Number of Young People Accessing High Quality Play |
|--|--|
| <p>The development of a sub-area site in Albany Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation by Sport and Leisure with support by Oxclose & District Youth Club, Washington Pride• A high quality sub-area resource (estimated NPFA play value 50+)• Completion due March 2009 | 2,754 within 1 km |
| <p>Identify location of a wheeled sports provision within Washington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation to be undertaken by Sport & Leisure with support by local young people, Oxclose & District Youth Club and Washington Pride.• Completion due March 2009 | 2,100 within 1 km |
| <p>The full refurbishment of play provision in Glebe Park in line with the Glebe renewal plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation by Oxclose and District Youth Club• A high quality sub-area resource (estimated NPFA play value 50+)• Completion due March 2010 | 2,087 within 1 km |
| <p>Development of a local area play provision in Holly Park to counteract the current removals nearby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation by Oxclose and District Youth Club.• Completion due March 2010 | 1,232 within 1 km |
| <p>The development of a teenage multi use games area in Sulgrave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation by Sport and Leisure• High quality local area resource• Completion due March 2010 | 749 within 400m |