

A Community Sports Strategy for Solihull

2007 – 2016



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Images courtesy of Sport England and Solihull Council

1. Introduction

Welcome to the Community Sports Strategy for Solihull.

Sport and active recreation provides a great deal of enjoyment to a large number of people in the Borough of Solihull. As well as being something that is done in people's leisure time, participation in sport and active recreation:

- improves people's health;
- helps to reduce the crime and anti-social impacting on people's lives;
- assists in improving the educational attainment of children and young people; and
- Provides people with jobs and careers.

A community can generate immense value from sport and active recreation.

From athletics to walking, and abseiling to trampolining, the Borough has a diverse range of sporting opportunities available to residents and visitors to the area. These opportunities are provided by a range of providers including the Borough, Town and Parish Councils, the private and educational sectors and community and voluntary organisations.

This final draft has been produced following views being sought on the priorities for sport and active recreation in the Borough of Solihull. Comments were sought on a draft strategy which was published on Solihull Council's website and sent electronically to those who participated in seminars run in October 2006.

All references to sport and active recreation are interchangeable throughout the strategy and refer to both sport and active recreation.



Jeanette McGarry
Director of Community Services

2. Executive Summary

The Strategy has been developed over the last 12 months and will be a key contributor to help deliver the Physical Activity Strategy for Solihull. Solihull Council has led this process with support from Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sport (CSW), Solihull Care Trust, Parkwood Leisure, Solihull Sports Council, Solihull College, North Solihull School Sports Partnership and Warwickshire LTA. Consultation has been central to the process. The Borough's sports clubs and public agencies have played a particular role in helping to shape the Strategy.

The Strategy seeks to increase participation in sport and active recreation through five areas of activity:

- Participation development
- Sports volunteering
- Sports clubs and facilities
- Sport workforce development
- Raising the awareness of sporting opportunities

Four themes have also been identified:

- Children and Young People
- Health and Older People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Economic Vitality

The Strategy will be delivered with the involvement of many organisations. The Sport and Physical Activity Network will monitor the implementation of the Strategy.



Nick Garnett
Head of Leisure & Chair of the Solihull Sport and Physical Activity Network
(SPAN)

3. Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- address national, regional and local sports priorities;
- contribute to the delivery of the Physical Activity Strategy for Solihull;
- give direction to the Council's services, set within these priorities;
- minimise duplication with a number of organisations involved in the development of sport;
- clarify the roles of the organisations involved;
- setting a broader context to the allocation of existing resources;
- obtain support and buy into a common approach to addressing the sporting issues;
- identify areas where investment in time as well as money may be needed and establish a priority;
- provide re-assurance to potential external funding bodies that there is a clear purpose to any bid for resources set with the national and regional context.

4. Solihull: Local Background Information

The Borough of Solihull is a relatively prosperous area compared to the rest of the West Midlands Conurbation. It has a population of around 200,000 and of those one quarter are aged over 65 and a quarter are aged 19 and below. There are just over 80,000 households. The Borough as a whole has a lower proportion of residents from black and ethnic minorities (5.4%), than the average in England and Wales and a significantly lower proportion than in the West Midlands.

There are 6,700 businesses in the Borough, 83 per cent of which employ less than ten people. Only 1 per cent employ more than 200 people. Overall, unemployment is below the national and regional average at 2.5 per cent but the Borough is characterised by significant economic disparity. It has to be noted that the gap in unemployment rates with the rest of the Borough has narrowed since 2001, due to a number of interventions that have been established or are under development to address directly or indirectly the issues of employment in the Regeneration Zone. In particular, the three wards in the North of the Borough that suffer multiple deprivations and are ranked in the poorest 10 per cent in the country. This is in contrast to wards in the South, some of which are amongst the most affluent in the country. There are also pockets of deprivation in the rest of the Borough.

The Borough is often described based around a north-south split in terms of socio-economic conditions with the largely low income north contrasting with the more prosperous areas to the south of the A45. The construction of Chelmsley Wood and surrounding estates in the North of the Borough took place in the 1960s. Meanwhile the old County Borough of Solihull, essentially Solihull and Shirley - was one of the most affluent towns in the UK when the two areas were merged as the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull in 1974.

This inherited divergence has traditionally been accentuated by limited transport communications between the two broad areas which both had more established radial linkages to/from Birmingham.

Solihull has 70 primary and 15 secondary schools and 5 special schools. There are also 2 colleges and a City Technology College.

The population in the north of the Borough is younger than the south. Similarly, the population density in North Solihull is much greater than in the rest of the Borough. North Solihull has large residential areas, such as Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst. Immediately to the south is Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham International Airport, Land Rover (4 x 4 vehicle manufacturer) plant and the National Exhibition Centre. Further south, lies the towns of Solihull and Shirley. In recent years Solihull has seen considerable development and economic growth such as the development of new shopping facilities. However, more investment is needed in the north to address the imbalance particularly in the view of the significant health inequalities within the Borough of Solihull. Shirley contains established

leisure, commercial and industrial areas, and the nearby Blythe Valley Business Park is playing a key role in the regional economy.

Although the average Solihull resident enjoys better health compared to other parts of the UK, there are marked variations in life expectancy across the Borough. Life expectancy varies by as much as eight years between the highest and lowest wards. In the north there tends to be a higher rate of mortality from smoking-related diseases and higher rates of teenage pregnancy compared to the rest of the Borough.

The area of the Borough is 17,832 hectares, of which 70% is designated Green Belt. The rural south and east has several significant settlements, including Dickens Heath new village and Blythe Valley Business Park which has created over 3,000 jobs since opening in 2001 - although the rural area overall has an untypically small average workplace size.

5. How the Community Sports Strategy was Developed

Solihull Council's Leisure Division has lead on the production of the strategy. The strategy has been developed in the following way.

Facilitating the development of strategy for Solihull

A number of stakeholders were invited to form a team with which to review the issues coming out of the strategy process and provide Council Officers with an external reference in addition to that provided by Council Members. This structure and the consequential development of the full strategy and action plan will be tested via this group as part of conducting a consultation exercise on a draft strategy. The group consists of representatives from Solihull Care Trust, Greater Warwickshire Sport, Solihull College, Solihull Sports Council, a regional representative of a national governing body (the LTA), Parkwood Leisure and one of the Borough's School Sports Partnerships.

Engagement

The two seminar workshop events were held in October 2006. The first engaged the sports community and voluntary sector. Sports Clubs and Governing bodies of sport were invited to an evening meeting where they were initially informed of the national, regional and sub-regional agendas and then invited to identify the local issues in discussion groups. The second workshop invited professionals from the health, crime and disorder reduction, youth services and other parts of the Council to identify their priorities and how sport could contribute to them. The information from both workshops was collated with specific activities and themes emerging throughout the process.

Research

Desk research was conducted reviewing the various local, sub-regional (Greater Warwickshire), regional and national strategies and policies relating to sport. This was done to ensure the strategy was relevant and had a strong evidential background.

Developing the strategy

This information along with the desk research was analysed and a draft produced. Consultation is to be carried out on this draft. Comments from the consultation will be feedback to create the final strategy document. A range of partners will be consulted including those bodies on the wider team, sports clubs, non-sporting bodies with an interest in sport and local town and parish councils. This was primarily carried via publishing the draft on Solihull Council's web site. A full list of consultees will be published in the final strategy.

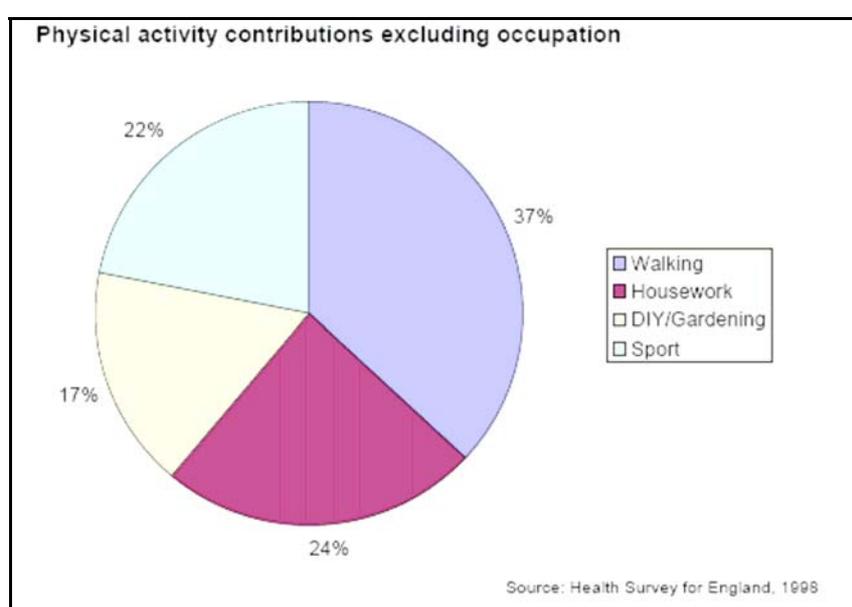
6. Scope of the Community Sports Strategy

Sport and active recreation makes a significant contribution to a whole series of agendas and social issues aside from being enjoyable and fun. This contribution is set out here. The scope of the strategy is then identified.

Sports contribution to improving health

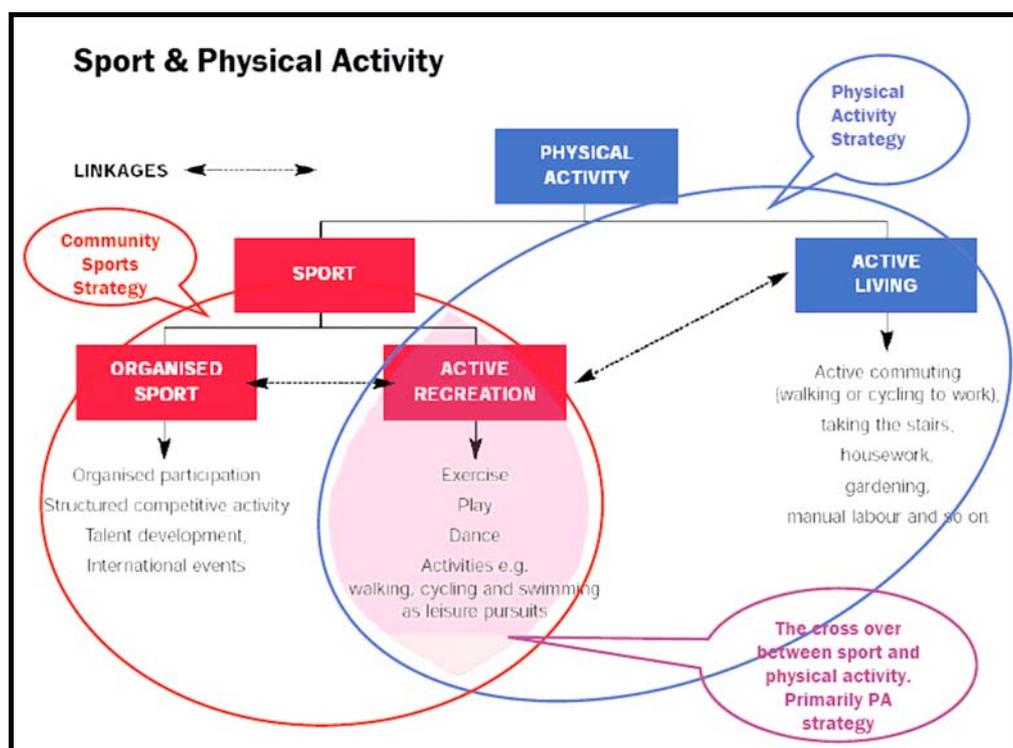
Sport forms a significant part of the physical activity undertaken by people in their daily lives.

Figure 1



There is significant evidence that shows that increased levels of physical activity have a positive impact on health by reducing the risk of obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes and improving mental health and well being. The relationship between physical activity and sport and active recreation is illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 2



Organised sport and active recreation form the sporting contribution to physical activity. The diagram illustrates that there are linkages between active living, active recreation and organised sport, a pathway. It is the hope that active living may lead to sustained active recreation and ultimately more people participating in organised sport.

With the improved health of the nation and tackling health inequalities being of the highest priority, national targets for increased participation in physical activity and sport have been set.

A Physical Activity Strategy for Solihull

Solihull Council and Solihull PCT (now Solihull Care Trust) outlined how they aimed to improve levels of physical activity in the Borough with the development of the Physical Activity Strategy for Solihull (PASS) in 2004. PASS aims to increase significantly the levels of physical activity through sport, recreation, leisure and everyday life particularly among disadvantaged groups. The PASS has as its primary focus encouraging active living and active recreation. Exercise, play, leisure pursuits, walking and dance all contribute to active recreation and are covered throughout the Physical Activity Strategy for Solihull.

There is a need to provide a pathway to provide opportunities for people at any level and progress as their desire and ability allows. This pathway can be seen illustrated in Figure 2 through linkages between active living, active recreation and organised sport.

Play Area Strategy 2003 -2013

This strategy aims to address any gaps in provision for children to enjoy active play and identifies pressure on existing facilities for children to play. It recognises the needs of local children to have a safe place to play, and sets out how children's play opportunities will be improved, with particular emphasis on those areas of the Borough with greatest need.

Sport and Active Recreation's Wider Contribution

As well as contributing to improvements in health, organised sport and active recreation can play a significant role in contributing to:

- creating safer and stronger communities;
- meeting the needs of children and young people;
- economic vitality and workforce development.

There is a body of evidence that illustrates sports contribution to these agendas.

Sports contribution to creating safer and stronger communities

Sport can:

- improve community cohesion, engagement and capacity building;
- reduce crime and anti-social behaviour particular amongst young people;
- improve the quality of the built environment and natural environment and create a sense of place.

A key strength to the current work that already takes place in the Borough addresses two of these outcomes:

1. The sports inclusion programme that incorporates Positive Futures, Off the Wood and NS Fusion uses sport to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
2. The investment by the Council and its partners in the two public leisure facilities at Tudor Grange/Norman Green Sports Centre and North Solihull Sports Centre and the associated investment in the Tudor Grange Park represent a significant contribution to the quality of the built environment. The Building Schools for the Future Programme will significantly improve secondary school facilities in the north of the Borough.

Sports contribution to meeting the needs of children and young people

Research evidence demonstrates that sport can make a contribution to meeting the Every Child Matters national framework:

1. Being Healthy – sport reduces the risk of illness and ill health for young people, can help to prevent or tackle obesity and contributes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
2. Staying safe – sport can promote community cohesion and decrease the likelihood of young people being the victims of youth crime or anti-social behaviour, bullying or discrimination. It can also help to reduce some accidents among young people.
3. Enjoying and achieving – sport assists young people to learn and attain educational standards, contributes to their personal and social development and to their enjoyment of leisure time.
4. Making a positive contribution – sport engages young people in community activity, reduces the likelihood of them being involved in youth crime or anti-social behaviour, develops their self-confidence and encourages positive behaviour and relationships.
5. Achieving economic well-being – sport helps young people to become economically active through providing training employment opportunities both directly and indirectly.

The Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy 2002 is being implemented in Solihull via the two Sports Colleges, Smith's Wood and Lode Heath. Two School Sports Networks have been set up involving all of the primary schools in the Borough. The Partnerships are currently over achieving the 75% target for 5-16 year olds spending a minimum of 2 hours each week on high quality PE and sport.

Sports contribution to economic vitality and workforce development

Sport can contribute to economic vitality and workforce development in many different ways by:

- providing direct employment and contributing to economic output through sports businesses and services;
- acting as a catalyst for investment and regeneration;
- assisting in developing a positive image and improving the attractiveness of an area of business investment, and as a place to live, work and visit;

- improving the skills and qualifications of the workforce, both for employment in the sport and cultural sector and in other industries and by;
- helping to reduce the cost to the economy of workforce absence due to ill health.

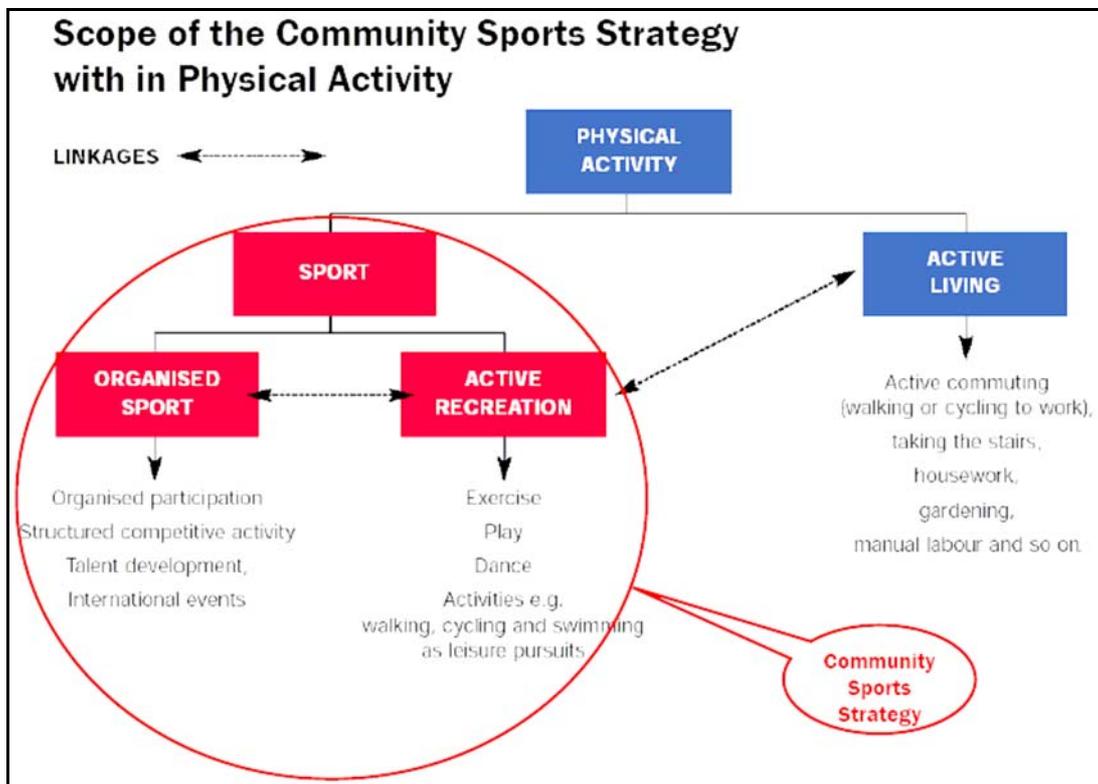
The two Council sports centres alone employ via Parkwood Leisure approximately 150 staff and make a contribution to the economy over and above the range of professional full and part-time sports coaches that work in the Borough.

The NS Fusion programme has involved the development of six long term unemployed local people. They have all completed a period of employment and training that has equipped them with the skills to coach a range of sports.

The Scope of the Community Sports Strategy

The Community Sports Strategy contribution to health through physical activity and therefore to PASS is a focus on organised sport in particular and its relationship with active recreation. This interrelationship will draw those involved in sport to contribute to the delivery of the PASS.

Figure 3



In addition the CSS includes within its scope sports contributions to:

- creating safer and stronger communities, and
- economic vitality and workforce development.

In acknowledging that sport can make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of children and young people, the strategy will support the work of the School Sports Partnerships in this area. Clearly there are many links between the two areas of work. So, the CSS will not seek to deal with the aims and objectives of the Sports Colleges and School Sports Partnerships.

7. Mission and Aims

Mission

To use sport and active recreation to create a Solihull where well-being, pride and quality of life is enjoyed by all and in doing so support the delivery of A Place for People, Solihull's Community Strategy.

Aims

The aim of the strategy is to increase participation in sport and active recreation in Solihull thus contributing to the delivery of the Physical Activity Strategy.

Improved sporting performance will be supported by engaging more people in sport and active recreation. More people participating should allow the creation of a greater number of sporting champions.

Objectives

- To increase participation in sport and active recreation within Solihull.
- To increase the number of sporting volunteers and support to the voluntary and community sectors in sport throughout Solihull.
- To assist in the development of sports clubs and sporting/recreational facilities within Solihull.
- To develop the local sport and active recreation workforce and in doing so contribute to the economic vitality of Solihull.
- To raise the profile and levels of awareness of the opportunities in Solihull for sport and active recreation.

In achieving these objectives, use sport and active recreation to contribute to:

- reducing inequalities for everyone who lives, works and visits Solihull;
- creating a safer and stronger Solihull;
- improving the health and well-being of the people of Solihull;
- meeting the needs of the Children and Young People of Solihull; and
- improving the economic vitality of Solihull.

8. National and Regional Context

For this plan to succeed, a wide range of organisations will need to sign up for sport and commit to the aims and targets set out in the plan. It is essential that the outcomes of this strategy link to other important government, national and regional strategies and plans. Some of the main policy drivers and their key priorities are highlighted below.

NATIONAL

Game Plan - a strategy for delivering Government's sport and physical activity objectives. A joint DCMS and Strategy Unit Report 2002

Game Plan is the Government's strategy for sport and physical activity through to 2020. It was published in December 2002 and presents a new vision for England to become the most active and successful sporting nation in the world. Game Plan now provides the lead for all sports plans in England.

It contains both sport and physical activity objectives, with the challenging target of 70% of the population being moderately physically active by 2020. The current assessment is that only 32% of the population take part in moderate physical activity for 30 minutes on five or more days per week.

Game Plan stressed that participation levels need to be raised for the whole population but interventions should focus on the most economically disadvantaged groups, and within those especially on young people, women and older people. The most sedentary groups will gain the most from a small rise in activity.

At least five a week. Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer, April 2004

This report recognises the possible effect that increasing levels of inactivity will have on the health of the nation. It promotes the important messages for regular participation patterns for adults and children as:

Adults - at least 30 minutes a day of at least moderate intensity physical activity on at least 5 or more days a week (for general health)

Children - 60 minutes a day of at least moderate intensity physical activity on 7 days a week, of which, at least twice a week this should improve, flexibility, muscle strength and bone health.

Rising levels of obesity is a key concern. Low levels of physical activity contribute significantly to the dramatic increase in prevalence of obesity and in turn, increase the risks of linked causes of morbidity and mortality.



The Framework for Sport in England (Sport England, 2004)

The national Sport England strategy aims to increase the number of people taking part in sport and active recreation three times a week for 30 minutes of moderate intensity, as sport's contribution to the achievement of the Government's physical activity targets (i.e. CMO recommendations). Sport England have stated that their aim is to encourage people to be more physically active by developing an active lifestyle through making sport and active recreation a part of everyday life, see figure 2.

The strategy embraces sport as much more than traditional team games and competition:

“Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels”

The strategy sets out the strategic development up to 2020, developing a framework, identifying key priorities for change (see below), future actions, and the impact through outcomes for sport and the wider social and economic benefit.

Figure 4

Key Priorities for Change:

1. Promotion and marketing
2. Legislation and regulatory change
3. Quality accreditation and improvement
4. Structures and partnerships
5. Innovation and delivery
6. Strategic planning and evidence

Sport England National Framework for Sport, 2004

Whole Sport Plans. Produced by National Governing Bodies (NGB's) for priority sports identified by Sport England

Some NGB's projecting that no more than 10% of their affiliated clubs will achieve Clubmark standard by 2009

Club development is a consistently high priority across most Whole Sport Plans/ County & Regional Plans in line with IP9 (SE WM 2004/05 Priority Action No. 5).

Coach / workforce development is also a high priority.

SkillsActive Assessment of Current Provision: Sport and Recreation

Around two in five (38%) coaches in the UK claim to hold a qualification in a sport that they coach. 760,000 coaches lack a formal coaching qualification.

The 2012 London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

The 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games present an opportunity to catalyse an increase in participation in sport across the UK and beyond, inspiring a new generation of young people, in particular, to get involved.

Starting from the closing ceremony of the Beijing 2008 games, the Cultural Olympiad, a four-year period of cultural activity under the umbrella of the 2012 games, will inspire participation in a wide range of diverse cultural activities. The involvement of arts, museums, galleries, buildings, libraries and archives, national institutions and small community groups across the country will provide the platform to both increase the number taking part and encouraging participation from under-represented groups.

Local communities are uniquely positioned to deliver big community enthusiasm for the Games, which can translate into significant social benefits and leave a real lasting legacy. Key local benefits of the Olympics are:

- opportunities for tourism and economic development
- getting our communities active, healthy and safer

- community cohesion by developing a feel good factor and enhanced pride
- creating a significant cultural and sporting legacy
- developing partnerships with local businesses to benefit

Volunteers (see West Midlands Sector Skills Agreement) will play a major role in the success of the Cultural Olympiad; the sporting events that take place before the games and the games themselves. New partnerships forged in the preparations will help local communities connect to a global event, and maximise the Olympics' positive impacts, including the massive boost for the tourism industry and acting as a catalyst for enhancing existing local programmes, plans and provision.

Preparing successfully for the Olympics and its legacy will be of national importance in the next few years.

Respect Agenda

The Respect Action Plan builds on our current drive to tackle anti-social behaviour and reclaim communities for the law-abiding majority.

It also explains why we need to deepen our approach by tackling the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour, intervening early where problems occur and broadening our efforts to address other areas of poor behaviour.

In summary, the Respect Action Plan has six main strands:

- A new approach to the most challenging families
- Improving behaviour and attendance in schools
- Activities for children and young people
- Strengthening communities
- Effective enforcement and community justice
- Supporting families.

REGIONAL

Sign Up for Sport, A Regional Plan for Sport in the West Midlands 2004-2008. A report from Sport England West Midlands, 2004.

The regional Sport England strategy moves on from the national strategy and discusses the priorities for action in the West Midlands and the development of sport up to 2008 (see figure 5).

Figure 5

Key Priorities for Change:

1. Increasing levels of participation in club and community sport
2. Improving levels of sports performance
3. Widening access to sport
4. Improving the health and well being of people through sport
5. Creating safer and stronger communities through sport
6. Improving education through PE and sport
7. Benefiting the economy through sport

Sign Up for Sport, 2004

In all of this policy it is clear that increasing participation and improving sporting infrastructure will have wide ranging benefits for the Borough in terms of crime and antisocial behaviour reduction, improving health and reducing health inequalities, educational achievement, and physical and social regeneration in areas of deprivation. A Community Sports Strategy, together with the Physical Activity Strategy for Solihull will be important for achieving central elements of government policy and targets.

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sport Business Plan (April 2007 – March 2008)

The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sport Partnership (CSW Sport) is a sub regional agency, made up of key local bodies, who have formally committed to working together and contributing to developing sport and active recreation for people throughout the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire area.

The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sport Partnership play a major role in establishing the delivery system for sport at a sub regional level in conjunction with Sport England West Midlands and will play a key role in advising, co-ordinating and supporting Solihull Sport and Physical Activity Network

The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire business plan identifies the role of the partnership as:

- Strategic planning, co-ordination and contribution
- Increasing participation
- Workforce development
- Performance management
- Marketing and communication

Some of the major tasks within the plan include the development of a volunteer development plan and a workforce development plan.

SkillsActive - West Midlands Sector Skills Agreement Regional Action Plan 2006

Key message – Our workforce may double by 2020 in the West Midlands

As the region becomes more physically active to 2020, there is the potential for the active leisure and learning workforce to more than double in the same period. This could mean a demand for anything between 63,000 and 110,000 new workers and volunteers.

Key message – Coaching, teaching and instruction is a priority for investment

There is an urgent need to invest in the coaching, teaching and instruction staff in our sector, as not only is there a demand for a greater volume of qualified coaches, but also a need for more specialists and people with a broader set of skills and knowledge to be able to work with people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. The new UK Coaching Certificate may drive up demand for workforce development as the sector aims to become 'professional' by 2012, but it also has the impact of higher costs of training, which individuals already find hard to pay for.

Coventry & Warwickshire 2012 Partnership

The partnership seeks to maximise the opportunities presented by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games to:

- deliver economic benefits
- improve the image and raise the sporting profile of the sub-region
- engage with the local community to promote the benefits of participation in physical activity and sport
- promote the cultural ethos and values of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)
- support the achievement of a lasting and sustainable legacy for the sub-region

The partnership feeds into the West Midlands 2012 Leadership and Advisory groups and focuses on 5 key themes:

- Sport
- Business
- Tourism
- Culture & Heritage
- Pre-Games Training Camps and Events (PGTC)

9. A Local Perspective

A Place for People - Community Strategy for Solihull 2006 - 2016

A Place for People describes the sort of place we want Solihull to be in the future. It aims to address people's concerns now and to respect the needs of future generations. It sets out the important issues and how they will be tackled. Our aims are to make Solihull into a place:

- That is good to live in for everyone
- That offers opportunities for learning and creativity
- Where we value children, young people and family life
- That is safe from crime and disorder
- That creates jobs and encourages enterprise
- Where people enjoy good health
- Where people respect difference and diversity
- That is inclusive and community focused
- Where people promote caring towards others.

Council Objectives

Solihull Council aims to deliver its vision and values through a set of core objectives, which are medium term goals, which will be what our customers experience as we achieve. The objectives are:

- A brighter future for our children and young people
- Improving the quality of life
- Closing the gap of inequality
- Treating you as an individual
- Good value services

Current Levels of Participation in Sport and Active Recreation

The 'Active People' survey was commissioned by Sport England to develop a comprehensive understanding of current levels of sports and active recreation participation and volunteering in England. The survey was aimed at adults to identify the proportion of adults participating in 3 x 30 minutes of sport and active recreation a week (to contribute to the CMO recommendations) volunteering rates and overall satisfaction with leisure facilities.

The results were published in 2006 and indicated that participation levels in Solihull are below the national average (-0.6%), satisfaction levels for facilities is below the national average (-0.5%) and above the national average for volunteering rates (+0.8%).

Only 20.4% of the adult population in Solihull currently take part in recommended levels of sport a week (3 x 30 minutes a week) compared with 21% participation rates nationally. This demonstrates that 124,500 (70.6%)

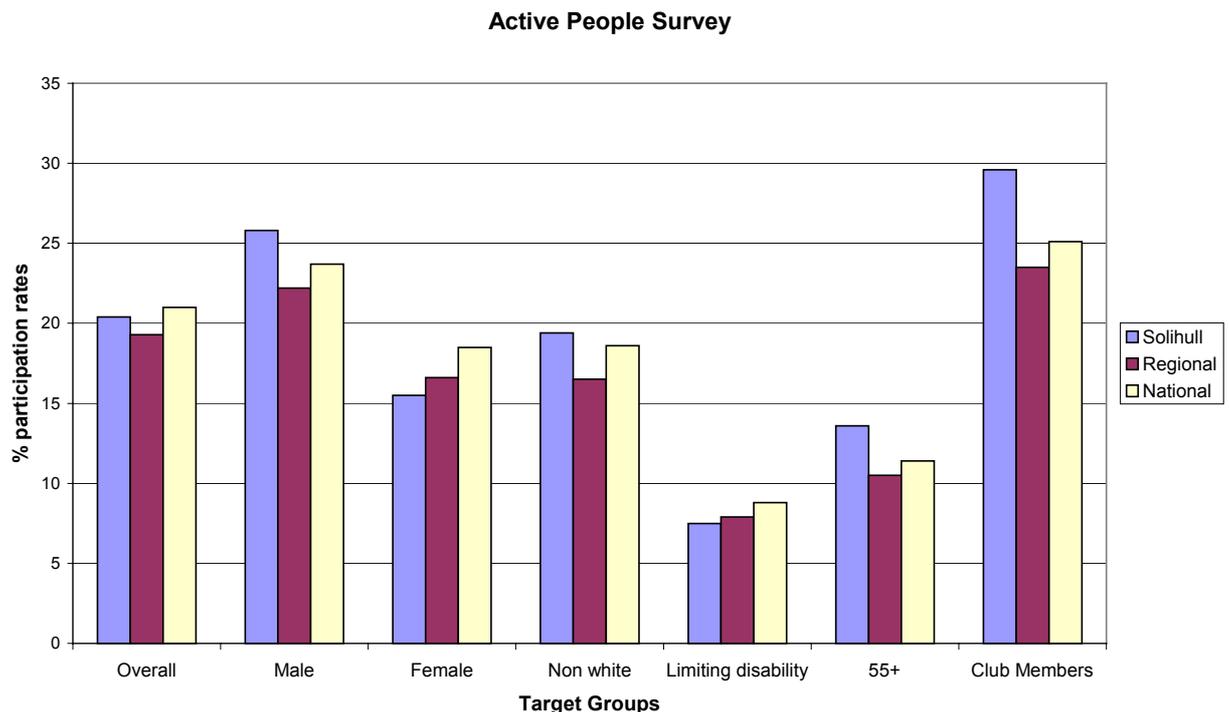
are currently not taking part in sufficient amounts of sport a week. A 1% increase a year (*Sport England target*) equates to an additional 1,245 a year, 104 people a month or 24 people a week taking part in recommended levels.

The key findings for Solihull are as follows:

Participation

- High membership rate of sports clubs (29.6%) - highest in the West Midlands conurbation and sub region.
- Male participation in organised competitive sport is one of the highest in the country (28.2%).
- Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) participation relatively high (19.4%) compared to neighbouring metropolitan authorities, the sub region and the region.
- Low participation rates for women and people with a limiting disability.
- Satisfaction with local sports provision is particularly low within people who have a limiting disability

Figure 6



Volunteering

- Although the overall volunteering rate is above the national average (5.5% and 4.7% respectively), this can be regarded as modest in light of the high density of community and voluntary sports clubs - particularly in the south of the borough.

- While female participation levels are significantly low, volunteering rates are relatively high at 4.2% - among the highest in the region.
- Volunteering rates are low in socio-economic groups A & B

Sporting Infrastructure (Clubs and Facilities)

Solihull has a high density of voluntary and community sports clubs and a wide range of sports facilities - mostly owned and operated by the private and voluntary sectors.

There are more than 280 local providers of sport and active recreation registered on the SolihullActive database www.solihull.gov.uk/activities.

There are more than 20 gyms and private health clubs within a 5-mile radius of Solihull town centre.

Solihull has no fewer than 10 golf courses and driving ranges.

The borough boasts several established and thriving multi-sports clubs operating in the not-for-profit sector. These include Olton & West Warwickshire Sports Club, Hampton in Arden Sports Club, the Arden Club and the Old Silhillians Association.

School sites are open for out of school hours. Access to sports facilities, needs to be improved.

Most sports facilities and organisations are located in the south of the borough.



Addressing Inequalities

The Solihull Partnership's strategy for developing the Borough in the future, 'A Place for People 2003 – 2013', clearly seeks to address inequalities that exist in health, educational attainment, crime and disorder and economic vitality and regeneration. Similarly, key objectives of Solihull MBC and Solihull Care Trust seek to improve quality of life and close the gap of inequality as reflected in the Health Inequalities in Solihull Strategic Framework 2005 - 2010.

Inequalities that exist within Sport and Active Recreation have been identified through the Active People and Active Places research, conducted by Sport England.

Physical Activity Strategy (PAS)

The Solihull Physical Activity Strategy was published in 2004 with the vision of enabling Solihull to be a place where everyone has equal opportunity, and is supported and encouraged, to live an active lifestyle, within their range of ability. The strategy aims to achieve a 1% increase in physical activity levels per year through increasing physical activity (including active recreation, sport and active living) levels based on at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least five or more days a week (to achieve a general health benefit for adults)

The strategy has six strategic objectives:

1. Develop a reliable database on physical activity patterns
2. Raise public awareness and understanding of the health messages of physical activity guidelines, information is provided and tailored to meet the needs of different population groups, particularly targeting those most in need
3. Ensure that appropriate and consistent advice is available across the Borough, tailored to meet the needs of different population groups, particularly targeting those most in need
4. Ensure that a full range of accessible opportunities for physical activity and sport is available across the Borough
5. Work towards ensuring that the physical environment and local culture promotes and enables an active lifestyle at home, at work, in educational settings, for recreation and transport. Also working to reduce inequalities including educational achievement and reducing crime
6. Establish 'pathways' for participation in specific activities providing continuum of opportunities from the most basic to the highest (e.g. walking, cycling, dancing, swimming, football)

SolihullActive

Launched in 2005, SolihullActive emerged from the borough's Physical Activity Strategy. It is a high-profile publicity campaign and branding exercise to reinforce health messages on physical activity. The aim of the borough-wide campaign is to get more people, more physically active, more often.

At the heart of the initiative is an online database of local leisure activities – **www.solihull.gov.uk/activities** containing details of more than 280 local providers of sport and active recreation spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors. This includes voluntary and community sports clubs, leisure centres, gyms and health clubs and golf courses.

46% of residents agree that they are unaware of the majority of cultural facilities in Solihull, 87% of residents agree that the Council should support cultural activity in Solihull through publicising and marketing activities. *Source: Solihull Citizens' Panel Survey, Spring 2003.*

London 2012 Olympics

A Solihull MBC local action plan has been agreed to maximise local opportunities in four main themes sporting benefits, cultural and social benefits, economic benefits, and business and tourism. Some of the key actions relating to sport and active recreation include:

- promote community sport participation
- work with regional partners to maximise opportunities in each of the four themes
- maximise volunteering participation
- promote the health benefits of sport and active recreation
- capitalise on all cultural opportunities
- maximise employment and training opportunities

Current Sport and Active Recreation in Solihull

Positive Futures

A national social inclusion programme, funded by Crime Concern, which uses sport and active recreation as a diversionary activity to engage with disadvantaged and socially marginalised young people.

The aim is to have a positive influence on young people's lives by widening horizons and providing access to new opportunities by using sport as a catalyst to encourage project participation and steer young people towards education, training and employment.

NS Fusion

NS Fusion is a five-year project designed to engage young people and the community of North Solihull in sport and physical activity. Aimed at young people aged 10-24 years, it runs from April 2006 to March 2011 and has four elements:

- Mobile evening activity sessions at crime hotspot locations within the wards of Kingshurst & Fordbridge, Smith's Wood and Chelmsley Wood.
- Sporting and learning opportunities at 'Pathway' venues including local primary and secondary schools, Smith's Wood Sports College and North Solihull Sports Centre.
- Holiday activity programme.
- New Deal Welfare to Work training programme for 18-24 year old unemployed young people.

Off the Wood

Off the Wood is part of the Solihull On Track programme which is focused in areas of high crime and deprivation to provide multiple interventions for 'at risk' children between 4 and 12 years of age and their families. On Track is a research-based, preventative, crime reduction programme aimed at developing multi-agency partnerships and delivering a range of services. On Track's main aims are:

- to target early interventions at the risk factors associated with crime and anti-social behaviour.
- to involve the local community in the programme
- to identify and involve 'hard to reach' groups
- to work with other agencies in multi-agency partnership in the design, and delivery of the programme.

Off the Wood uses sport and active recreation as a diversionary activity targeting children aged 8 to 12 years and their families and is delivered by Solihull Leisure Services. The programme is available for those living in postcodes B36 and B37 and they can participate in a varied sports programme, including swimming, basketball, football, ice hockey, urban cricket, dance and aikido.

Community Sports Coach Scheme

A Sport England funded programme to increase levels and standards of coaching in England and develop a professional career structure. In Solihull we have coaches in FUNdamentals of Sport, Basketball, Tennis, Netball and Girl's Football.

Striders & Strollers

An introductory walking programme to improve the health and wellbeing of participants and increase levels of active recreation. Currently there are four walks in the borough, which meet fortnightly and targets people who do not currently walk or are looking to increase their activity levels. Each walk follows agreed routes which last between 30 – 45 minutes.

DocSpot

An exercise referral programme to improve participant health and increase their levels of regular physical activity. Patients will attend the programme for 12 weeks and will have a personal exercise programme which can include a range of sport and active recreation activities e.g. swimming, gym, recreational walking.

Cyclesolihull

Cyclesolihull is a community initiative, led by volunteers but supported by Solihull MBC and Solihull Care Trust to encourage more people to cycle. Current initiatives include development of cycle ride leaflets to encourage more people to cycle as a leisure activity by exploring the local countryside and informal rides (weekly during the summer) for people who would like to join others to cycle to these routes together. Cyclesolihull has developed its own web site (www.cyclesolihull.org) to publicise its activities and provide further information about cycling.

School Sports Partnerships

The two partnerships in Solihull work towards achieving the PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy (2002) by developing PE and sport in schools, both within and beyond the curriculum, to improve:

- Pupil concentration, commitment and self-esteem leading to higher attendance and better behaviour and attainment
- Fitness levels - active children are less likely to be obese and more likely to pursue sporting activities as adults
- Success in international competition by ensuring talented young sportspeople have a clear pathway to elite sport and competition whatever their circumstances.

The overall objective, a joint DfES and DCMS public service agreement (PSA) target, is to enhance the take up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year olds so that the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of 2 hours each week on high quality PE and school sport, within and beyond the curriculum, increases to 75% by 2006 and to 85% by 2008, with at least 75% in each partnership by 2008.

However, the ultimate vision is that:

“By 2010 all children will be offered at least 4 hours of sport every week, which will comprise at least 2 hours high quality PE and sport at school and, in addition, the opportunity for at least a further 2-3 hours beyond the school day (delivered by a range of school, community and club providers).”

Solihull Sports Council

Solihull Sports Council represents local sport. It provides a forum for the voluntary sports sector to meet and discuss a wide range of sporting matters while at the same time acts in partnership with other agencies to develop and promote sport in Solihull.

The Sports Council also oversees a range of complementary activities. These include providing cash grants to both individuals and clubs to help in their chosen sport and advice and support in helping clubs and voluntary organisations apply for funding through the sports lottery and other funding agencies. From time to time it also offers support and training to clubs and officials in areas as diverse as child protection and first aid.

Solihull College

Solihull College is a key provider of sports education in the borough. The College provides a wide range of industry-accredited courses and academies in sport and leisure. This includes BTEC certificates and diplomas in sport, through sports and fitness therapy to apprenticeships in exercise and the coaching of football.

The College runs four academies. These academies focus on football, rugby, cricket and golf.

10. Key Challenges

A series of key challenges have been identified as a result of the research and analysis conducted. These challenges are as follows:

- The majority of people in Solihull are unlikely to be achieving the Government's recommendations for sport and active recreation. Strategic Objective 2 seeks to increase participation in sport and active recreation within Solihull.
- There is a lack of a comprehensive and cohesive support network for the voluntary and community sector in sport and active recreation.
- There is a lack of data on current sports and active recreation participation, volunteering and provision at a ward-by-ward level, against which progress in increasing participation can be assessed. This has partly been addressed through Active People survey.
- There is a lack of co-ordination of provision of facilities and opportunities for sport and this is likely to be contributing to inconsistency in advice and information given to local people by front-line services. Strategic Objective 1 and 5 will seek to address this.
- Provision of facilities and opportunities for sport appears to be inequitable. Strategic Objective 1, 3 and 4 will seek to address this issue.
- The local culture and environment needs to better promote and enable local people to lead more active lives. Strategic Objective 3 and 5 will seek to address this issue.



11. Strategic Objectives

To address the key challenges identified through consultation, the strategy has five main objectives:

- Support the voluntary and community sector in sport throughout Solihull
- Increase participation and widen access in sport and active recreation opportunities.
- To assist in the development of clubs and active recreation facilities within Solihull and that both are supported and promoted effectively.
- To develop a local workforce development plan through sport and active recreation whilst making an effective and influential contribution to the economic vitality of Solihull.
- To raise the profile and levels of awareness of sports and active recreation opportunities.

Each of these objectives is dealt with in more detail on the following pages.



11.1 Volunteering

Support the voluntary and community sector in sport throughout Solihull.

Overview

Sport and active recreation relies on its volunteers. Volunteers make sport and sports club in particular tick, they fulfil a range of roles from coaching to officiating, administration to event organisation.

Sport and active recreation is the biggest single contributor to the voluntary sector. Increasingly these same people are being asked to do more. The burden on volunteers continues to grow with further bureaucracy, concerns around litigation, child safety and time pressures amongst a few.

Key Issues

- Increase the number of people volunteering in sport and active recreation.
- Retain the number of volunteers within sport and active recreation.
- Improve the training and skills for potential new and existing volunteers.

Policy Statement

Volunteers and volunteering play an important role within sport, work will be undertaken to increase the number of sporting volunteers and support to the voluntary and community sectors in sport throughout Solihull.

Action Points

- Co-ordinate the support for sports volunteering
- Establish a sports volunteering recruitment programme
- Training and education programme in partnership
- Increase the number of young people volunteering through the work carried out in Solihull's schools and colleges
- Include the community and voluntary sector at the core of the local sporting infrastructure.

11.2 Participation

Increase participation and widen access in sport and active recreation opportunities

Overview

There is a unique opportunity to increase participation in sport, at community and grass roots levels as well as the promotion of sporting excellence.

Participation in active recreation and sport can create many opportunities to bring people together and establish long-term social cohesion.

Key Issues

- To increase participation levels throughout the local community (1% per annum increase until 2020).
- Provide effective information to increase participation and maintain retention within active recreation and sport.
- To provide effective marketing and promotion plan to raise levels of awareness of sport and active recreation opportunities.
- To provide effective participation programming through active recreation and sport to address crime, health, education and social regeneration.
- To raise awareness and actively encourage participation for the following priority groups.
 - Black minority and ethnic
 - Women and girls
 - People with disabilities
 - Older people

Policy Statement

Increased participation is a key objective that underpins the desire to deliver improved community services and facilities as well as increasing the variety of active recreation and sporting opportunities.

Action Points

- Promote an increase in participation in sport and active recreation within Solihull
- Deliver active recreation and sports programming which is effective
- Improve access and participation in sport and active recreation for priority groups.
- Provide long-term intervention participation programming through sport for young people
- Contribute to healthy lifestyles programme through active recreation

11.3 Clubs and Facilities

To assist in the development of clubs and active recreation facilities within Solihull and that both are supported and promoted effectively.

Overview

Active recreation and sport club infrastructure should meet the current and future needs of local people.

The infrastructure to develop sports clubs, linked by extending community access and facility access, is vital in the promotion and development of sports clubs for people to get active.

By promoting the development of clubs and facilities, an effective club network and pathway through sport can be achieved.

Facility investment is supported by adequate investment in the training and development of key people (coaches, officials and administrators). This will ensure a highly skilled quality workforce for clubs and facility infrastructure.

Key Issues

- Promote a strong club infrastructure and increase participation within clubs.
- Promote access for active recreation and sporting opportunities for priority groups.
- Effective pathways and programming are in place as part of start, stay and succeed active recreation and sports club programming.
- Ensure that local facilities for active recreation and sport are accessible to meet the needs of the local community.

Policy Statement

To assist in the effective development of active recreation and sports club providers and active recreation facilities.

Action Points

- Review of Solihull facilities strategy.
- Support the development of a local community club infrastructure within Solihull.
- Evaluate levels of awareness of facilities and promote accessibility.
- Better use of open spaces for sport and physical activity opportunities.
- To support the effectiveness of clubs within the local community.
- Increase the representation of club membership amongst priority groups.
- The development of an integrated service delivery with facility operators and Solihull MBC.
- To offer clear and effective development routes for gifted and talented athletes.
- Develop accessible systems for providers of active recreation and sport.

11.4 Workforce Development

To develop a local workforce development plan through sport and active recreation whilst making an effective and influential contribution to the economic vitality of Solihull.

Overview

Workforce development relates to instructors and coaches, both paid and unpaid, together with volunteers within sport and active recreation.

Creating a prosperous local economy requires a number of different elements to be in place and sport and active recreation has an important contribution to make. It is an effective and influential method to promote social cohesion and viable employment opportunities.

Over 400,000 people are estimated to be employed in sports related activities in England, which represents just fewer than 2% of all employment. Sport related employment provides households in England with £5.8 billion in disposable income, just over 1% of total household

Key Issues

- Raise the profile of sport and active recreation workforce development programme.
- Adapt a holistic approach from all agencies to develop the workforce.
- Ensure a workforce development programme through sport and active recreation to contribute to economic regeneration.
- Encourage and develop active workplaces.

Policy Statement

Workforce development within sport and active recreation will provide people the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to develop as individuals, therefore contributing to the economic vitality of the borough. Accessible and positive career paths need to be created. Workforce development within sport and active recreation has the capability to increase professional staff, volunteers, instructors and coaches.

Action Points

- Promote awareness of workforce development programming.
- To develop and influence NGB workforce development plans at a local level.
- Promotion of workforce development programme for unemployed people within Solihull.
- Raise awareness of the coaching workforce within Solihull.
- To promote active workplace within Solihull.

11.5 Raising Awareness

To raise the profile and levels of awareness of sports and active recreation opportunities.

Overview

Sport plays one of the most significant roles in everyday life of people around the world, whether those who actively participate in it or just spectators and supporters. In most western countries, this part of social life is widely reported on and reflected by the mass media.

Sport has not only become great entertainment, occupation and lifestyle, but solid business as well. Marketing, promotion and advertisement are fundamental tools for generating interest in sport and active recreation.

Promotion and marketing the benefits of sport and active recreation should be communicated effectively to increase participation and widen access.

Sport England have recognised the need for a long term, sustained social marketing campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of sport and active recreation as part of a balanced framework for increasing and widening the base of participation.

It is most important to promote a cultural shift towards sport and active recreation becoming part of our daily lives.

Key Issues

- The need for a local strategic group to represent sport within Solihull aligned to the single system for sport.
- Influence policy and decisions in health, sport and active recreation.
- To establish co –ordinate and implement a long term marketing policy for sport and active recreation.

Policy Statement

The provision of relevant and up-to-date information is important in helping all members of the community to make informed decisions and choices regarding their participation in Sport and Recreation opportunities and activities. Equally, the lack of such information is widely recognised as being a significant barrier to participation.

Action Points

- Implement Solihull Sports and Physical Activity Network (SPAN) and make relevant links to Local Area Agreements and The Solihull Partnership.
- Promote awareness of active recreation opportunities and support local physical activity providers to become more accessible.
- Promote talented performers.
- Use appropriate systems to monitor the effectiveness of marketing and promotion that takes place.

12. Strategic Themes

A series of themes have been identified that will run across future objectives. These are:

- Children and Young People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Health and Older People
- Economic Vitality

12.1 Children and Young People

Overview

Children and young people consistently say that they would like more "things to do and places to go".

Every Child Matters states: Whatever their background or their circumstances, every child and young person should have the required support to:

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being.

Key Issues

- Youth Matters states the need for young people to have more choice and influence over services and facilities that are available to them. To encourage young people to volunteer and contribute to their local community.
- Solihull Community Strategy recognises the value of young people within society and the contribution they make within Solihull.
- Children and young people learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged and the evidence shows clearly that educational achievement is the most effective route out of poverty.
- There is a specific need to improve access to culture, sport and play for children and young people, so that they can develop and enjoy the benefits of participation.

Policy Statement

To provide sport and active recreation opportunities and facilities to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution by supporting healthy lifestyles development. This will enable every young person to achieve.

Action Points

- To provide sport and active recreation opportunities for children and young people.
- To promote and encourage opportunities for a healthy lifestyle, through sport and active recreation, for children and young people to achieve.
- For young people and children to participate in a safe friendly environment which promotes social cohesion, well being and pride.
- Sustain and embed participation amongst children and young people, by creating effective pathway development opportunities through clubs.
- Create and deliver appropriate sport and active recreation, volunteer training and employment opportunities for children and young people.

12.2 Safer and Stronger Communities

Overview

Safer, Stronger and Sustainable Communities have a real impact on the quality of life enjoyed by local people. The fear of crime and disorder can have serious adverse effects on people's quality of life, as does accessibility, affordability and economic prosperity. A safe and strong community is also one which celebrates diversity and which is cohesive and self-confident. Sport and active recreation can enable healthy, active communities, and help local people at risk to adopt a positive lifestyle.

Key Issues

- A need to maintain existing provision and improve the quality of life for people in most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- A need to reduce crime and the fear of crime in the borough.
- To tackle anti-social behaviour.
- A need to create stronger vibrant communities through the power of sport and active recreation.

Policy Statement

Sport and active recreation will contribute to make communities stronger and safer, addressing disadvantaged communities and areas of high crime by working in partnership across the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote equality and access.

Action Points

- Ensure sport and active recreation contributes to crime reduction targets.
- Increase levels of participation within sport and active recreation.
- Promote social cohesion and well being through sport and active recreation Increase the capacity of local communities by the promotion and development of volunteering and workforce opportunities.

12.3 Health and Older People

Overview

Evidence clearly shows that participating in regular physical activity is beneficial for the health and well-being of all who live and work within Solihull. As stated in the Chief Medical Officers report “We all can and should be more active”.

Opportunities to encourage activity levels to rise can be created by changing the buildings and the environment which will support people in more active lifestyles.

Older people (50 years +) encompass a substantial proportion of the population of Solihull and this proportion is steadily increasing leading in turn to an increasing need to maintain mobility, independence and quality of life. Sport and active recreation can play a key part in contributing to meeting this need to the benefit of both the individual and *the public services within the Borough*.

This age group is the most diverse with many people having inactivity-related diseases and conditions, with others participating in high levels of physical activity well into their later life. This population group can also gain apart from long term gains, the most short-term gains from increasing levels of physical activity. Work in this area needs to take account of the Future is Ours Strategy and the Falls Strategy for Solihull.

Key Issues

This population group need to be targeted and addressed according to functional ability not age.

- Older people have specific barriers that need to be addressed preventing uptake of sport.
- Older people should be involved with the development of opportunities for sport.
- Older people should be particularly encouraged and supported to keep moving and keep their mobility through daily activity.

Specific activities that promote improved strength, coordination and balance are particularly beneficial for older people.

Policy Statement

Improve health and well-being by increasing activity levels of the local residents of Solihull. Physical activity will contribute to well-being and is essential for good general health.

Action Points

- Improve the health of the population including older people through active recreation and sporting opportunities throughout the borough.
- To promote sport and active recreation activities that will improve physical and mental health and well-being.
- Inform the public of sport and active recreation activities, services and opportunities.
- Increase levels of participation within sport and active recreation.
- Increase capacity of local communities by the promotion and development of volunteering and workforce opportunities.

12.4 Economic Vitality

Overview

Enhancing a culture of enterprise, raising levels of enterprise and entrepreneurship and raising aspirations is a means of addressing issues of job opportunities and an important step towards achieving a robust and entrepreneurial economy. Economic development is more than increasing business activity. Economic development involves shaping a community's future by creating employment, a place people want to live and an attractive place to spend leisure time.

Sport and active recreation provision can identify a community's place in the market and develop programmes to make the vision of economic well being come to life.

Sport and active recreation has an important contribution to economic opportunities in the borough. Sport and active recreation can stimulate our local economy. The sports and leisure sector and its supporting industries are already significant employers and contributors to the local economy.

Key Issues

- The requirement for a local strategic group to address and influence the contribution sport and active recreation can make to the economic development and vitality of the borough.
- A local approach to influencing policy and decision making through workforce development to contribute to the economic development of Solihull.

Policy Statement

To ensure that sport and active recreation is positioned to make a positive contribution and impact to the economic development and vitality of the borough.

Action Points

- Promote awareness of workforce development programming.
- To promote and provide a range of employment and self-employment opportunities within sport and active recreation within the borough.
- Present opportunities for training and the development of new skills, as demonstrated by the proposals for the London Olympics and Paralympics 2012.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Community Sports Strategy creates a multi-agency approach to the development of sport within Solihull.

The strategy will be monitored and evaluated through a community sports network. In Solihull, a Sports and Physical Activity Network will provide this strategic focus for sport within the Borough as well as physical activity. This structure promotes the Delivery System for Sport as identified in the Sport England National Framework for Sport and the West Midlands Regional Sports Plan.

The strategy will be reviewed in 2009 to reflect any changes in funding and the structures of sport in England following the award of the next lottery licence.

The strategic action plan sets out each of the strategy's objectives that will be addressed.

