

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Sport and Activity Working Group held in the First Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Wednesday 25 June 2008 at 3.00 pm.

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 A Hoseason, Coaching Development Officer, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr J Warde, Principal Facilities Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Miss M Murray, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

Mr B Gormley in the Chair

BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group held on 30 April 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were **NOTED**.

3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There had been circulated Report No SA7/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport giving details of progress to date and identifying the next steps in developing a multi-agency strategy for Physical Activity within Highland. The report advised that a consultation exercise was currently underway involving elected Members through Ward Business Meetings, and the public, both through Ward Forums and individually through an on-line questionnaire. There was a separate questionnaire for young people. The consultation would close on 27 June 2008 and the results collated and reported to the next meeting of the multi-agency Physical Activity Group which had been established to develop the strategy. A draft strategy would then be prepared and submitted to the Sport and Activity Working Group for comment prior to it being presented to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in September or November 2008.

In discussion, Members commented that the consultation had not been raised at some Ward Forums due to the short timescale.

The Active Schools Manager advised that the timescale was short to allow sufficient time for the strategy to be prepared and submitted to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. The deadline could be extended to the first week in August if necessary.

Members then considered the adult questionnaire and made the following comments:-

Schools

- all of the items listed were important;
- opportunities should be provided for youngsters to engage informally in play and sport during the school day;
- improvements to school grounds were necessary to facilitate safe play and sport;
- a variety of terrain in school playgrounds was an asset;
- it would be useful to receive feedback from Playground Supervisors regarding current play activity in schools;
- “Fit for Girls” was a priority given the significant reduction in physical activity by girls when they reached secondary school;
- single sex physical education could be beneficial;
- role models should be used to promote sport and physical activity to young people;
- greater emphasis should be placed on women’s sport.

Workplaces

- the Council should lead by example in changing the culture of inactivity that existed in the workplace;
- lack of facilities, such as changing rooms and showers, was an issue;
- lunchtime activities, such as the “Splash and Dash” sessions at Inverness Leisure, should be encouraged.

Homes

- planning gain should be utilised to develop play and activity areas;
- “Home Zone” developments provided safe environments for children to play in;
- gardening activity improved physical and mental health;
- the possibility of lunch clubs for senior citizens providing activities such as dancing could be investigated;
- partnership working was key to promoting health improvement;

Communities

- the possibility of the Ranger Service providing guided walks suitable for older people should be investigated;
- highlife prices, and the reduced rates to which some groups were entitled, should be publicised more widely;
- GP exercise referrals were important although it was noted that some GPs were opposed to the idea;

The Working Group otherwise **NOTED** progress to date on the development of the Physical Activity Strategy.

4. HIGHLAND SPORTS STRATEGY PROGRESS

There had been circulated Report No SA8/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport giving details of progress made from March to June 2008 on the creation of the second Highland Sports Strategy. The report advised that a series of consultation meetings had been held throughout Highland in May to which people from a wide range of organisations interested in sport had been invited. Those in attendance received a presentation detailing the background to the second Highland Sport Strategy and discussion groups were asked to consider eight topics and record issues/ideas, solutions/actions and barriers to solutions/actions for each topic. The groups were also asked to prioritise each topic according to the greatest need in the community. The results indicated that facilities were the main issue relative to the development of sport in Highland, followed by increasing participation, supporting people and strong organisations. The feedback from the consultation meetings would be reviewed by the multi-agency steering group established to progress the Highland Sports Strategy and the key findings would be presented to the Sport and Activity Working Group in due course.

In discussion, Members who were present at the consultation meetings expressed concern at the low numbers in attendance.

The low priority awarded to the role of local Sports Councils at the consultation meetings was highlighted and the following comments were made:-

- one approach was for the Council's sports development officers to take an active role in invigorating Sports Councils;
- the development of Sports Forums was a possible way forward;
- Sports Councils had an aging membership and struggled to attract younger clubs;
- some Sports Councils were poorly attended and met simply to consider grant applications which it was suggested could be determined at Ward meetings;
- Inverness Sports Council was well attended and actively seeking to increase its membership.

The Coaching Development Officer advised that one suggestion arising from the consultation meetings, which would be progressed by officers, was the creation of a Highland-wide directory of sports clubs containing contact details for the Secretary and key members of each club, as well as information such as the number of members, age range etc.

Members agreed that the directory would be a useful tool and stressed the importance of keeping the information up to date.

The Working Group otherwise **NOTED** the report.

5. HIGHLAND PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

There had been circulated Report No SA9/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport regarding the success of adult participation in sport following the publication of a national survey taken in 2006. The Scottish Omnibus survey,

published by **sportscotland**, covered a wide range of sports and physical activities and compared participation rates in Highland with that of the whole of Scotland. The report highlighted a number of key findings and that, as a result of all the published data, Highland was in the top quartile of Scottish local authorities in terms of participation in sports. The survey data would be used in the Council's physical activity and sports strategies and could be used to set baseline figures against which to measure future participation increases against local and national targets.

The Working Group **NOTED** the successful participation levels in the Council area.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next meeting of the Working Group was provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 13 August 2008 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Inverness.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm.