

***A STRATEGY FOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY IN ABERDEENSHIRE***

2002-2005

SUMMARY

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



in Partnership with Aberdeenshire Sports Council

SPORTS STRATEGY

Section

1

WHAT THE STRATEGY IS ABOUT

What does the term “sport” cover?

Sport is defined as:

“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 competitions at all levels”. (European Sports Charter)

Why do we need a strategy for sport?

Sport is an important part of society in its own right but its potential to contribute to better health, promote more inclusive and active communities and support lifelong learning is not always recognised.

How the strategy has been developed

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to community planning. This means working in partnership with other groups who provide services and with users of those services. This principle has been followed in drawing up the sports strategy.

Who is the strategy for?

The strategy is for all of Aberdeenshire but particularly

- The 234 sports council member clubs,
- Primary and secondary schools
- A range of organisations involved in the participation, development and promotion of sport and physical activity.
- Other members of the general public who participate or who may wish to take part in sport and physical activity either on a regular basis or from time to time.

What does the strategy cover?

The new strategy promotes an integrated approach to sport and active lifestyles in line with the priorities of **sportscotland** and the government. It includes a section on facilities available to the public as these are a fundamental part of developing sport and accommodating both clubs and casual participants.

The new strategy provides a focus and framework to encourage participation in line with the national aim of making **more people, more active, more often**. Annual targets will be set for each **key area** of the plan and a progress statement issued against each area.

The new strategy for the period 2002-2005 provides:

- A clear statement of the objectives and priorities for developing participation in sport thereby adding to the quality of life in Aberdeenshire
- A framework for determining how resources are allocated taking account of demand and the needs of communities.
- A partnership approach to developing opportunities to participate in sport and for enabling people to realise their sporting potential.

Section

2

THE CONTEXT OF SPORT IN ABERDEENSHIRE**Structure of Sport in Aberdeenshire**

Provision for sport involves a range of different organisations. This includes hundreds of voluntary clubs many of which are members of Aberdeenshire Sports Council. There are several privately run clubs for sports such as golf which have their own facilities. There are approximately 780 facilities ranging from village halls which provide modest accommodation for sport and recreation to large dedicated indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

The Role of Aberdeenshire Council

Aberdeenshire Council is Scotland's sixth largest authority and covers an area of 2428 square miles. It provides services for 228,000 residents.

The council's directly managed leisure facilities and those it supports financially are located throughout Aberdeenshire. A key part of the new plan will be for facilities managers, sports development staff, schools and clubs to work effectively together to ensure opportunities are more accessible and meet local community needs.

Role of Aberdeenshire Sports Council

Aberdeenshire Sports Council has worked in partnership with the Council since 1998. The Council's Sports Development team's lead officer for Volunteer Sport provides support for the Sports Council. This partnership has resulted in an agreed vision and shared priorities for sport in Aberdeenshire.

What We are Aiming to Achieve

The following outcomes summarise what the strategy aims to achieve over the next three years by using existing resources and attracting further external funding.

- A well developed infrastructure for sport that includes an adequate number of accessible quality facilities.
- A broad based programme for sport and health related fitness which is accessible to everyone who wishes to participate and which enables people to develop their skills and interests and fulfil their potential
- A committed partnership approach that makes the most effective use of joint resources
- A community driven approach to the planning and implementation of sport and active lifestyles
- Quality in the management of facilities and the delivery of services

How are we going to get there?

The plan is underpinned by the principles of social inclusion, and community planning. In particular we will

- Promote the value and benefits of participation in sport and active lifestyles
- Provide quality sports facilities and programmes for people at all levels from introduction, through regular participation to performance at the highest levels.
- Work in effective partnership with relevant agencies to provide a wide range of

opportunities and an inclusive approach.

- Encourage community involvement in the planning and delivery of sport and active lifestyles programmes.
- Target resources to those who tend to be excluded through social, economic, educational or physical disadvantage.
- Build the capacity of individuals and communities in planning and developing participation, coaching and administration so that these skills can be transferred to other areas of their lives and contribute to their own personal development and the life of the communities in which they live.

Section

3

KEY ISSUES

Challenges

There are significant challenges ahead for Aberdeenshire. Demand outstrips the resources available. The range of sporting and recreational activities is diverse and there are many organisations involved in providing for sport. This makes planning and communication difficult.

Sport is sometimes perceived as competitive and requiring particular skills or physical abilities. At certain levels this is true and part of the strategy aims to develop peoples talents. The vast majority - if not all people - can take part in some form of physical activity if not a sport. The strategy, therefore, deals with promoting more opportunities for people to be physically active.

The health related benefits of sport and active lifestyles will address national policy on promoting better health including increased levels of physical activity. The Strategy will promote more opportunities to learn new skills throughout life and encourage people to be included and actively involved in their communities.

Section

4

AIMS & OBJECTIVES**Aberdeenshire Council's Corporate Aims**

Aberdeenshire Council's aims are:

- to maintain and improve the quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire by delivering first class public services
- to involve communities by consulting and working together to deliver services so as to achieve the best value possible
- to make services easy to use by taking them closer to people
- to always look for new ways to improve our services.

Sports Strategy Overall Aims

Taking account of national policy, the Council's corporate aims, the Education and Recreation Service Plan and the principles of community planning, the following overall aims have been identified.

- **Maximise opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate in sport and physical recreation.**
- **Develop the infrastructure, which will allow athletes and participants in sport and active recreation to flourish.**
- **Build the capacity of communities to sustain sporting and recreational activities and new opportunities.**
- **Raise the profile of sport and recreation and promote the contribution it makes to the quality of life in Aberdeenshire.**

The following sections set out how these aims will be tackled by proposing specific objectives, setting out actions for pursuing them, identifying the outcomes that are expected and explaining how progress will be measured.

The actions that are proposed cover the three year period of the plan. Programmes to support the action points will be produced and reviewed annually.

Section

5

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The overall aim is to maximise the contribution that sport and recreation can make to the quality of life in Aberdeenshire. The range of activities and programmes are diverse and include work that will be undertaken by the Council as well as actions to be taken by Aberdeenshire Sports Council.

Aim 1: Maximise opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate in sporting activities and physical recreation.

Objective 1: Increase participation by young people in sport and physical activity.

Action Following consultation prioritise a range of sports for development and support from 2002-2005 ensuring that the programmes meet the needs of the community.

Action Work in partnership with a range of sports and health related agencies to make the programmes delivered more accessible across Aberdeenshire

Action Provide increased lifelong learning opportunities through the development of clubs, increasing the number and skills of participants, coaches and those in an administrative role

Action Identify talent and provide opportunities for those taking part in sport to reach their full potential

Action Encourage the development of junior sections in sports clubs across Aberdeenshire building from the information in documents such as the Sports Council's Club Class support package.

Action Support the development of pathways in individual sports to provide a structured progression from getting started, keeping going, getting better and being the best

Action Assist those showing potential to be involved in the Active 8 sports partnership where talented juniors are helped via the lottery sports programme to develop their talent

Action Provide an Aberdeenshire wide Learn to swim programme based on four levels of progression from beginner leading to a transition level five where the skills learnt can be developed via local swimming clubs, lifesaving, other water sports or simply swimming as part of an active lifestyle.

Objective 2: To increase and enhance the number of opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity within the school curriculum, in extra curricular time and to link these to activities in the community.

Action Appoint a school sport co-ordinator in every LEARN in Aberdeenshire by August 2003.

Action Work with a range of health agencies to encourage youngsters to establish healthier life styles.

Action Work effectively with PE staff and schools to improve and enhance the number of opportunities currently available for extra curricular sport.

Action Work in partnership with appropriate local agencies to establish and develop links with school sports and the wider Aberdeenshire community as part of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) sport and PE programme for 2003-2006.

Objective 3: Involve more people over 50 in sport and physical activity

Action Develop partnerships between Sports Development staff, Community Recreation Officers, Community Education and other community based staff to provide activities and programmes for those over 50.

Action Extend partnership working with other health-related agencies to support provision for the 50 plus age group.

Action Carry out research with non-users to identify activities that could increase participation.

Objective 4: Enable more people with a disability to take part in sport and physical activity.

Action Extend through partnership working, the opportunities available to people in Aberdeenshire with a disability to take part in sport and physical activity in the way they choose.

Action Work corporately within the Council, with other agencies, and with people who have a disability to provide a co-ordinated approach to the provision of sport and physical activity.

Action Secure external funding and resources to develop the network of multi sport and sport specific groups across Aberdeenshire prioritising areas which currently have low or no provision.

Action Support and co-ordinate disability awareness training for all Recreation staff and volunteers.

Action Raise the profile locally and nationally of Aberdeenshire disabled athletes through the local media, sports web site and related directories.

Action Audit the accessibility of sports facilities for disabled people.

Objective 5: Enable more people with learning difficulties to take part in sport

Action Extend through partnership working, the opportunities available to people in Aberdeenshire with learning difficulties to take part in sport and physical activity in the way they choose.

Action Work corporately within the Council, with other agencies and with people who have learning difficulties to provide a co-ordinated approach to the provision of sport and physical activity.

Action Secure external funding and resources to develop the network of multi sport and sport specific groups across Aberdeenshire prioritising areas which currently have low or no provision.

Objective 6: Provide increased opportunity for people on low income to take part in sport and physical activity.

Action Audit current participation by those entitled to concessions in relation to the Council's provision, access policy and scale of charges.

Action Identify where there are opportunities for improvement in the provision of programmes for those on low income.

Action Develop partnerships with other agencies to promote greater inclusion.

Action Allocate resources to address the priorities identified above and monitor the results of the programmes

Objective 7: Have more people taking more physical activity in the interests of better health.

Action Raise the awareness of the health improvement gains attained from regular physical activity and provide social environments that encourage and enable safe and enjoyable activity.

Action Create a framework for an inter agency 'Active Lifestyle Alliance' which will remove divergences between facilities and services, have shared and agreed aims and outcomes and provide a consistent approach to encouraging active lifestyles.

Action Provide intervention programmes according to a needs assessment to targeted groups in disadvantaged areas across Aberdeenshire.

Action Examine the scope for transport initiatives to improve access.

Action Produce an 'out of schools hours' action plan to raise the activity levels of the 5-14 age group and provide the resource to support participation.

Action Support the provision of physical activity for older people in alignment with the strategy "Living Life to the Full" and offer training and education opportunities for volunteers to enable them to promote the health of older people to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

Aim 2: Develop the infrastructure that will allow more people to participate in sport and physical activity and allow people to develop their skills and levels of achievement.

Objective 8: Provide an adequate number of accessible quality facilities to meet demand for sport and recreation.

Action Identify the number of facilities required and check the requirement for improving existing facilities either managed directly or supported financially by the Council. This will be done by regularly updating the sports facilities planning study with Sportscotland including a projection of future requirements through to 2005 and maintaining an up to date audit of existing provision. This approach will provide a basis for prioritising bids for lottery funding.

Action Outline Aberdeenshire's facility priorities in relation to the £2.085 million New Opportunities Fund Sport & PE allocation for 2003-2006.

Action Ensure financial support to Trusts is allocated on an equitable basis and linked to Service Level Agreements.

Action Review current arrangements for community use of school and other facilities with a view to extending affordable access taking into account the wishes of Aberdeenshire Sports Council members and Aberdeenshire Disability Sport.

Action Develop plans for including facilities for sport and recreation in future PPP (Public Private Partnership) projects for schools.

Action Secure increased funding to help develop facilities and introduce new programmes to develop participation including assistance to local communities in their pursuit for external funding toward facility upgrade, provision or refurbishment.

Objective 9: Improve opportunities for participation in small rural communities

Action Address issues such as rural location, access and transport to ensure that opportunities to use facilities and participate in sports development programmes are more accessible and equitable. This will include work with local trusts managing sports and recreation facilities.

Action Increase the number and range of sports programmes in the more rural areas of Aberdeenshire

Action Improve the advisory service and information on activities available in rural areas of Aberdeenshire through the use of the sports web sites and sports directories

Action Work with the school sport co-ordinators to identify where there are gaps in current sports provision and promote links to the wider community

Objective 10: Develop partnerships between those involved in providing and promoting opportunities for sport and recreation to ensure co-ordinated and effective use of resources and establishment of clear pathways for increasing participation and developing performance.

Action Maintain Council support for Aberdeenshire Sports Council and ensure close collaboration in implementing and developing the strategy and the programmes associated with it.

Action Liaise with **sportscotland** to ensure that strategic objectives and action programmes for Aberdeenshire fit with national plans and priorities. Continue to seek funding where appropriate from **sportscotland** to support this approach.

Action Continue partnerships with Aberdeen City, Moray and other agencies until at least 2005 to increase participation and performance in the north-east of Scotland.

Action Review and update existing partnership agreements, strengthen partnership working with national sports governing bodies to secure increased sports officers for the area and consider further partnerships with agencies such as Forest Enterprise, National Trust, NHS Grampian and Scottish Enterprise Grampian.

Action Further develop international links with associations such as Danish Gymnastics Institute (DGI) to widen opportunities for players and coaches to learn from European sports provision and structures.

Action Ensure that the resources available to partners are used in a co-ordinated way to break down barriers to participation and promote equitable access to sporting opportunities.

Objective 11: Develop structures that will foster and support talented athletes in the development of their sports potential and personal development.

Action Continue grant aid and support to Aberdeenshire Sports Council to support talented individuals and squads to improve their performance standards.

Action Support a range of development performance squads across Aberdeenshire to identify future talented athletes and assist in the development of talent for the future.

Action Work in partnership with other members of GIS to provide support services including sports medicine to talented athletes.

Action Seek sufficient resources to identify and support talented athletes.

Aim 3: Build the capacity of communities to initiate and sustain sporting and recreational activities.

Objective 12: Increase the number of volunteers involved in running sport and development of their skills.

Action Provide professional advice and support to volunteers and clubs and deliver and promote a comprehensive range of quality support services for the benefit of clubs.

Action Provide support packages and workshops for volunteers.

Action Promote the role and value of volunteers as part of an Aberdeenshire wide commitment to active citizenship and community involvement.

Action Work with other volunteer agencies to provide accessible and affordable training opportunities for volunteers at local level

Objective 13: Create a sustainable club structure.

Action Organise and promote a range of courses for leaders, officials and coaches to ensure clubs operate efficiently and effectively.

Action Through the Council's grants scheme provide financial support to assist clubs with projects and development activities.

Action Forge stronger links between clubs and schools to allow young people to continue participation and improve their performance.

Action Promote sport in the work of Aberdeenshire Sports Council and the role of its members.

Aim 4: Raise the profile of sport and the benefit of active lifestyles and promote the contribution they make to the quality of life in Aberdeenshire.

Objective 14: Ensure that sport and the promotion of active lifestyles contribute to Council and other public policy plans.

Action Liaise with those producing policies on health, community safety, community learning, education and social inclusion to ensure that the benefits of sport and active lifestyles are recognised in contributing to these policies and that resources are allocated accordingly.

Action Communicate the benefits of and demand for sport and recreation and seek the resources required to ensure sport is supported as a key feature of community life.

Action Promote the value and benefits of sport and active lifestyles through the sports council web sites and via a range of promotional materials and progress statements.

Objective 15: Secure continuous improvement in the delivery of sport.

Action Manage and measure performance and seek continuous improvement in the delivery of sport and recreation services. A range of meaningful indicators will be developed so that reports on performance can be reported back to the Council, the sports community and other interested parties. These will show the progress being made against strategic priorities.

Action Develop methods of gathering data and analysing it in a systematic and regular way.

Action Promote quality assurance – Aberdeenshire Council is one of the leading sports development units in the UK being highly commended in 2002 following external assessment through the Quest scheme. Areas for further improvement towards excellence standard are ongoing and central to this is the joint working with the sports community to get their input as to how services can further improved.

Action Seek Quest accreditation for sport and recreation facilities within the next two years.

Section**6****RESOURCES AND TIMETABLE**

The resources for delivering the plan will be a combination of the budget allocated by the Council and external funding secured through Lottery grants, Scottish Executive funding and sponsorship.

The Council's core budget for sport and recreation is made up of £2,982,000 for sport and recreation facilities and £302,000 for sports development. Aberdeenshire Sports Council is currently allocated £35,150 from the Council to support its activities.

Since the strategy is aligned with national priorities it is hoped that there will be significant capital and revenue funding attracted. At present over £130,000 per year is generated through external funding. The target is to increase this to between £180,000 and £200,000 per annum for the next three years. Aberdeenshire's provisional allocation from the New Opportunities fund for Sport and PE is £3.065 million. £2.085 million will be available for widening access to existing facilities or improving them. £980,000 will go towards out of school hours programmes and providing diversionary activities from crime, anti social behaviour or unsatisfactory lifestyles.

The involvement of the voluntary sector is critical to the success of the strategy. Aberdeenshire Sports Council will work through their Finance & Marketing and Education, Training & Development groups in a joint effort to deliver the plan across Aberdeenshire.

We are mindful that the Community Planning approach will be reinforced when the Local Government Bill becomes law in the near future. Consultation will continue with the council's area committees, Aberdeenshire Sports Council's membership of 234 clubs, all of Aberdeenshire's schools and a range of local, regional and national sports agencies to ensure that the sports strategy for 2002-2005 is inclusive and reflects the needs and wishes of the people of Aberdeenshire.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

If the Sports Strategy is to be effective progress has to be monitored and reviewed. Each objective will be measured against agreed criteria. A progress statement will be issued each year and this will be communicated to all interested parties. Liaison with Sportscotland will continue. The progress statement will include Aberdeenshire's progress against national targets.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Aberdeenshire Council will

- Co-ordinate the development and implementation of this sports strategy.
- Initiate sports programmes, provide opportunities for being introduced to sport and physical activity and manage the development of pathways for people to progress to the standards they aspire to.
- Continue to provide and seek to improve facilities for sport and active recreation including community access to schools.
- Support sports clubs, other groups and individuals to build their capacity through professional advice, financial support and other means.
- Advise sports clubs, groups and individuals on funding and support available.
- Work with agencies at local, regional and national levels and work in partnership with Aberdeenshire Sports Council and develop new partnerships to extend and enhance current provision for sport and active lifestyles.

Aberdeenshire Sports Council will

- Advocate and promote the value and benefit of sport and active lifestyles.
- Provide a forum for individual sports clubs and other organisations involved in sport to discuss their activities and put forward proposals for tackling issues within the framework of the strategy.
- Support sports clubs, other groups and individuals to build their capacity through professional advice, financial support and other means.
- Advise sports clubs, groups and individuals on funding and support available.
- Assist local sports clubs, organisations and individuals by supporting bids for funding to train sports administrators, coaches, leaders, and officials to build the capacity of voluntary sports clubs and improve standards of performance of teams and individual athletes.

SUMMARY

The strategy sets out what we are aiming to achieve and it provides the framework for action over the next three years. The delivery of the strategy for developing sport through programmes and adequate facilities is a challenge for both the Council's officers and Aberdeenshire Sports Council as our partner.

Both organisations are committed to making the strategy work. Our overall aim is to see an increase in participation of 25% over the next three years in sport and active lifestyles. The objectives in the sports strategy are challenging but with joint commitment it is hoped that all the actions identified can be implemented over the next three years and substantial progress made to meeting our aims and objectives. The national strategy's emphasis on having more people, more active more often is the goal for Aberdeenshire Council and its partners.