

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Sport and Activity Working Group held in Committee Room No 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday, 11 March 2008 at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr B Gormley
Ms J Douglas

Mr A M Millar
Mrs E McAllister

Officials in attendance:

Mr G Watson, Community Development Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr A Clark, Active Schools Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr J Warde, Principal Facilities Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr A Hoseason, Coaching Development Officer, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Miss J MacLennan, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Mr B Gormley in the Chair

BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr W Fernie.

2. REMIT AND WORK OF THE SPORT AND ACTIVITY WORKING GROUP

There had been circulated Report No SA1/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport setting out the remit of the Sport and Activity Working Group, as agreed by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2008, and which made recommendations as to how this remit might be taken forward.

In discussion, Members were mindful of the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead particularly in relation to the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The importance of play in promoting healthy lifestyles was recognised and, in light of recent restructuring, it was vital that attention was concentrated on play so that the focus previously associated with it was neither lost nor diluted. Early attention on this area would allow the Working Group to input to a report scheduled for consideration at a future Highland Council meeting.

The Working Group **NOTED** its remit and **AGREED:-**

- (i) the way forward for the activity strategy, sports strategy and facilities/estates strategy as each item is taken on the agenda;
- (ii) that a paper on play be brought to the next meeting of the Working Group; and
- (iii) that representatives from **sportscotland** be invited to address a meeting of the Working Group as soon as **sportscotland** had completed their current

restructure and recruitment exercise.

3. HIGHLAND SPORTS STRATEGY

There had been circulated Report No SA2/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport informing Members that a multi-agency officer group had been established to take forward a Highland Sports Strategy. In addition, a briefing paper was tabled at the meeting identifying how organisations with an interest in developing a sports strategy and the sporting community in the Highlands could respond to the Scottish Executive's "Reaching Higher: Building on the Success of Sport 21" document, the aim of which was to increase participation and improve performance.

In regard to the development of a Highland Sports Strategy the proposed process was outlined and which included seven area workshops plus an additional one for sports specific development officers with the issues, actions and aims identified from these workshops being fed back to the Working Group. The 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow was foremost in many minds and the workshops would also look for ideas how increased representation from Highland on the Scottish team could be achieved.

It was important to involve Sports Councils more in the process as they had the potential to be drivers of sport initiatives in their own locality and could assist in leading the consultation. It was recognised that their remit was evolving and that this could be explored in greater detail with **sportscotland** and the Highland Sports Development Association.

The Working Group **NOTED** the establishment of the multi-agency steering group to look at sporting and activity provision in Highland and that regular updates of its progress would be reported back to the Sport and Activity Working Group.

4. HIGHLAND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

There had been circulated Report No SA3/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport informing Members that a multi-agency officer group had been established to develop a Physical Activity Strategy for Highland. A paper setting out the background and strategic objectives of a Physical Activity Strategy was tabled which also informed Members of progress made to date. The aim was to bring together all the funded programmes, to identify gaps in provision and to maximise opportunities for individuals to be physically active. It was vital to involve wider social partners so organisations such as Community Health Partnerships and NHS Highland had been invited to participate. Ultimately it would be for the Education, Culture and Sport Committee to agree the Strategy but it was hoped that the Wellbeing Alliance would then take the opportunity to endorse it.

The Working Group **NOTED**:-

- (i) the establishment of the multi-agency group to develop a physical strategy for Highland, consisting of representatives from all Highland Council Services and from partnerships with agencies and the voluntary sector who had an involvement in physical activity; and
- (ii) that the group would regularly report to the Sport and Activity Working Group on progress with the aim of one or more final reports being considered by the Working Group prior to the submission of a Physical Strategy to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee for adoption.

5. FACILITIES/ESTATES PLAN

The Facilities Officer reported on work undertaken to date to progress a facilities/estates planning model. Current provision of facilities had arisen in an ad hoc manner over a number of years but the time had now come to identify where there was a gap in provision, or an improvement of facilities was required. A Facilities Planning Model would allow current provision to be measured against **sportscotland** standards and for priorities to be identified. The provision and demand in each of the catchment areas of the Council's 29 Secondary Schools would form the basis of the study but taking account of political and economic factors. It was unrealistic to expect some facilities, such as swimming pools, to be available in each of these areas but the aim was to address the issue of equality. The outcome would allow an assessment of how much of the Service's Capital Programme would be required and to draw up a development plan for the next 20 years. It was suggested that it would be beneficial for officers to attend Ward Forum meetings as part of the consultation.

In discussion the following points were raised:-

- gaps in provision identified included all-weather pitches and indoor facilities.
- some Primary Schools had no facilities for physical activity and had to use village halls and there were circumstances where even this option was unavailable and required teachers to adapt classroom to allow any form PE to take place.
- the cost of using existing secondary school premises by the public was sometimes prohibitive.
- all premises and not just those in local authority ownership would be audited where they considered fit for purpose and accessible on grounds of price.
- with regard to providing facilities for elite athletes, views would be sought from those involved bearing in mind that such athletes should not be disadvantaged on the basis of geography but taking into account the viability of certain options available
- discussions would also take place with the sports governing bodies as to how they too might support elite athletes.

The Working Group **NOTED** the development of the Facilities Planning Model and **AGREED** that officers also attend Ward Forum meetings as part of the consultation process.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Taking into account its work plan and the timetabling involved to consider the various Strategy documents, the Working Group **AGREED** the following dates for future meetings:-

- 30 April 2008
- 4 June 2008
- 25 June 2008
- 13 August 2008
- 24 September 2008
- 29 October 2008

The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.

