

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
17 September 2009

Agenda Item	15.
Report No	ECS/46/09

Developing Partnerships for Sporting Excellence
Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

SUMMARY

This report informs Members of current opportunities to form partnerships with other funding agencies to develop the ability to identify and nurture young talented sports men and women in advance of the Commonwealth Games, Glasgow 2014.

Forming such a partnership would contribute to a number of commitments in **Strengthening the Highlands** and the Single Outcome Agreement, relating to health improvement and sports development.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An element of the Highland Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (PASS), approved by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in November 2008, seeks to develop “athletes expected to be on the cusp of Commonwealth Games standards by 2014”. The Strategy recommends that one strand of achieving this is to “support and develop school sports associations to improve competition opportunities”.
- 1.2 Although established talented athletes with aspirations to represent Scotland at the Commonwealth Games 2014 are already supported in Highland through the Highland Institute of Sport (HIS), there is a weakness with the identification and nurture of emerging young talented athletes just below this level to give them the opportunity to reach the standards set for entry to HIS. This could result in relatively low numbers enrolled in HIS, and the Highlands being under-represented in the various Scottish teams at the Commonwealth Games.
- 1.3 In order to achieve these aspirations, the PASS document advocates that the various partners should “investigate a multi-agency approach to the feasibility of funding paid coaches and instructors’ education needs to improve the skills pool”. Through discussion and negotiation, partners have now emerged willing to provide financial help to achieve these objectives. Most notably **sportscotland**, Scottish Swimming and the Highland Swim Team Committee have emerged as keen to assist.

2. Partnership opportunities with other agencies

- 2.1 Most notably **sportscotland**, Scottish Swimming and the Highland Swim Team Committee have emerged as keen to assist.
- 2.2 **sportscotland** has offered to provide additional funding to Highland Council of £90k in order to employ a Youth Sporting Future Co-ordinator over three years. This person would work with Schools, Active Schools Co-ordinators and Clubs to review the sports competition structure for young people so that all those working with young people in sport could access and contribute to organising quality competition. Talent identification would be followed up by a support structure, working with schools, governing bodies and coaches to provide pathways for athletes to reach standards where they would be considered for admission into the Highland Institute of Sport.
- 2.3 Scottish Swimming has offered £10k per year for three years to contribute towards the employment of a Swimming Coach and Swimming Clubs co-ordinated by Highland Swim Team Committee have pledged the same amount. These commitments are conditional on Highland Council offering the same sum (£10k) to complete a funding package. The coach would be employed to work with swimming clubs to provide the environment within which young talent can emerge, be identified and nurtured, be brought into the Highland Swim Team structure, and then meet the standards to progress into the Highland Institute of Sport, ultimately with a view to Commonwealth Games selection standards.

3. Resources / Budget Implementations

- 3.1 The post of Youth Sporting Future Co-ordinator would be fully funded by **sportscotland**. Some operational costs would be met from existing resources in Active Schools and Sports Development. The post of Swimming Coach would require a commitment of £10,000 per year for three years, but would draw in double that amount from other agencies. The ECS Service would reconfigure Sports Development services to redirect existing resources to achieve this commitment.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that:

a) Members approve the proposed partnership funding to target support to Highland athletes to increase their chances of being selected to compete in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and

b) approve the use of external funding of £150k over three years on offer to employ a post to provide additional support to competitive sports competitions in schools, and to employ a swimming coach.

c) approve the use of £10,000 a year for three years from existing sports budgets as the Council's contribution to the partnership.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 31 August 2009

Ref:

Background Papers