
Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and Sports Facilities Improvement Plan

To: **Council 17 December 2009**

Main Portfolio Area: **Environmental Services**

By: **Director of Environmental Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All**

Summary: **Following approval by Cabinet - to agree the draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy themes and objectives to increase participation for wider social and health objectives including recommendations of the Sports Facilities Improvement Project.**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out the Council's vision, themes and objectives for the sport and leisure it provides over the next three years. The strategy is one of a number of key strategic documents to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan and is response to the healthy communities section.
- 1.2 The document will replace the previously agreed Sports Strategy for Thanet 1999 – 2002.
- 1.3 The new strategy will address the following targets;
- ◆ More people aspiring to take part in sport and active recreation;
 - ◆ More people actually taking part in sport and active recreation;
 - ◆ More people becoming involved as volunteers in sport and active recreation;
 - ◆ Increased satisfaction with opportunities for sport and active recreation in Thanet.
- 1.4 The Sports Facilities Improvement Plan (executive summary within the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy) was undertaken after Thanet District Council was approached to take part in a pilot project with Sport England.

- 1.5 Aim was to test new ways to support to Local Government in strategic planning for sports facilities in the district.
- 1.6 Thanet was the only authority in the South East region selected.
- 1.7 The plan makes a number of recommendations which would need to be embedded in the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. This will assist decisions on the Council's own asset disposal programme and recognises that the Council is no longer the sole operator of key sports facilities.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 Evidence supports sport and active recreation having the potential to;
- ◆ Provide health benefits to those who regularly participate and support Government agenda to change the health and lifestyle choices of the local population reducing the burden on health service
 - ◆ Provide positive opportunities and diversionary activities to those young people who may otherwise become disenfranchised
 - ◆ Develop community cohesion and pull together groups/communities
 - ◆ Improve educational attainment and opportunity to contribute to reducing unemployment
 - ◆ Deliver economic benefits to local area through increased participation in sport and related leisure activities and through visitors attracted by quality sporting events and facilities
- 2.2 The programme of international sporting events such as London 2012 Olympics, Football and Rugby World Cups, will give an unprecedented opportunity to increase participation in areas across the country.
- 2.3 National indicator 8 measures local authorities on the % of the population regularly active and has been chosen as key indicator in Kent Agreement 2, through the East Kent Local Strategic Partnership and as a TDC performance indicator.
- 2.4 The 'Active People' survey provides annual data for this indicator and has highlighted the need for Thanet to focus on improvement. The table over page highlights these figures;

Active People Participation rates for Thanet, county, region and nation

Area	2005/06 Regular Participation	2005/06 no activity	2007/08 Regular Participation	2007/08 no activity
Thanet	17.7%	55.7%	18.3%	51.3%
Kent	19.9%	51.6%	19.1%	49.2%
South East region	22.6%	46.9%	22.3%	45.3%
England	21.0%	50.6%	21.3%	48.5%

*regular participation defined as 3 x 30 minute moderate activity sessions per week

- 2.5 The guiding vision in developing the strategy has been to build active, healthy, safe and successful communities in Thanet through increased participation in sport and active recreation.
- 2.6 This will be achieved by prioritising the work of the Council in acknowledgement of its limited resources through: building and developing the Council's existing good work on leisure services and linking where possible to the work of the Council's partners.
- 2.7 The key themes to achieve the vision are:
- a. Raising the profile of sport and active recreation;
 - b. Increasing opportunities for sport;
 - c. Developing healthy lifestyles;
 - d. Enhancing sports facility provision;
- 2.8 The four themes are supported by a number of high level actions. The actions will be included in the Council annual service plans over the next three years where the proposed outputs and outcomes can be measured and monitored.
- 2.9 One of the key themes of the Strategy (enhancing facility provision) was included as an outcome of the sports facilities improvement plan project. Participation figures have been shown to have a direct correlation with satisfaction with sports facilities in the local area. The 'Active People' survey also monitors satisfaction with local sports facilities and Thanet again compared poorly with others. The table over page highlights these figures;

Area	Satisfied 05/06	Satisfied 08/09
South East	71.8%	69.9%
England	69.5%	66.6%
Kent	69.1%	63.9%
Shepway	61.6%	59.1%
Dover	59%	56.5%
Thanet	58.7%	60.6%

2.10 TDC leisure services took the lead on the sports facilities improvement project with support from other departments such as planning and estates along with partners from Kent County Council and Sport England in order to;

- ◆ agree the scope and vision
- ◆ assess the national and local policy context
- ◆ conduct a 'facility mapping exercise' to audit current provision, compare to other areas and to look at future needs
- ◆ make recommendations on surpluses and deficiencies in each sport facility type and prioritise action.

2.11 The Vision agreed was - **'To broaden the range of active leisure facilities and improve existing provision to engage a wider audience through increased choice and contribute to greater participation within the local community.'**

2.12 Outcome is a document that;

- ◆ Gives the current picture of sports facilities in the district
- ◆ Looks into future needs of the population (until 2026)
- ◆ Provides robust evidence base to support Local Development Framework process (LDF)
- ◆ Provides strategic direction for all sectors and highlights the need for all organisations to contribute rather than just the Council
- ◆ Recognises that, given the current economical climate, new ways of funding developments will be required
- ◆ Is a working document that helps to attract external funding from a range of sources

- ◆ Looks at methods to address needs, making key recommendations and identifying priorities

- 2.13 The document will help to avoid inappropriate investment in the wrong facilities.
- 2.14 Where deficiencies are highlighted it is assumed that work with the relevant national governing body of sport and local representatives for that sport will be undertaken to discuss methods for meeting the demand.
- 2.15 An important consideration is to acknowledge other partners in this process taking on board the Council's medium term financial strategy.
- 2.16 On 2 December 2009 Cabinet recommended adoption of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy commenting that the actions are important to achieving the Corporate Plan theme of 'Healthy Community' and that the strategy will enable the limited resources available to the service to be complimented by external funding.
- 2.17 Within this they also recommended that the Sports Facilities Improvement Plan was agreed subject to amendments made based on comments from key stakeholders. Any amendments will be made in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Director for Environmental Services.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 A range of consultation work has been undertaken to help shape the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.
- 3.2 This includes information from recent user surveys, the Residents Panel responses on the Council's leisure services and feedback from member organisations from the Thanet Sports Network.
- 3.3 The Sports Facilities Improvement Plan included key stakeholders from Sport England, Kent County Council and partners of Thanet Sports Network (including local leisure providers). Consultation with clubs and providers also took place during the PPG17 process in 2006 and Indoor Sports Review in 2004.
- 3.4 Following on from the agreement by Council, further workshops will be held with local school head teachers, local facility providers in each sector and national governing bodies of sport. Comments will then be fed into the plan and published in the various forms available to the Council.

4 Corporate Implications

4.1 Corporate

- 4.1.1 The Sport and Active Recreation strategy will assist the Council in making decisions on what services to deliver and whilst Sport and Active Recreation isn't

a core service it highlights the value it will have on achieving wider social issues such as those mentioned in section 2.1 of this report.

- 4.1.2 The Council is an owner and operator of some of the key sports facilities in the district and the satisfaction of users/local population is key to achieving the overall aim of the sport and active recreation strategy - increasing participation. It will also impact positively on perceptions of the Council.
- 4.1.3 The recommendations from the Sports Facilities Improvement plan may well be of a sensitive nature and open to public challenge as they will help build on the evidence base shown in PPG17 and allow increases in or rationalisation of some facilities in favour of investing in others.

The data used is robust enough to explain these decisions. It is also just a recommendation. Any review of specific, individual sports facilities would need to follow standard TDC public consultation processes.

4.2 Finance

- 4.2.1 The revenue budget as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy indicates the need for reduction in overall Council expenditure. The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy themes and actions have been drafted to minimise the additional call on the Council's future revenue funding, however as highlighted in 4.1.1 the value given from maintenance of the current revenue budget can be seen through benefits in other departments/agendas.
- 4.2.2 The strategy will enable bids for external funding to be submitted to help deliver some of the actions. This has been evidenced by the ability to pull in over £200k over a period of 4 years to deliver the highly successful youth crime and disability sports projects.
- 4.2.3 Similarly the recommendations from the sports facilities improvement plan are not intended to act as a 'wish list' placing a greater burden on the Council's revenue and capital budgets but to help justify the hard choices over what can and can't be supported.

These decisions can potentially lead to a release of budget savings, disposal of unwanted assets and the option of prioritised reinvestment into other sporting provision.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The Council is not statutorily obliged to provide sporting services and facilities except in relation to the Children's Act, which identifies that district councils have a responsibility to provide leisure activities for children and young people.

4.4 Equity and Equalities

- 4.4.1 The Sport and Active Recreation strategy identifies key groups to be targeted as participation in these groups is generally lower.

4.4.2 All activities delivered within the Council's sports service are monitored in order to analyse equality.

4.4.3 Specific actions/work that arise from the objectives will form part of the Council's annual service plans that are subject to equality impact assessments.

5.0 Recommendation:

5.1 **That Council adopts the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy as drafted, to allow the range of actions set out in the strategy to be taken forward.**

5.2 **That Council agrees the principles of the format, recommendations, strategic planning methods and vision set out in the draft Sports Facilities Improvement Plan and, subject to further consultation with key stakeholders, permit delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services to agree updates to the document as required in discussion with the Director of Environmental Services.**

6.0 Decision Making

6.1 The strategy has been drafted on the basis of achievability, reflecting existing initiatives with the Corporate Plan and service plans.

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Background Papers

Best value review – Leisure
PPG17 Open Spaces, Indoor Sport and Recreation Assessment
Sports Facilities Improvement Plan working group minutes
Sports Facilities Improvement Plan context, mapping and summary document (further information available from Sports Development department)

Appendix

See attached Sport and Active Recreation Strategy with executive summary of Sports Facilities Improvement Plan

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	
Legal	