

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 Wednesday, 30 April 2008 at
10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr B Gormley
Mr W Fernie
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

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Meeting of the Working Group held on 11 March 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were **NOTED**.

3. THE ROLE OF PLAY IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

There had been circulated Report No SA4/08 by the Community Development Manager outlining the value of play in providing physical activity for children and in developing the basic skills required for sport. It explained how the Council's Sports Development staff could contribute to the delivery of the Council's Play Strategy to provide quality play opportunities. In addition, the various actions undertaken by Active Schools Coordinators (ASCs) were detailed and which included the promotion of a number of national schemes encouraging play and the training of playground supervisors to teach games and activities and to understand the value of free play.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- promoting play was already the remit of ASCs but this was being extended to involve pre-school children.
- assessment of current play activity was necessary if the success of the play strategy was to be measured.

- consideration be given to increasing the number of ASCs, particularly in rural areas, to avoid excessive time being wasted in travelling.
- a corporate approach to play was necessary given the various Council services involved and to ensure structured provision was achieved rather than on an ad hoc basis.
- to maximise the benefits of Youth Work and ASC activities some work required to be undertaken outwith school hours.
- over-supervision in play and physical activity could hinder personal and social development and allowing children a degree of freedom was important.

How to identify children not taking part in play activities was also discussed. This was easier to accomplish in smaller schools but in larger schools this could be achieved by liaison between Head Teachers and ASCs. However, there was no formal recording of a child's degree of activity. Information sharing had improved through joint working with health services but there was still much work to be done. Greater inroads could be made by further developing the "Getting It Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) approach to allow early intervention. Often there were financial reasons why families did not actively participate in sport and a suggestion was made that the Hi-Life Scheme could be further extended both from Leisure facilities and other sport provision.

The Working Group **AGREED** to:-

- (i) endorse the principle that ASCs and other Sports Development specialists make the development of quality play opportunities an integral part of promoting physical activity and sport; and
- (ii) explore with the Education, Culture and Sport Service and the GIRFEC team how play and activity levels of individual children could be identified, particularly at the pre-school stage.

4. GLASGOW 2014 – DELIVERING A LASTING LEGACY FOR SCOTLAND – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

There had been circulated Report No SA5/08 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport setting out a response to the consultation paper "Glasgow 2014 – Delivering a Lasting Legacy for Scotland", the deadline for responses being 9 May 2008. The Education, Culture and Sport Committee had, at its meeting on 13 March 2008, delegated the drafting of the Council's response to the Working Group.

The Committee Chairman referred to discussion which had taken place at an All Scotland Group meeting arranged to explore with local authorities, sport and cultural groups the benefits the Commonwealth Games could generate. There would be opportunities for local authorities to enter into partnerships to support a sport or country at the Games. The degree to which the Council should become involved would need consultation but it was proposed that the Council should aspire to engage as many young people as possible with the Games. In the long term it was hoped there would be substantial investment made to providing facilities, particularly in more remote areas, to encourage participation by the wider community.

The contribution made by volunteers was recognised. Although volunteers readily engaged in primary school sport activities, there was less participation by parents in secondary schools but it was hoped that the measures contained in the Parental Involvement Act would help. Regret was expressed that **sportscotland** had deleted all of its volunteer coordinator posts given the considerable success of the one based in

Highland. It was hoped that **sportscotland** would be encouraged, by the emphasis on volunteering in the consultation response, to reinstate the Highland post.

Having suggested that the Administration might wish to consider the Council's involvement in the Games, the Working Group **AGREED**:-

- (i) the response to the consultation, taking into account the comments raised; and
- (ii) that the Games' legacy plan also include investment to allow the extension of the opening hours of existing facilities and the development of facilities generally, particularly in rural areas.

5. SPORTS FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

There had been circulated Report No SA6/08 by the Community Development Manager detailing issues for discussion arising from a proposed draft report for the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on Sports Facility Development Planning. It also set out a rationale for establishing future priorities for investment.

Equalisation of Provision

Although equalisation appeared to be a fairer approach this had to be weighed against the scenario of rejecting community aspirations and perhaps closing facilities in areas where over provision existed. A midway approach could be to have a programme in place based on gaps in provision but where, if communities raised a specified percentage of funding, their placing in the programme could be advanced. In drawing up a draft programme the report had defined a "community" as the catchment area of each of the Council's 29 Secondary Schools, referred to as Integrated Learning Communities (ILCs), and had compared provision within an ILC to **sportscotland** standards. In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- although the ILC model worked well in urban conurbations, it did not work so well in the rural areas where, for example, individuals might have to make a 2 hour round trip to access a badminton court.
- the **sportscotland** standards appeared to be based on an urban model and, in a Highland context, would not make best use of resources.
- to highlight Highland's unique circumstances, an approach be made to **sportscotland** with a view to having representation on their Board.
- not everyone had links to local schools and other factors such as population density, age profile, areas of social deprivation and travel times to existing facilities had to be taken into account.
- a ward by ward approach in some areas was required to define what a "community" was and on which to base the facility model.
- low cost options, such as sport barns, could provide basic facilities.
- as a result of poor drainage many sport pitches were frequently unplayable.
- investment into mobile facilities would help to address the problem.
- existing facilities would have to be graded in terms of whether or not they were fit for purpose.

Swimming Provision

A mapping exercise had been undertaken to identify those swimming pools allowing public access and had then compared it to demand. The issues and statistics gathered identified, depending on how the statistics were interpreted, three different areas of

demand. If the Council chose to invest in additional swimming provision, there were considerable revenue implications to take into account and Members would have to consider which elements of the Education, Culture and Sport Service would have to be cut to meet the costs involved. Community-run pools had been tried previously but, in the long term, communities had found them difficult to sustain resulting in the Council being asked to take over their associated costs and, in some cases, their operation.

Length of Priorities List

The cost of the draft priority list, resulting from the Facility Planning Model, was approximately £18,750,000 and, based on current levels of Community Learning and Leisure expenditure, would take at least 25 years to complete. Although it could be viewed as good forward planning, it might raise community expectations about projects which would take years to address and a realistic approach had to be taken.

The Working Group **NOTED** the various issues raised and recommended that the Administration be given an opportunity to consider the draft report and the various factors involved in developing a Facility Planning Model.

6. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

The Working Group **NOTED** the next provisional meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for Wednesday 4 June 2008 at 10.00 a.m. in the Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Inverness.

The meeting ended at 2.00 p.m.