

A guide to District Sport and Recreation Strategies



Increasing competition, local government legislation, planning legislation, and education reform are changing traditional roles. When allied to increased expectations of quality, improvements in sports technology, and new delivery mechanisms, they have produced unprecedented pressure for the strategic planning of sport and recreational provision. Local strategic plans could soon be a pre-requisite to the further development of sport and recreation in Northern Ireland. District Councils should be reviewing their role to take account of these changes and then provide leadership in directing the leisure service for the 90's.

These guidelines aim to provide practical advice on preparing a District Strategy for sport and recreation, possibly as part of a wider leisure strategy.

The guide, which has been produced in conjunction with District Councils, sets out to ask questions and provide answers about why a strategy is needed and what the benefits are. Most importantly, practical guidance on how to do the work is provided.

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SPORT AND RECREATION AS PART OF A LEISURE STRATEGY

A local sport and recreation strategy should be part of a broader leisure strategy, encompassing all aspects of leisure provision. It should reflect the District Council's corporate objectives, complementing those of other bodies in the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors. In that way the District Council's policies for sport and recreation will inform and influence other agencies - particularly those involved in planning, education and the voluntary sector. The impetus for producing a strategy for sport and recreation should come from the District Council. Each District Council is in a central position to adopt a pivotal role as strategist, co-ordinator, enabler, supervisor of service quality and in some cases direct provider. Adopting these roles will ensure the full potential for new partnerships and opportunities are explored and that the best use of all available resources is achieved.

In recent years the role of District Councils in developing sport and recreational opportunities has grown considerably. Key elements in this developing role have been:

- Increased awareness by the public of the benefits to be derived from participating in sport and recreation;
- The creation of dedicated Leisure Service Departments;
- Rapid expansion in the provision and development of facilities.

The potential introduction of competitive tendering to the management of public sector leisure facilities, and increased financial controls on District Council spending could restrict their future role as direct providers. Meantime, the introduction of Local Management of Schools, the growth of the private sector leisure industry, and the potential of the voluntary sector will present new opportunities and partnerships for all of those providing sport and recreational opportunity.

A strategy is difficult, if not impossible, to develop without an explicit statement of the fundamental principals upon which it is based. The production of a strategy offers the opportunity of developing and promoting a district-wide values statement. Key values, such as equality of opportunity and quality of service, can be identified as being at the very heart of the strategy process and can, therefore, be placed at the very top of the political agenda.

The Purpose of this Document is:

- To encourage District Councils to take a strategic approach to the planning, provision, and development of sport and recreation opportunities in their area;
- To provide practical guidance and advice to local agencies on how to undertake a local sport and recreation strategy.

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland will, during 1993 and 1994, produce further, detailed guidance, upon the development of local coaching, local facility, and local sports development plans. Such plans can be developed independently by those District Councils not presently able to produce a comprehensive strategy — such plans could subsequently be used as component parts of a comprehensive Sport and Recreation Strategy.

A DISTRICT SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY:

IS

- A plan which has commitment and support from all interested parties.
- A means to achieving stated aims and objectives.
- A concise statement of strategic issues and policies which determine courses of action.
- A document or guide written in plain English, short in length, well illustrated and easy to read and understand.
- Capable of being produced within 6-12 months by concentrating on key issues.
- Able to evolve and change to meet new issues and demands.
- Concerned with providing opportunities to participate at all stages of Sports Development Continuum.
- A strategy for the planning and development of sport and recreation throughout the district.
- A mechanism for clarifying roles and reducing duplication.

ABOVE ALL

The District Sport and Recreation Strategy should become the driving force behind all policies and programmes in the medium term.

IS NOT

- A technical document, or, a "blue print".
- An end in itself.
- An encyclopaedia of very detailed proposals, action statements or programmes of work.
- An academic, lengthy and dry report which sits on the shelf.
- A time consuming exercise involving extensive research and data collection.
- The product of a 'one-off' or static exercise.
- A 'shopping list' for future facilities.
- A strategy which is for and applies only to the District Council.
- A bid for control of local sport.

ABOVE ALL

The strategy should not become a public relations document entirely unrelated to actual working priorities.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The principal benefit of a strategy is that it provides clear guidance on the objectives and future policies and programmes for sport and recreation. There will be specific benefits to particular organisations.

BENEFITS TO THE DISTRICT COUNCIL:

- Provides a basis for raising the political profile and commitment to sport and recreation provision in all sectors;
- Provides a policy framework for contract specifications for management of District Council sports and recreational facilities;
- Provides a basis for the most effective use of resources and measuring performance set against stated aims and policies;
- Maximises the sport and recreation input to other planning processes;
- Acts as a stimulus to creative thinking.

BENEFITS TO LOCAL PEOPLE:

- Improves the opportunities to participate in sport and recreation and progress to higher levels of performance;
- Describes the policies and proposals for sport and recreation in their area and enables local people to contribute;
- Identifies ways to obtain value for money in local services.
- Identifies the needs of all groups and not just the requirements of those who are most vociferous.

BENEFITS FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMERCIAL SECTORS:

- Establishes clear communication between the District Council and the voluntary/commercial sector, thereby illustrating opportunities to work in partnership and independently;
- Focuses attention on the key role organisations play already in creating opportunities and developing activities, plus establishing priorities for future development;
- Protects the facilities used by local clubs.

BENEFITS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR:

- Provides a framework within which curriculum skills can be linked to community based opportunities;
- Creates an opportunity to maximise use of community facilities;
- In generating links between agencies new potential economies of scale are created.

THE PROCESS

The following process identifies seven distinct stages. Each stage is critical to the achievement of the whole and each could be conceived as a distinct programme of work. This approach allows for different methods to be adopted in the production of the Strategy, as discussed in the final section.

THE STRATEGY PLANNING PROCESS		
STAGE	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
STAGE ONE	Preparing the Brief.	A short report identifying all the key tasks and individuals involved in producing a strategy within a specified time frame.
STAGE TWO	Review and information gathering.	A formal Position Statement identifying all current policies and practices, and including a complete audit of local facilities, clubs, and other agencies providing sporting opportunities for local people. This position statement should take the form of an "organisational health check" and should identify strengths and weaknesses in all areas, but particularly the range and quality of the human resource.
STAGE THREE	Identification and analysis of external influences upon the District Council.	A report summarising the effect on local opportunities of the actions of other agencies and of legislative and structural change.
STAGE FOUR	Identification of District Council role and aims, including the formalisation of a Sport and Recreation "Mission Statement"	A Mission Statement and associated aims and objectives designed to provide opportunities for all members of the community and involve all service providers.
STAGE FIVE	Identification of strategic action areas and associated key issues.	A list identifying all the locally important strategic action areas, each action area to be sub-divided into locally relevant key issues.
STAGE SIX	Development of key issues.	A report analysing in some detail each of the key issues identified at Stage Five and formulating policies and associated work programmes for each key issue.
STAGE SEVEN	Strategy Review.	A timetable for a strategy review process within both the short and medium term.

STAGE ONE - PREPARING THE BRIEF

The brief is a document which identifies and summarises all the tasks involved in producing a strategy.

The production of a brief is essential; presentation of it to appropriate committees can be the procedure for gaining political approval. This can achieve commitment and identification with the work by elected members, officers, and the local community.

District Councils will prepare a brief based upon their own circumstances. However, some key elements to be considered are:

- What is the time period during which the strategy will run? Three to six years would be appropriate but the timescale of other strategies, and the length of management contracts may have an influence?
- What is the timetable for production? This should include start date, timing of interim reports and presentations, and links to the District Council's corporate and financial planning timetables. The "critical path" might identify the need for external consultants in achieving deadlines.
- What are the main likely strategic action areas?
- What form should the presentation of the final report take? To whom and how will the strategy be presented? In particular, the issue of how widespread ownership of the document will be achieved needs to be addressed.
- Should an advisory consultative group be established and what other consultative mechanisms exist?
- What are the stages involved in producing a strategy? These should be identified and listed in the sequence they will follow.
- At what stage should the views of external bodies be sought?

ACTION REQUIRED	Month:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Prepare brief.		■											
Secure officer/member commitment.		■	■										
Negotiate and agree Mission Statement, aims and objectives.			■	■									
Establish advisory group.				■	■								
Audit policies and provision in all sectors.		■	■	■	■								
Identify key external influences.			■	■									
Identification of main key issues.					■	■							
Consultation: key issues, present position, external influences.					■	■	■						
Prepare first draft and include development of each key issue.					■	■	■	■					
Consultation.									■	■	■	■	
Revise draft.												■	■
Proofing and printing.										■	■	■	■
Strategy Launch.													■
Strategy Distribution.													→

STAGE TWO - REVIEW AND INFORMATION GATHERING

The review stage should be an appraisal of opportunities for people within the district to participate in sport and recreation. It should comprise four distinct elements:

- 1 **District Council policies and practices.** This stage should ask why the service is being provided, what service is being provided, who provides it and who uses it. It should include a definition of the current aims, policies, responsibilities and practices; it should identify constraints, pressure points and opportunities.
- 2 **An audit of facility provision,** including purpose-built indoor and outdoor facilities and natural facilities, identifying those that are not currently widely available (for example, schools that provide no or little access to the community).
- 3 **An audit of clubs** that operate within the district and any other voluntary sector activity that provides opportunities for sport and recreation.
- 4 **An identification of the range of activities** for which there are opportunities within the district.

Within the review section, it is important to consider opportunities and services that are available to district residents but which are nonetheless provided by other agencies, in each of the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors. The opportunities provided by major or specialist facilities located outside the district area should also be recognised.

STAGE THREE - EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON THE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNER AGENCIES

The next stage is to review the external influences which will have an impact upon sport and recreation. These can be considered as:

- Policies and practices of key organisations and bodies.
- Legislative changes.
- Other significant changes - population, economic, environmental.

1 Policies and Practices of Other Key Organisations

This should consider the opportunities and threats arising from:

- Education policies and practices with regard to the community use of school facilities, and the development of the Northern Ireland Curriculum programme of study for Physical Education.
- National strategies such as the Strategy on Sport for People of School Age published by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland.
- DENI and DOE (NI) guidance regarding planning principles and facility development.
- Policies for recreation adopted and applied by other agencies, particularly those that influence major land holdings such as agencies responsible for water supply.
- Health education and promotion.
- Equity issues.
- Northern Ireland's European status as an Objective One region, in relation to European Structural Funding.
- New practices arising from periodic reviews such as the 1992 efficiency scrutiny of government funding in the voluntary sector
- Health and safety, and security practises.

2 Legislative Frameworks

Important current issues include:

- The possible introduction of competition to the management of leisure facilities.
- The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and the Education Reform Order 1989. Will increased delegation and entrepreneurialism in schools impact upon opportunity?
- Planning practices, especially relating to land intensive facilities such as golf courses and playing fields.
- District Council capital expenditure and financial restraints.

3 Population; Economic; Environmental Change

This should provide a profile of the area:

- Population - the district's population and identification of any projected significant change in, for example, age groups, gender, religious affiliation, distribution.
- Economic - brief description of the district's employment and industrial structure, levels of unemployment and identification of likely future changes and influences.
- Environmental changes - such as changing use of agricultural land, new conservation designations and major building programmes.

STAGE FOUR - IDENTIFICATION OF DISTRICT COUNCIL ROLE AND AIMS

This stage involves the establishment, or refinement, of the District Council Mission Statement and its associated objectives insofar as they impact upon sport and recreation. This enables a context to be established for the Sport and Recreation Strategy. The starting point should be the Recreation Department's "Mission Statement". If such a statement does not exist, it will be necessary to agree a "mission" as this will be the foundation upon which the Strategy is built.

AN EXAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT

The Recreation Department is dedicated to the business of enabling local people and visitors to make creative use of their leisure time. In particular, we seek to enable individuals to progress their sporting potential to the limit of their ability or interest.

The aim of a local sport and recreation strategy is the provision of opportunities for all members of the community. The range of opportunities may be encompassed in a defined sports development continuum comprising four elements:

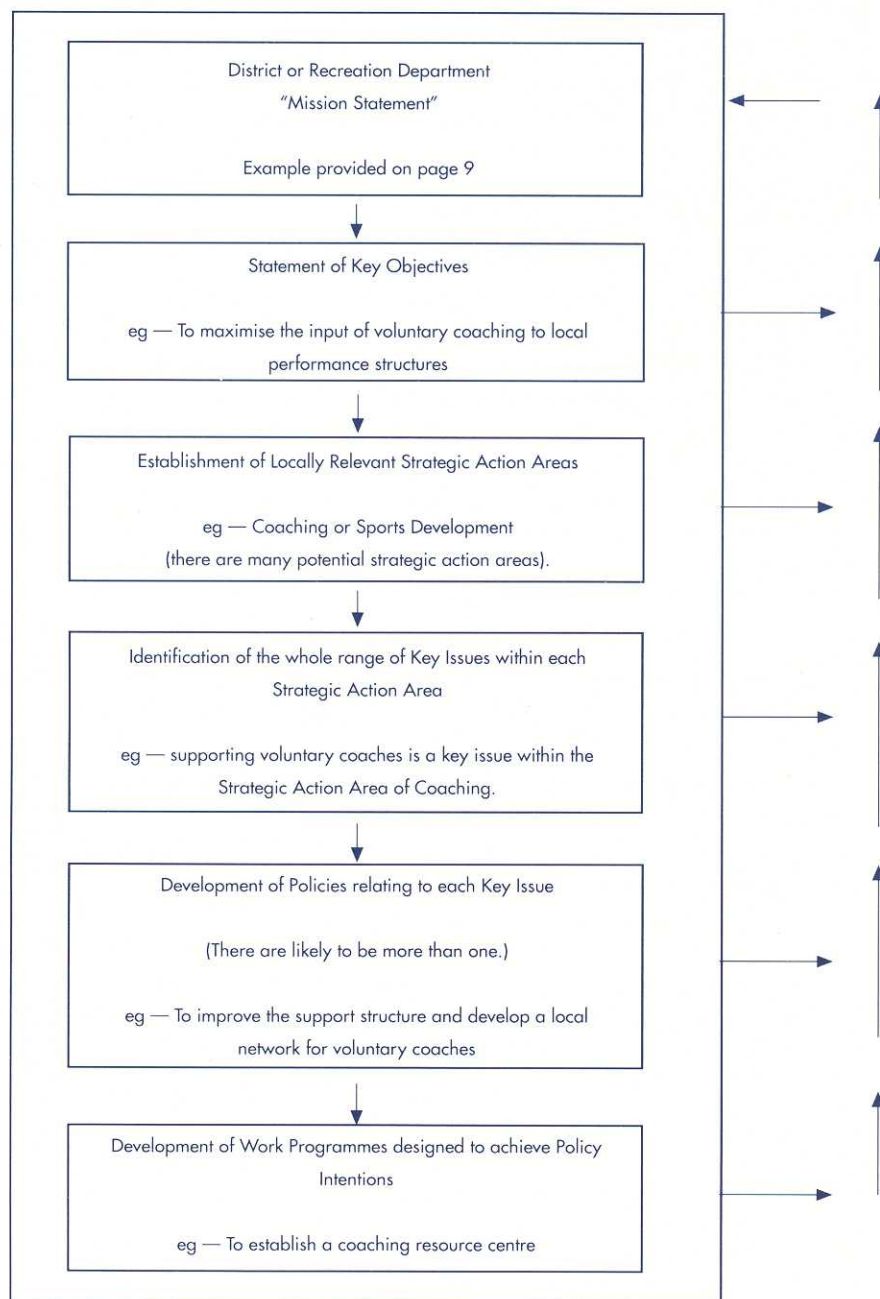
- (i) **Foundation** - young people acquiring basic movement skills to provide a foundation for future participation in the sports of their choice.
- (ii) **Participation** - the pursuit of activity for reasons of enjoyment, fitness, social contact, or sport for its own sake.
- (iii) **Performance** - participation motivated by the desire to get better.
- (iv) **Excellence** - achieved by those with the interest and ability to achieve publicly measured levels of performance.

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland puts this approach forward as a model, not a prescription for sports development. District Councils may wish to consider the four stages within the continuum in terms of specific target groups or in terms of key work areas such as coaching, sports development and facility provision and management. At this stage of the process the applicability of the District Council's corporate policies to sport and recreation can be established and the involvement of all the relevant District Council departments can be encouraged. The involvement of other departments and key agencies, such as the Education and Library Board, is particularly crucial at this stage given the impact that a local strategy for sport and recreation should have upon all forms of provision.

STAGE FIVE - IDENTIFICATION OF KEY ISSUES

The key issues for consideration within a sport and recreation strategy will obviously relate to locally important strategic action areas and to the broader corporate aims of the District Council as a whole and the 'mission' of the recreation department in particular. They can be usefully identified in isolation, that is to say without considering the impact of external influences at this stage. The format can be based on a series of questions, each designed to identify the local importance of particular key issues.

The relationship between these terms is set out in the following "Family Tree":



To provide guidance on what could be key issues, some examples are provided in the framework of the Sports Development Continuum and in the context of coaching, facilities and sports development as three common key Strategic Action Areas.

1. FOUNDATION LEVEL — KEY ISSUES		
STRATEGIC ACTION AREA	STRATEGIC ACTION AREA	STRATEGIC ACTION AREA
COACHING	SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	FACILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are primary teachers resourced with knowledge, skills and materials? • Is parental input maximised through training and the use of resource materials? • Are sports coaches aware of the special needs of your people? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there opportunities for progression in all those activities that are provided within the primary school programme? • How many local primary schools offer a range of post school extra-curricular activities for all children above the age of 8? • Are primary schools effectively linked with secondary PE specialists and supported with appropriate sporting expertise and resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is maximum community use made of local schools, especially by primary-aged children and their parents? • Do primary schools have, or have access to, adequate sporting facilities? • Do major facilities provide for the needs of very young children?

2. PARTICIPATION LEVEL — KEY ISSUES		
STRATEGIC ACTION AREA	STRATEGIC ACTION AREA	STRATEGIC ACTION AREA
COACHING	SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	FACILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are voluntary sector coaches adequately resourced and recognised? • Is there appropriate introductory and in-service training for coaches? • Are teachers fully aware of resource materials and coaching support available, or potentially available, especially via the in-service training programme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is sports development expertise available to all major facility providers, including school governing bodies. • Do local management practices genuinely encourage sport for all? • Do appropriate opportunities exist for all target groups such as young people, women, and people with disabilities. • Is the potential of leadership training maximised in all sectors? • Is there a structure to optimise school/club links? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What local facilities, particularly schools and community centres, are currently under-used? Does LMS offer any new opportunities? • Is the potential of local sports for all the local population optimised? • Is there a deficiency in any facilities locally?

3. PERFORMANCE AND EXCELLENCE — KEY ISSUES		
STRATEGIC ACTION AREA COACHING	STRATEGIC ACTION AREA SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	STRATEGIC ACTION AREA FACILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there mechanisms in place to optimise the knowledge of local voluntary coaches in the context of performance coaching? • Have performance coaches been identified and appropriately deployed in each priority sport? • Is there an appropriate structure for the identification and development of performance bound young people? • Are local specialists, such as sports scientists and sports medics available to local performers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are clubs and schools effectively linked? • Are voluntary and statutory sporting provisions effectively dovetailed? • Is there a local performance structure in all priority sports? • Are performance opportunities equally available to all? • Do special arrangements relating to access exist for local high performers? • Have all the support services necessary to sustain high performance been identified? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do any local centres have the potential/physical pre-requisites to function as a centre of excellence? • Is access to facilities for training as good as it could be? • What specialist facilities are needed and not available locally? • Is there a local sports injury clinic? • Have reciprocal access arrangements been made with the owners of key facilities located outside the district?

STAGE SIX — KEY ISSUES: EXAMINATION, POLICY, COURSES OF ACTION, CONSULTATION AND REVIEW

Having identified the key issues within each of the strategic action areas the next stage is to examine them and gather the relevant information necessary to inform decision making for policy formulation purposes.

This will lead to preparing policies and work programmes which flow from them. These will form the basis of the strategy document itself. At this stage, public consultation is desirable. Techniques used in public consultation include public meetings, questionnaires, discussion groups and advertising for comment. The opportunity to comment should be open to agencies and individuals.

District Councils are increasingly conscious of the need to consult with local consumers of the services they provide. The process of involving local people in decision making has been accelerated by a number of recent imperatives:

- Public scrutiny of value for money in the delivery of public services.
- The growing expectation of quality in the delivery of services, via whatever mechanisms, and a concern for customer satisfaction.
- Increased competition will mean District Councils will have to specify and define more clearly than ever before what they provide.
- The local autonomy of schools.

In addition to consulting local people, it is strongly advised that individual District Councils consult with their neighbours to identify areas of co-operation and partnership and to avoid duplication of effort. Consulting other agencies like the Health and Social Services Board, Water Management groups, and the Education and Library Boards would be productive. Some ideas about consultation are provided at appendix IV.

Stage six, therefore, comprises the following elements each of which will take place in the context of one of the previously identified strategic action areas:

• Key issue statement and examination	Statement of the issue and information obtained about it.
• Policy	Policy for decision, identifying a proposal to resolve the issue.
• Work programmes	Specific courses of action with time, staff and financial resources identified with performance indicators and, where appropriate, indicating the roles of other agencies.
• Consultation	Involve the public in the planning process and consult neighbouring authorities. Agencies at local, regional, and national level may wish to comment.
• Review	Review each course of action, set against pre-defined criteria.

The following six pages explore in greater detail the development of each of these elements in the context of the key issues of Coaching, Sports Development and Facilities.

Example key issues within each strategic action area, subsequent policies and courses of action are described below:

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA: COACHING

Coaching is here considered in its broadest sense and is taken to include not only the activities associated with enabling sports introduction, participation and improved performance, but also related disciplines such as the education and training of administrators and officials, the development of support systems for teachers, parents, and other key individuals, and the establishment of appropriate resource packages to support professional and voluntary coaches.

Key Issues

Local circumstances will determine which key issues prevail in which local area.

Example key issues, in the framework of the Sports Development Continuum have been developed at Stage 5 on pages 11-12.

Key Issue: Identification

Voluntary coaches play a major role in delivering opportunities to local people at all stages of the Sports Development Continuum. Are there any mechanisms by which this invaluable provision can be further developed, fully recognised, mobilised, rewarded, and motivated?

Key Issue: Examination

- Examine voluntary activity in all your priority sports. Ensure you quantify activity in sports clubs, in school-based extra-curricular activity, and in other areas such as youth clubs and community based organisations. Examine provision at each stage of the Sports Development Continuum.
- Examine the support structure available to these coaches and particularly the level and type of support provided by the voluntary agencies for whom they are coaching. Support provided from a wider than local base (eg that provided by the Local Sports Advisory Committee) and other forms of support such as that provided by the Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching, National Governing Bodies of Sport, and other coach education initiatives should also be identified.
- What barriers exist to deter local volunteers from participating in the available support structures? Consider especially, matters such as pricing, timing, and accessibility.
- Try to attach an annual cost to the total annual voluntary commitment and to the annual value of the support structure provided:
 - is the balance fair?
- These issues can be identified and examined by a variety of methods:
 - survey work with practising voluntary coaches.
 - survey work and discussion groups with teachers, youth workers, and Sports Development Officers.
 - questionnaire survey of groups such as Parent/Teacher Associations and major community organisations.

Policy

To improve the support structure and develop a local network for voluntary coaches and key others within the district.

Courses of Action

- Produce a register of coaches.
- Develop a training needs analysis on a sport by sport basis.
- Provide introductory and in-service training opportunities.
- Develop a corps of coaches sympathetic to and familiar with educational philosophies.
- Establish a resource base of appropriate literature, audio visual material, and equipment.
- Develop coach training appropriate for teachers, youth workers, and parents.
- Establish a Coach of the Year competition.
- Organise generic administrative support and training opportunities for local clubs.

Consultation

- Establish the attitudes of practising coaches, lapsed coaches, and teachers to current coach education practices and provision.
- Establish the needs and requirements of local clubs, providers of service, and significant community groups.
- Establish current and potential utilization of coaches both within the school curriculum and in support of extra-curricular and, particularly, post-school programmes.
- Consult neighbouring District Councils to establish potential areas for co-operative activity.
- Amend your programme and plans to reflect your consultation.

Review

Consider:

- Annual review of results.
- Three-yearly review of policies and programmes.
- Six-yearly review of role and aims and objectives of the whole strategy.

Further Guidance

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland will be publishing a companion guide to this document in the Summer of 1993. This will be titled "Developing Local Coaching Strategies" and will provide detailed guidance regarding the planning of programmes relating to this Strategic Action Area.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA: SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Sports development is a process by which the interest and desire to take part or improve may be created or developed. It involves the provision of appropriate opportunities for participation at all levels and seeks to enable participants to achieve their full potential. It involves the integrated planning and management of the human resources available in all major providing sectors. It is concerned with the needs of the customer and involves the processes of optimising services rather than the hardware of service provision.

Key Issues

Local circumstances will determine which key issues prevail in which local area.

Example key issues, in the framework of the Sports Development continuum have been developed at Stage 5 on pages 11-12.

Key Issue: Identification

In Northern Ireland, sports specific opportunities are not available to all young people at all stages of the Sports Development Continuum. In particular, pathways from foundation to participation and from participation to performance, are often underdeveloped. Is this reflected locally and, if so, what corrective action is possible?

Key Issue: Examination

- In the commonly found curriculum sports, what post-school opportunities exist, and where, for each year group between the ages of 8 and 14? Examine particularly those sports with major local clubs or other local participation opportunities.
- Are there any major curriculum activities for which there exists little or no community based opportunities?
- Are introductory opportunities at primary schools widely available in each focus sport, and are they appropriately resourced with coaching expertise and other resource materials?
- Are teachers, particularly at primary level, sufficiently knowledgeable to deliver a wide programme?
- Do the major clubs actively manage their links with all local schools, including primary schools, and offer development opportunities for those young people with performance inclinations?
- Is there a system for the identification and support of performers within the school curriculum?
- Is there a regular performance school offering opportunities for all high performers?
- Do the networks and personnel exist to allow the planning of effective opportunities throughout the Sports Development Continuum?
- These issues can be identified and examined by a variety of methods eg:
 - survey work with clubs and schools.
 - questionnaire survey of Parent/Teacher Associations, school Boards of Governors, and young performers (in clubs and schools).

Policy

To establish post-school/weekend opportunities in a minimum of three sports at each school site for each year group between P4 and year 12, to link these with club development sessions, and to offer one multi-sport performance school to all local performance bound young people.

Courses of Action

- Identify and support one community-link co-ordinator within each post-primary school and ensure the complete coverage of all primary schools by appropriate clustering.
- Develop an educational/motivational package targeting school Governors, and, particularly Parent/Teacher Associations of primary schools.
- Ensure one key club in each focus sport is operating an open junior section that meets established quality criteria.
- Organise one multi-sport performance school, utilizing local performance structures such as Sport Step, Champion Coaching, or other programmes.
- Ensure clubs, schools, teachers, parents, and coaches are supported with appropriate motivational material, training packages, and other resources.

Consultation

- Establish the attitudes and current practices of schools, clubs, and Parent/Teacher Associations.
- Identify resource and coaching support that is presently available.
- Establish the view of the Education and Library Board (particularly the Creative and Expressive Studies Adviser or Field Officer).
- Consult with neighbouring District Councils:
 - if they have similar programmes, can they assist each other?

Review

Consider:

- Annual review of results.
- Three-yearly review of policies and programmes.
- Six-yearly review of role and aims of the approach to this key area.

Further Guidance

A companion manual to this document will be published in 1994 offering detailed guidance regarding the development of a local Sports Development plan.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA: FACILITY STOCK

The local facilities stock is the range of local buildings and facilities capable of sustaining sport and recreation usage. It includes facilities in all sectors and also those facilities which are potentially usable but which, for whatever reason, are not currently in either public or recreational use.

Key Issues

Local circumstances will determine which key issues prevail in which local area.

Example key issues, in the framework of the Sports Development continuum have been developed at Stage 5 on pages 11-12.

It should be remembered that facilities are no more than a means to achieving the ends outlined in the other strategic action areas. The central theme will always be matching stock to current and future demand.

Key Issue: Identification

Partnership working and inter-agency approaches are relatively new to Northern Ireland. As a consequence, optimum use of facilities is sometimes not achieved. To what extent is this underuse problem reflected locally and what interventions are possible to redress the situation?

Key Issue: Examination

- Identify local facilities with potential for sport/recreation use, but not currently used for sport and recreation. Alternatively, are there any periods when existing buildings are quiet?
- Identify underused local facilities and quantify the scale of underuse and the potential of the facilities. Pay particular attention to schools, community centres, and privately owned facilities such as scout/guide halls, church halls and other large indoor spaces.
- What activities are under-resourced (focus upon a limited number of important local activities)? Consider the demand addressed in the development plans of individual sports.
- Is community recreation provision, quality provision for performance, and specialist provision for excellence related to expressed demand?
- These issues can be identified and examined by a combination of methods:
 - survey work with existing users.
 - survey work with key coaches and clubs.
 - questionnaire survey of local schools and community groups.

Policy

To maximise community use of facilities by the promotion of inter-agency working and the resourcing (financial and otherwise) of those who control public access to underused facilities.

Courses of Action

- Develop an action plan relating underused facilities to areas of potential demand.
- Identify key individuals with management responsibility at each target facility, and identify the human skills necessary to enable public use.
- Identify specific barriers to open access on a facility by facility basis.
- Offer a free recreation management advisory service to all local facility providers.
- Offer advice to all local school Boards of Governors and seek to negotiate common and promotional pricing and access policies.
- Establish minimum standards for "new build" - for example, community centres might have a minimum ceiling height to enable sports such as badminton - and offer partnership funding in return for public access.

Consultation

- Establish the attitude of facility owners to your proposals. Ensure, particularly, that the demand exists to sustain any newly provided facility.
- Consult all local community groups to establish their needs for neighbourhood provision.
- Identify the specialist requirements of local sports clubs that are not presently met, and consider whether these can be provided by local facilities such as schools.
- Establish the view of the Education and Library Board and other major potential providers. Seek to influence that view and, in particular, to agree with those providers, public access policies.
- Ensure your analysis reflects the needs of all sections of the community.

Review

Consider:

- an annual review of results.
- a three-yearly review of policies.
- a six-yearly review of policy and strategy.

Further Guidance

Further guidance in the form of a Companion Manual to this document will be published in 1994.

STAGE SEVEN — STRATEGY REVIEW

Strategy review is the next stage and must be seen as an integral part of the whole process and include built-in review dates. An approach could be:

- Annual A review of specific courses of action set against defined criteria for measuring achievement. Consider any new key issues which may have arisen.
- Three years A review of policies and achievements from courses of action for existing key issues. Identification of new key issues, policies and courses of action for next three years and performance targets for interim (annual) review.
- Six years A major review of the role, aims and objectives of the strategy. Examine in detail the achievements and review the overall direction.

The timetable for a strategy review must link with the District Council's corporate and financial planning cycles. It may therefore be appropriate to have a strategy committee, comprising elected members and serviced by senior officers of the Council.

WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE STRATEGY?

Having identified what is to be done and how to do it, the final question to resolve is who is involved in undertaking the strategy?

Who does the work?

There are four options and each District Council will have reasons for choosing one of the following:

- 1 By District Council staff.
- 2 By resourcing the local voluntary sector eg the Local Sports Advisory Committee.
- 3 By external consultants.
- 4 By combinations of these approaches.

In making a choice, some of the key points to consider are outlined below:

By District Council staff

- Staff will have vital knowledge and experience of their district.
- Preparing and implementing the strategy will develop partnerships based upon real commitment.
- There is a risk that the document would be seen as the District Council's and, therefore, that it might not win widespread ownership.

By the local voluntary sector

- A strong and organised voluntary sector might well be aware of the sporting and recreational needs of the area as direct consumers.
- Involvement is an effective means of securing widespread ownership of the strategy.
- Professional and technical support would need to be provided in order to enable the voluntary sector to undertake a project of this size.

By external consultants

- Consultants are detached and able to 'step back' from the District Council; this may raise new issues.
- Consultants have the perceived advantage of being 'independent' and, therefore, councillors may accept their views more readily.
- Some stages of the strategy process require absolute impartiality whilst others require local knowledge that consultants would be unlikely to have.

By Council staff supported by consultants

- This approach develops the expertise of both.
- It ensures consultants are not employed to prepare reports and information which is known already.
- It guarantees an impartial input to the strategy process.

Establishing an advisory/consultative committee

A consultative committee will increase the District Council's awareness but will also allow others to influence the direction and, more importantly, identification with the strategy. The establishment of some form of advisory committee is strongly recommended.

In evaluating the value of this approach, factors to consider include:

- This guideline document argues that a strategy should co-ordinate the future development of sport and recreation in the district for everyone - not be simply a strategy for the District Council.
- Representation of other organisations and groups should assist the planning process, and encourage ownership of the strategy.
- The composition of such a group would depend upon local circumstances but is likely to include:
 - local organised sport, possibly the Local Sports Advisory Committee.
 - the Education and Library Board.
 - other Council departments.
 - planning authorities.
 - community and/or residents associations.
 - major conservation interests.
 - appropriate national agencies such as the Water Service, and the Forestry, Drainage, and Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture.
 - Area Health & Social Services Boards.

It is also likely to include occasional input from agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce, Business in the Community, The Sports Council for Northern Ireland, Governing Bodies of Sport, the Community Relations Council, The Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland, and other key agencies with importance locally.

DISTRICT SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGIES

APPENDIX I

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY: AN INITIAL CHECK-LIST

The following checkpoints may help in determining whether your area is ready to embark upon the strategy process. The check-list can only be taken as a starting point; it is neither exhaustive, nor specific to your area.

1 Background Position/Rationale

Who is the strategy for?

What agency will produce the strategy? On behalf of whom?

In what areas is the District Council

- an enabler?
- a service provider?

What is the scope of the strategy (leisure, sport, tourism, recreation, arts, play, coaching, facilities, sports development)?

What other external strategies exist?

What other Council departments will seek a role?

Who will be involved in compilation?

What will the strategy lifespan be?

What is the publication timetable?

Who will be involved in consultation?

2 Readiness Factors

Do you have a key

- member
- officer
- opinion former

involved in the strategy process?

Is there a network and opportunity for dialogue involving departmental staff, other departmental staff, other District Council staff, the community at large, sports clubs, community organisations, national organisations with a local presence, individuals, Governing Bodies, schools, the Education and Library Board, etc, etc?

Have you identified and resourced a strategy manager?

Have you secured commitment for:

- financial resourcing?
- non-financial resourcing?
- officer time?
- member time?
- changes, if necessary?
- implementation?

Does the district have an agreed:

- philosophy?
- corporate/departmental mission?
- service plan?

DISTRICT SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGIES

APPENDIX II

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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 M19 2EQ

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 Upper Malone Road
 Belfast BT9 5LA

DISTRICT SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGIES

APPENDIX III

GLOSSARY

DISTRICT LEISURE STRATEGY

- A district-wide strategic plan that encompasses all aspects of the leisure service. This would certainly include sport, arts, and play provision. Individual components could be produced individually and incrementally.

DISTRICT STRATEGY ON SPORT AND RECREATION

- The stand-alone component of the District League Strategy that addresses sport and recreation.

ENABLER

- A description for the role of District Councils and others in encouraging others to provide services as opposed to the traditional approach of providing services directly. This type of approach requires a strong emphasis upon inter-agency working.

KEY ISSUES

- Each Strategic Action Area contains a range of locally important key issues. Each key issue will encompass a discrete work programme in which improvement is sought.

LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

- The system, introduced by the Education Reform Order (Northern Ireland) 1989, by which individual schools become increasingly autonomous in management matters such as budget management, staff appointments, and community use.

MISSION STATEMENT

- A short global statement identifying an organisation's ultimate objective, its rationale and its intended outcomes.

POLICIES

- An organisational plan of action designed to establish particular behaviours by which specific objectives will be achieved or an agency's objectives and preferred means of achieving these.

SERVICE PROVISION

- The products of all services that are provided, managed, and resourced directly by the supplier.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

- The model encompassing foundation, participation, performance and excellence, within which the stages of sporting development available to any one individual are chartered.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA

- An area of activity (such as sports development, coaching, or facilities) that is of fundamental importance locally. Strategic action areas will contain a number of key issues.

STRATEGY

- A statement of the medium term aspirations of an organisation and the means of achieving them. A strategy is normally the product of external consultation and is relevant to a number of bodies all of whom should, ideally, have an element of ownership.

TARGET GROUPS

- Groups of people united by a common characteristic, often a disadvantage. Typical examples include people with disabilities, women, and those living in rural areas.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- A proxy measure used when performance is not directly measurable.

WORK PROGRAMMES

- Detailed plans of activity, usually costed and timetabled, by which specific objectives will be achieved.

DISTRICT SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGIES

APPENDIX IV

CONSULTATION

Possible Consultee	Process for Consultation
<p>Local</p> <p>General Public</p> <p>Sports Clubs</p> <p>Social Clubs with Sports Role</p> <p>Local Sports Advisory Committee</p> <p>Other District Council Department</p> <p>Council members</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>School Head and Governors</p> <p>Facility Providers — Public</p> <p>— Voluntary</p> <p>— Private</p> <p>Interest Groups — People with Disabilities</p> <p>— Women</p> <p>— Unemployed Centres</p> <p>Regional</p> <p>Education & Library Boards — School Facilities</p> <p>— Curriculum</p> <p>— Youth Service</p> <p>District Health & Social Services Boards</p> <p>Adjacent District Councils</p> <p>National/Other</p> <p>Sports Council for Northern Ireland</p> <p>Northern Ireland Council for Physical Recreation</p> <p>Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching</p> <p>Governing Bodies of Sport</p> <p>The Youth Council</p> <p>The Community Relations Council</p> <p>The Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Some or all of the following processes might be used in consultation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Public meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Open to all (b) Closed for specialist audience 2 Circulation for comment — consider synopsis of strategy 3 Circulation of questionnaire 4 Presentation to key agencies for formal discussion 5 Selected discussion groups <p>The following techniques should be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Draft document to be available 2 Synoptic summary to be used 3 Promotional flyer to encourage participation in consultation 4 Formal presentation materials including slides, OHP's, videos to be available 5 Process to be widely advertised and time limited 6 All barriers to participate in consultation to be removed, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — day/evening meetings — creche provision — use of commonly relevant material — utilise different formats