

CABINET: 7th JANUARY 2004

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS RECREATION DEVELOPMENT?

A brief summary of the services contained in this Review is set out below:

Sports development;

(Support for sports clubs, implementation of Active Sports, TOPS and similar programmes to create opportunities, Local Sports Councils, capital projects, training, data and information).

Youth development;

(Developing the links between youth agencies and leisure; supporting groups; capital projects, training, child protection, data and information).

Recreation development for disabled and older people;

(Creating opportunities for participation; linking agencies, leading on information, providing advice to the Council)

Play development;

(Supporting the play network, anchoring the relationship to HCC, building a training structure, creating new opportunities, setting standards, advising local groups)

Community recreation development;

(Support for village halls, project work in target areas, capital projects)

Arts and heritage development

(Supporting the work of key partners in performance participatory and education programmes)

Open space project development

(Leading or supporting others, project development, relations with Town and Parish Councils, use of developers' contributions)

Countryside recreation

(Supporting lead agencies in the development of opportunities and programmes, advice on wider issues for the District)

Policy development

(Create and manage the process of creating overall policy for Leisure)

KEY FEATURES

It is a small team with the equivalent of three full time posts. They are supported by one Administrative post and also part of the time of the Assistant Director Leisure and their PA. The Council's investment is largely in people although there are some significant revenue funding Agreements with partners. There is limited income generation through fees and charges due to the community development nature of the service.

The work is largely about influencing others and working via partnerships to create gains in the community. There is a lack of nationally adopted performance indicators and benchmarking arrangements. With the nature of the work, measuring "success" is hard. However, the Citizen's Panel and Stakeholder surveys have shown strong levels of support for the Service Package. It is a package already extensively using alternative means of delivery. The balance is very much towards the support of partner working and this is good for attracting other investment into the District.

KEY FINDINGS / IMPROVEMENTS

This is a good service, valued by customers and partners alike.

The expertise of the team members is key. They operate very close to capacity and if there ever are longer term issues such as illness, that aspect of the work effectively stops.

There was strong support from all stakeholders to maintain current partnership oriented delivery. The team remain open to identify and explore other options where they are shown to demonstrate best practice.

The team works with local communities and individuals to build their capacity to undertake activities themselves. This orientation of the work was clearly favoured by stakeholders over organising festivals or similar one off high profile events.

Whilst there was a high level of support for the work of the team, it needs to be more effective in communications with the public at large and partner agencies – in some way due to the nature of the work outlined above.

There are always opportunities to explore and secure further partners to assist programmes

The review generated "Key Principles" to guide delivery that have been adopted in the Leisure Service Plan.

The existence of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has increased the potential impact of community oriented services like these. Several actions for the LSP are included in the Improvement Plan to assist service delivery to the community.

Where the LSP is active – for example with the Participatory Needs Assessments, the team is already actively engaged. The team now needs to influence the LSP in the mechanisms it uses. This is a key point for the future of community engagement by the Council.

KEY LEARNING POINTS ON PROCESS

The time implications for this style of review were too big for a small team.

The practice of surveys to partners was a good innovation and should be repeated in cycles.

Key elements from the Service Improvement Plan have been integrated into the Leisure Service Plan work programme. This would seem to be a better process for monitoring at member level than the four individual best value reviews in leisure.

BEST VALUE REVIEW REPORT OF THE RECREATION DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE IN LEISURE SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Best Value Review package covers a wide range of services: sports development; youth development; recreation development for disabled and older people; play development; community recreation development; arts and heritage development; open space project development; countryside recreation and policy development. They all include significant partnership working and indirect delivery.
- 1.2 This report, produced by the self-assessment team, informs members about the service itself; the process used to undertake the review and the outcome from the review. Importantly it seeks approval to an Action Plan for continuous improvement over the next five years.
- 1.3 The report draws on inputs from the self-assessment team, customers, stakeholders, members, external sources and the Best Value Board. The Team was only able to make limited use of input from other local authorities as they were all struggling to apply Best Value to this aspect of service delivery. Nonetheless there is the prospect of closer working in the Improvement Plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE KEY OUTCOMES

2.1 Review costs and savings

2.1.1 The overall current net cost of the Service is contained in a series of budgets across Leisure.

The Development Team and associated partnership work	£285,180
Art and Heritage	£58,710
Eling Tide Mill	£24,550
Grant Aid	£91,180
Open space projects	£12,486

(2003/04 budgets including corporate and on costs)

2.1.2 The cost of the review has involved the opportunity cost of officer time and has been estimated to be in the order of £15,000. There has been no employment of consultants or use of other budget funds.

2.1.3 The Service does not operate direct provision and therefore the scoped for additional income is limited. However, partnership working is a key feature of service delivery. In that regard the team looks to develop these and add resources to the programmes with which it operates. For example, in the period of the review, £169,000 has been added by helping others secure funds towards programmes in this package (£ 100,000 Sure Start, £48,000 Blashford, £6,000 Branch Out, £15,000 Ringwood football youth project).

2.2 4 C's Key Activities of the Review

A wide range of services and partnerships are covered by this review. It means that some elements are better developed than others. There are some activities that embraced all elements of the package – for example the Citizens' Panel survey but other activities were specific to individual elements – for example, the development of benchmarking networks. This is identified in the Appendix scoping the Review (Appendix 1)

2.2.1 Challenge

The pro-forma was used within the team and external input brought in to stimulate and question the team at key stages for the whole package. External input was also used to focus debate in the arts. Challenge questions were also included in the surveys, including the Citizens' Panel. As a result there was some significant external comment on challenge issues.

2.2.2 Consult

A consultation plan was drawn up and used (Appendix 2). It largely comprised surveys: Citizens' Panel, key external partners, internal partners, employees, Town and Parish Councils, grant aid applicants. In addition two focus groups were held with arts agencies and individuals. The outcomes of the Citizens' Panel are Appendix 3 and the other stakeholder surveys are collated in Appendix 4. There was also an "evidence based" Leisure Review Panel meeting arising from which there was a list of factors for the Portfolio Holder to account for in the Improvement Plan. This was published as a Portfolio Holders Decision in June 2003 (Appendix 5)

As well as seeking matters of fact, the consultation also asked questions of a challenging nature. The results of consultation were overwhelmingly positive. This is encouraging for the Council given that the services in this package do most of their work "behind the scenes". This is not to say that there were no actions, in fact one of the key findings is the need to communicate and consult more.

2.2.3 Compare

Currently, there is only one National BVPI that applies to this package (existence of a Cultural Strategy). For all other elements of the package, as yet, there are no prescribed indicators. The sector is particularly poorly served due to the lack of any County, Regional or National indicators or benchmarking arrangements. This was not used as a reason to do nothing or defer all activity to the Improvement Plan. The team had to pursue its own comparator lists for all significant elements of the package. Some good

contacts have been made to form the basis of future work. However it was clear that there are no local authorities with a comprehensive set of indicators. The enquiries of the team have in fact led to new initiatives at County or regional level, which will be the basis of progress in the Improvement Plan.

Progress has been made during the Review. Networks have been started and there will be a set of indicators in place through the Improvement Plan. Also there are now initiatives at a national level in sports and arts, which should guide further work. The team is aiming to include best practice and / or different delivery mechanisms in any set of comparators, as well as local networks. Appendix 6 identifies the work being done.

2.2.4 Compete

The options for delivery were included in the consultation process. The outcome showed no support for any alternative form of delivery. There was strong support for the current means of delivery. Despite this, the team is suggesting that some resources are used to discover more about the option of a Trust. This is part of the Improvement Plan.

From networking discussions, this appears to be the only significant alternative and whilst there is no level of support for it amongst stakeholders, this may be due to a lack of awareness. Therefore the team will seek out examples of this means of delivery. Progress has already been made with contacts established with Eden Arts and Cleveland Arts as well as Gosport Development Trust but at this stage they seem to be used for other purposes than an alternative to a Team based in the Council.

2.3 Key Review Outcomes

2.3.1 Cost savings or income generation

Improved grant performance through the re-design of the forms and process

Explore and secure further partners to assist programmes

2.3.2 Service improvements

Be more effective in communications with the public at large and partner agencies

Involve agencies more in the programmes and decisions

Encourage more sustainable practices amongst partner agencies

2.3.3 Policy changes

Adoption of “Key Principles” to guide delivery

Foster the creation of the Cultural Strategy

Contribute to the review of “Heart of the Forest” and its relationship to policy at this level



2.3.4 Recommended delivery options

Maintain current partnership oriented delivery but remain open to identify and explore other options where they are shown to demonstrate best practice. In the first instance follow up known Trust options to assess suitability.

Partnership working is already such a key feature that the advent of the Local Strategic Partnership is a significant opportunity. The Team needs to make best use of the Community Action Team and relevant Community Action Networks and has already begun doing so.

2.3.5 Service performance targets and projections

The approach to the generation of income is to use this to establish programmes to meet need, not in cost reduction. The evidence from partners is that demand outstrips supply. The project budget resources of the team are already modest and the likelihood is that any sizeable changes to resources will come via partners. This is illustrated by the current balance between the value of partner investment in this package of services as against budget investment made through the authority.

2.3.6 Improved contribution to Corporate Objectives

During the review Heart of the Forest (HOF) was published and a matrix of impact on corporate objectives established. Members of the team have fed back on the consultation plan to identify the potential for HOF to offer greater leadership to service delivery.

The existence of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has increased the potential impact of community oriented services like these. Several actions for the LSP are included in the Improvement Plan to assist service delivery to the community.

3. BEST VALUE REVIEW BOARD

3.1 At the outset of the Review the team considered the Board's comments on the Review Plan and the team's response is attached as Appendix 7. These were considered during the conduct of the Review.

3.2 There were also comments from the Board on the draft full report as a result of their meeting on 2nd December and these are included below:

3.2.1 The Best Value Review Board would like to congratulate the Recreation Development Team on conducting a very comprehensive review of the Service. The achievements of such a small team and the impact it has on the Community is to be commended.

3.2.2 The Board felt that the team should publicise their work both externally and internally both to highlight their achievements and to enable more groups to benefit from the opportunities the team can provide.

3.2.3 It was felt that the team operated very successfully with minimal resources but should additional resources be forthcoming, this would produce wide ranging results, which would outweigh the original investment. Another issue with such a small team was ensuring the right balance between

Policy development and work in the Community, additional resources would help to address this.

3.2.4 The Board felt that rather than exploring a Trust option, the team should look at developing better links to other sections within the Council. It felt that there should be a real link with the Recreation Centres consisting of regular contact with a view to progressing joint initiatives which would in turn lead to career development opportunities for Recreation Centre employees and a more joined up approach to Leisure generally.

3.2.5 The Board also felt that there were opportunities for the team to form stronger links with other sections within the Council such as Community Safety and Health Development where possibilities for partnership working should be explored. There is potential for duplication if each section works in isolation. It is therefore recommended that the organisation provides a mechanism to assist groups such as these to integrate working practices.

3.2.6 The team have successfully developed performance indicators in order to benchmark the Service but have been unable to find willing partners to participate in this exercise. The Board felt that the team should take a lead in developing performance indicators which are easily understood by others and easy to monitor to encourage other Authorities to participate in a benchmarking exercise.

3.2.7 The Councillors on the Board felt that more work should be carried out to raise the awareness of Recreation Development with Town and Parish Councils. It was felt that a presentation to the Town and Parish Council Liaison Meeting could be a good way of achieving this.

3.2.8 Overall, the Board felt that the Recreation Development Service was operating at a very high standard, considering the limited resources available, and that it had excellent prospects for improving, particularly if additional resources were secured.

3.3 The team has had little time to consider the comments in detail but welcome the support and endorsement of the Board. The team will consider the points raised but would comment at this time as follows: 3.2.3 the team presented bids in the last two years of expenditure planning and will continue to present bids for consideration where a community need is evident; 3.2.4 the policy orientation of the two arms of the service is different, so the future relationship depends upon the outcome of the review of centre objectives; 3.2.5 happens to the extent that the Councils mechanisms allow and the team will be keen to help develop those mechanisms.

3.4 In terms of the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) the team considers that the points raised are covered as follows:

BOARD	3.2.2	3.2.3	3.2.4	3.2.5	3.2.6	3.2.7
SIP	2.2	Text above	2.12	2.19	2.8	2.9

4. THE SERVICE

4.1 A brief summary of the services contained in this Review is set out below:

Sports development;

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(Supporting the work of key partners)

Open space project development

(Leading or supporting others, project development, relations with Town and Parish Councils, use of developers' contributions)

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- 4.2 All of these activities have the common theme of extensive partnership working across all sectors. A list of these is attached as Appendix 8. They may also, on occasions, combine together to assist in project or people development. They also share involvement in grant aid, Lottery and fundraising activities. A major development in this area is the formation of the Community Action Networks of the Local Strategic Partnership. The team relates mainly to the Leisure CAN but also relevant are Children and Young People; Transport and Life Long Learning.
- 4.3 Overall, the package amounts to a net cost (including all on costs and non controllable costs) in the region of £285,000. The total value of the activity to the community is many times this, because of the partnership resources attracted to the work. Much of this is hard to quantify – for example the value of a person being taken through coaching and other support which enables them to run a team or playgroup, or the reduced costs of anti social behaviour when people are engaged in constructive use of leisure time. However, even a very narrow view of the financial inputs brought in via partners, makes a powerful case for the work of the team. An indicative estimate in Appendix 9, shows our revenue contribution of £127,000 partners other funding which is

worth an additional £1,042,000 revenue per annum. In terms of capital, recent investments totalling £914,000 have geared £4,500,000.

- 4.4 The reliance on partnership working over direct provision is a key feature of the historic approach in this District and was a major part of the assessment of the approach to this work in the review. A list of partners has already been referred to in Appendix 8.
- 4.5 These services are all discretionary activities in themselves but once undertaken, some need to meet legislative requirements, such as with the well being of children there are requirements for Criminal Records Bureau clearance.
- 4.6 The scale of the package in terms of employees is 3 FTE officers with 1FTE support in the core team, with part of the time of the Assistant Director Leisure (Service Development) and their Personal Assistant.
- 4.7 The key stakeholder groups were covered in the consultation plan (Appendix 2 and the results in 3 and 4).
- 4.8 **Evaluation of the asset**

In the later Best Value Reviews, there is greater attention to the management of the asset. In this package there are no assets of a capital nature. However, it has already been shown that the team has a very significant influence on many forms of community asset. Examples are: arrangements to increase community use of education facilities, assisting in the provision of new playing fields, facilitating capital bids for Lottery awards- e.g. forest forge, ArtSway, Brockenhurst College and others; operation of the grant scheme and support for local projects.

The skills of the team have meant a succession of successful projects that has seen the District at the forefront of the community gaining Lottery success. At the heart of this is the quality of the employees and as an “asset” they need supporting and developing. This is accounted for mostly in the operation reviews of Appendix 11 and has found its expression in the workforce planning section of the Service Plan.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

- 5.1 The Review was undertaken by the self-assessment team:

Barry Rickman	Portfolio Holder Leisure Tourism and Arts
Dye Lockyer	Play Development Officer
JJ Dawson	Opposition Spokesman Leisure Tourism and Arts
Keith Smith	Best Value Mentor
Lynda Aldous	Secretarial Assistant
Martin Devine	Assistant Director, Leisure
Peter Brailey	Sports and Youth Development Officer
Sally Collings	Community Recreation Officer
Sonia Masterman	Secretarial Assistant
Sue Worth	Audit Representative
Suzanne George	Recreation Development Officer
Tom Gibbons	Employee Side Representative

5.2 The team were assisted by two external inputs:

Chris Balchin, independent consultant, who directly assisted the work of the team in challenge and future direction. This occurred at the outset and after the return of the principal consultation findings. This helped to test if the team was responding appropriately and robustly to the inputs from stakeholders.

Peter Mason, independent consultant, who arranged and facilitated two workshops with artists, one for the amateur sector and one for professional artists and makers. He also interviewed the key arts partners. These inputs shaped a discussion paper that will form the basis of a future focus session in the Leisure Review Panel on arts provision in the District. Peter also drew up a new draft Agreement for all key partners.

5.3 The review started in 2001 with work based on the formerly adopted COMPASS method. This was held over when the system was under review. This review was largely undertaken covering 6 months from August to January, in effect in the interregnum before a new system was launched in December. There was the launch of the third approach, part of developments which have been necessary to keep up with the changing demands placed on the Council by the national system. At all times the Team attempted to undertake the review in a way that reflected the developing practice of the Authority.

5.4 Later in the process, the Government's approach changed again and Authorities are now only expected to undertake reviews of cross cutting issues (e.g. Young People) or major blocks of Services (e.g. Housing). With the advent of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the steam went out of the smaller reviews. On reflection, it was felt that the review should be completed and recorded.

5.5 The review has taken over 1,000 employee hours. Given the history outlined above however, it is a very broad estimate. In para 2.1.2 the statement is made that no consultants were employed to undertake the writing of the review, they were only used in challenge. This meant that the team itself (3FTE) have had to do all the work and keep the "day job" going. Fortunately with the changes in approach to packages this sort of mismatch of resources should not occur again.

5.6 The relationship of the actual review to the anticipated outcomes and challenges of the Review Plan was considered by the Leisure Review Panel area attached as Appendix 10.

5.7 The Improvement Plan was initially presented to the Leisure Review Panel. The Review Team decided not to consult on the draft Service Improvement Plan (SIP) prior to concluding the stages of the internal process. This was because of the strong support for the service evident in the consult element, combined with a SIP that builds on the strengths of the current relationships. In addition, the Council is now operating a performance management system that is based on Service Plans. There is a Leisure Service Plan and it contains high level elements of this Review's Service Improvement Plan. It is the overall leisure document that the Panel will monitor, rather than individual Best Value Review Improvement Plans. In summary therefore, the key parts

of the attached SIP (Appendix 15) have already found their way into the more senior document.

6. THE REVIEW IN CONTEXT

- 6.1 The services covered by this Review are at the heart of much that is current in community related issues. Recent legislation has given local government new powers under the Local Government Act 2000. This puts Local Government at the heart of community activity. The Service is closely affected by initiatives such as the well being power; the duty to produce a Community Plan that recognises the role of local government as community leader; the requirement to produce a Cultural Strategy; the formation of the Local Strategic Partnership and its focus on community involvement through partnership working.
- 6.2 At a national level, concerns over the breakdown in active communities; the need for more and better qualified leaders and instructors; increasing obesity in young people; the fear of crime; the recognition of the value of maintaining independence later in life in an ageing society; heart disease and well being; the support needed for school sport and the essential need to conserve sites of nature conservation value, amongst others, means that winning the hearts and minds of our communities is a large and increasingly recognised agenda. Whilst there is an increasing emphasis on these aspects nationally, this is not new locally, where the Council has been active in such areas since the Leisure Benefits paper of the mid nineties.
- 6.3 An important addition to this evidence, is "Realising the Importance of Cultural Services" Local Government Association 2001. It included assessments of arts; libraries; museums; parks and open spaces; children's play; sport and tourism. It is a detailed paper that can be sourced at (www.lga.gov.uk/lga.culture/potential.htm). The paper records evidential support for these elements of the work and also advocates the greater involvement of the leisure sector with health, education, community safety and regeneration agencies.

Its key findings include:

Cultural services have an intrinsic value, a fact illustrated by their consistently high levels of satisfaction regularly recorded in user surveys.

Their diversity means there is "something for everyone"

They are concerned with personal and social development and so contribute to both individual development and community development.

They are significant means to deliver against other agendas such as crime, health, and education. Inclusion issues can be aided, not just by extending who takes part but in the resultant benefits in self worth and enhanced skills that this participation can bring. This then has wider benefits for those individuals.

Health benefits extend to mental health as well as the more documented physical benefits of exercise. These can be of general benefit to the population at large or targeted to the needs of particular groups e.g. cardiac rehabilitation.

The impact of work in community safety issues is well documented over a number of decades, where innovation has made opportunities more attractive to the target group.

Environmental benefits are often recognised in the provision of green space but there are also awareness and education issues.

6.4 It is telling however, that the study notes the need for more research and improved methodologies for the monitoring of outcomes.

6.5 There is a large and expanding bibliography, which supports the assertion that a local authority active in its communities is a powerful community leader and supporter, helping to improve the quality of life in those communities. Some examples from these sources follow.

6.6 “People Taking Part” (Department of National Heritage 1996) notes:

“Community development has been pursued by local authority leisure departments as an effective means of responding to the needs of the communities they serve. This involves taking the needs and perceptions of local people as a starting point when planning leisure and cultural services; involving people in the issues which affect them; building working partnerships with the many different interests represented within the community, including the private sector and adopting an enabling role as well as providing services themselves. They are also increasingly responding to the needs of their communities by supporting local networks and promoting the sharing of advice and experience. This consultation can also help local authorities to make effective decisions”.

6.7 In 1999 a particularly influential study was published – the Policy Action Team 10 “A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit: Arts and Sport”. The goal of the study was: “To draw up an action plan with targets to maximise the impact of arts, sports and leisure policies in contributing to neighbourhood regeneration and increasing local participation.”

6.8 The key findings were:

“Arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity, can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities”.

This is because they:

- a) Appeal directly to individuals’ interests and develop their potential and self-confidence.
- b) Relate to community identity and encourage collective effort.
- c) Help build positive links with the wider community.
- d) Are associated with rapidly growing industries.

6.9 The study outlined six key recommendations for local authorities which, in summary, covered the aspects of: recognition of leisure in health crime education and employment strategies; action at a locality level; plans developed more widely than just in leisure; youth service to target activities; ensure widest use of built assets. Leading the recommendations was:

“The principles of the community development approach in this report should underpin and build on the ways in which local authority culture / leisure strategies and services are developed and provided, creating targeted programmes linked to network projects”.

This is very much reflected in the approach taken across the elements of this package, with the resulting benefits to quality of life in the District. Those principles, again in summary are:

Valuing diversity – the strength of diversity and the appropriateness of designing approaches to fit the needs of individual communities.

Local control – building the skills of communities to develop their own services – sometimes alongside direct provision

Support local commitment – local authorities and their partners as supporters not to replace local contributions

Promote equitable partnerships – openness about the degree to which the funding or supporting partners are able to empower community groups. Look for a balance of who takes the risks.

Defining common objectives – Bringing people together to jointly agree stated objectives

Working flexibly with change – every one being prepared to adapt to changing circumstances

Sustainable – there is a poor track record of sustaining the effort that supports community initiatives. Re-invention to meet constantly changing criteria or the constant search for short-term funds is ineffective and inefficient.

Pursue quality – irrespective of the means of service delivery, set standards should apply. Community development is difficult but the inputs and outputs can all strive for excellence.

Connect with the mainstream – there is a danger of isolation – being seen as “special” schemes. To be successful it is inevitable that there must be such a connection.

- 6.10 Many aspects of these principles that are the foundation of the work of the Team, be it with Town or Parish Councils, formal Trusts or an impromptu group of young people. The social, economic and environmental issues may, on the face of it seem to be less “important” in this District, than those areas where terms like “regeneration” and “exclusion” might be more popularly associated. This is however, far from the case.
- 6.11 Without presenting exhaustive lists or reams of text, this is readily illustrated by local examples of how these service inter-relate with others in the fields of health; children and young people; exclusion; community safety; environmental awareness and others. This review re-inforced those positions and as a result the Leisure Service Plan has been very heavily influenced in this direction. This is a factor that has been welcomed by members in their consideration of it. We will also see very strong relationships between this approach and the work of the LSP when its draft Community Plan is produced

- 6.12 As the Council is able to show a policy relationship through the Service Plan and then back it up with action, it is possible to tie into national initiatives. This can bring benefits in areas such as funding, resources, and marketing. Examples of this are: National Childcare Strategy; Healthy Schools; Active Communities and Curriculum 2000.
- 6.13 There are two aspects to local action that can be recognised. Firstly there are activity projects which the team influence. They are very many of these through the range of partners already identified but some examples will serve to illustrate the point:
- Forest Bus: rural isolation and children / young people outreach into areas of identified need.
- ArtSway: visual arts project in conjunction with the Education Other Than at School team of HCC.
- Brockenhurst College: regular activities across a range of sports for people with learning difficulties
- 6.14 The second aspect is the role of the team to work a further step away from the action to foster / persuade / prompt organisations, clubs and individuals to become involved and when involved to do so on the right basis and with the correct approach. In this role there is a wide influence in the setting up of junior sections; the creation of new clubs; tutor training, official's courses, child protection training and many other means. The scope of impact that the Council is achieving across all the sectors is therefore considerable.
- 6.15 Characteristic of this local action is the extent to which it is partners that lead delivery. In fact they are often the service providers, having had support or an initial lead from the team. This partnership orientation has a long history, albeit that it has been improving over time. This means there is a strong level of trust and understanding amongst agencies in the District. This is illustrated by the supportive outcome of the survey of key partners.
- 6.16 The Team expects this to continue to develop with the advent of the Local Strategic Partnership. The Team provides a ready source of networking skills and experience for the Council and has already proven its worth in support of achieving responses to the outcomes of Participatory Needs Assessments in Calshot, Martin and Pennington.
- 6.17 The team works in an environment where they seek to bring about change. They also have to deal with change as programmes and initiatives come and go. There is a track record of managing change and there are examples to illustrate this:

EXAMPLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF CONTEXT
The need emerges for clear policies on child protection	The team led the way for the Authority in devising a policy which NFDC adopted. This has been further revised and updated since.
The needs of disabled and older people are not well covered	The first service in the Authority to appoint a post specifically to address these issues

Community Safety issues related to young people are profiled across the District	The Team leads the facilitation of the “Youth Projects” and taps into Community Safety funding to deliver them.
The new Labour Government creates an Agenda for Child Care and a new funding stream	The team is the first in Hampshire to conclude an Agreement with the County Council and tap into this. Also roll forward Agreement beyond April 2006
Active Sports is launched as a national initiative	Team adopts the scheme and members “mainstream” the funds. The team leads work to create a Hampshire Sports partnership and this creates a new guidance for the authority’s sports development.

7. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The sustainability workbook is attached as Appendix 12. Of the three elements: social, economic and environmental, the main emphasis of this package is in social benefit. However there are some key impacts in terms of the environment and economy.

The influence of the package is wide ranging - from enabling greater involvement in communities to assisting with the provision of open spaces in settlements. There are a number of outcomes in the Improvement Plan but the main outcomes are set out below

7.1 Integrated

A realisation that this team has a substantial interface with the community and with the additional emphasis on joint working, the relationship of this team with the work of the Local Strategic Partnership will be an important feature of future work.

There is still improvement needed in the internal mechanisms of the Council to bring this team closer to related functions across the Council and to give contact between this team and the direct provision elements of the Council.

The work with partners does mean the team can influence their operations, so more could be made of encouraging good sustainability practice.

7.2 Social

There is already activity to offer opportunities for people in the community to join outreach programmes designed to promote well being. This needs to be more co-ordinated in the service and include partner agencies too.

With direct support to key community groups there is confidence that many services are available to groups that are hard to engage. There is however a lack of good data to confirm this. More effort needs to be made to secure better profiles of target communities and the outcomes of programmes.

Sustaining communities often revolves around individuals as volunteers. It seems that leaders / coaches / supporters are harder to find. The team needs to work alongside other agencies to encourage a strong and continuing base of such workers.

The team operates in ways which do assist accessibility to services – encouraging activities to be provided in communities, out of hours work, face to face communication, access to facilities to audio tape or Braille written work and more. Yet there has been no systematic assessment of how accessible the team’s work is and given their role, this should be done.

7.3 Environmental

There is an interface with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust but it is only on a site by site basis. There is scope to improve the environmental impact through arranging a wider agreement to cover all sites where there is the potential to enhance nature conservation.

There are very strong networks in the Social field but not in the Environmental. This team should make stronger links to the environmental roles that are active in communities.

Ensure all partners adopt Green Purchasing Plans.

The team supports work in the community so this often means enabling provision to happen where people live. This has positive environmental impacts too, not least due to reductions in travelling. However if provision is expected to call on a wider catchment not enough is done to promote alternatives to car free travel, or at least reducing reliance on the car.

7.4 Economic

There is some support offered to business in the childcare arena but this is not particularly structured. The opportunity offered now by the Business Forum should be exploited.

Business should be better engaged in sponsorship or patronage of the topic areas covered by the team. A target has been set for the team and there is an action in the SIP to assess if we are doing enough to assist partners in doing likewise.

8. FIT TO HEART OF THE FOREST

- 8.1 There is a good fit to Heart of the Forest (Appendix 13) however, it could be better.
- 8.2 The Review process requires that aspects of policy that are holding back improvement should be identified and put to the responsible Review Panel for assessment. In this instance the Team feels that improvement would be aided if HOF had a structure and content that was more readily usable by Services in planning action to match direction and thereby created clearer paths between work programmes and the Corporate Plan.
- 8.3 In this Review the team suggest that policy should be reviewed in a number of areas. With the passage of time since the review started, they have very much been input into the process and taken on board.

POLICY	REASON FOR REVIEW	ACTION
New: Principle for operating the Service	Suggested addition to guide officers in the approach to be taken	Now adopted in Leisure Service Plan
Cultural Strategy	Imperative one is put in place to create the overall guidance across services	In Leisure Service Plan
Heart of the Forest	Consider its form and how it connects to Service planning	Cabinet consider in second version
Grant policy and guidance	There is a need to look at both current desires for leisure grants and also the fit to other grants in the Council	In work programme

9. BEST VALUE SCRUTINY

- 9.1 Councillors Richard Frampton (Vice Chairman Leisure Review Panel) and John Coles operated as lead scrutiny members for the Review at the outset and were satisfied that the process was robustly undertaken in an open and honest way to the point of producing the SIP that went to the Leisure Review Panel.
- 9.2 The last phase of “signing off” the Final Report has had the input of Councillors Alan Weeks and Les Puttock. The Best Value Review Board has independently inspected the review and their comments are reported in section 3.
- 9.3 The members of the Board were:

Alan Weeks	Leisure Review Panel nominee
Jayne Griffiths	Head of Personnel
Les Puttock	Leisure Review Panel nominee
Neil Farmer	Head of Leisure East Dorset District Council
Sharon Plumridge	Head of Support Services and Board Chairman

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is no suggestion at this point that there are “Key expenditure areas” of any scale. There is the likelihood of a need to find resources for better communication and in due course there are issues yet to be investigated which may have financial implications. A list of those that may lead to cost implications are:

SIP No	ITEM	COST
1.1	Fees for playing field strategy	Planning Development grant now but uncertain if needed later for the plan itself
1.3	Data collection	Likely to be a corporate issue
1.5	Cultural strategy and service plans	Print and web design. Probably in current budget
2.1	Assess role of trusts	Travel cost
2.4	Available information	ICT for web site – likely to be part of Corporate programme

2.5	Training programmes	Currently other agencies bear the brunt of this and it is likely to continue to be so.
2.6	Coherent approach to youth issues	There is no capacity to undertake the audit convening role –it would need funds – possibly LSP?
2.7	Arts and heritage	In the short term any cultural tourism initiatives are likely to be self funding. In the medium term, if project funding is needed, the current budget may be enough
2.8/3.2	Performance indicator development	Travel
2.12	Co-ordination of the “health offer”	This is promotion and will need resources – possible approach to NFPCT.
2.14	Create community profiles	ICT cost but probably in ICT work programme ultimately and then may be LSP cost.
2.16	Increase awareness of sustainability issues	Print
2.18	Naturalistic approach to open space management	Needs to be assessed – could be a cost reduction
3.1	Grant aid information	Print and www. Former within service budgets the latter probably a corporate ICT item.
3.3	Process benchmarking.	Travel / training to view best practice
4.1/4.2	Surveys	Postage
5.2	Accessibility audit	Outcomes may produce costs to make the service more accessible.

10.2 In total these are modest costs at the day to day level of operation.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Sustainability Assessment undertaken by the Service has resulted in the identification of areas for improvement, many of which will have a positive impact on the environment.

11.2 Those of particular note have been highlighted in Section 7

12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Sustainability Assessment recognises the importance of safe and secure communities.

12.2 This Service has significant impact on the issue, both directly through its programmes of activity and indirectly through community development. Particular areas of activity have been identified in the Improvement Plan. These Services are often at the heart of anti social behaviour issues and can be cast in a number of roles. There are some instances where the participation in activities can of itself constitute an intrusion. Where this may occur, clearly it needs detailed consideration. In the great majority of cases the work facilitated by this team has a beneficial impact on crime and disorder issues.

13. CONCLUSIONS

- 13.1 This Service package covers a wide range of topics and service delivery approaches. There is a lack of nationally adopted performance indicators and benchmarking arrangements. The position within individual authorities is little better. The team has led efforts for others to make progress, networks to become established and data to be shared. This will achieve benefits.
- 13.2 Citizen's Panel and Stakeholder surveys have shown strong levels of support for the Service Package. It is a package already extensively using alternative means of delivery to direct provision. The balance is very much towards the support of partner working.

14. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS

- 14.1 As a member of the Self Assessment Team, the Portfolio holder supports the outcome of the Review.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 That the Improvement Plan for the Recreation Development Best Value Review package, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved
- 15.2 That those actions not requiring additional resources be implemented in accordance with the timetable.
- 15.3 That those actions requiring additional resources either be met by efficiency savings, or are not implemented until sufficient budgetary provision is provided.

For further information please contact:

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Background Papers:
Review Plan
Report to CMT

[j:l:m:cabinet:2004:01:recdvlp]

NFDC RECREATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

RECREATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN: 2003 – 2008

PLAN PROGRESS AS AT : 20/11/03

TERMS IN THE SCHEDULE:

CABE	Commission for the Built Environment	MD	Martin Devine, Assistant Director Leisure
CAN	Community Action Network – support networks for the Local Strategic Partnership	CFNF	Community First, New Forest
DL	Dye Lockyer	NW	Neil Williamson, Team Leader PDI section, Planning
HOF	Heart of the Forest NFDC Corporate Plan	PDG	Planning Development Grant
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	SLA	Service Level Agreement
		Team	Recreation Development Team

1.IMPROVEMENT AREA: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
1.1	Create a facilities strategic plan to meet the requirements of PPG 17; leisure planning and links to the corporate strategy [CHALLENGE]	Bid to CABE (unsuccessful) PDI section brief a consultant. In leisure work programme.	Assess the implications of the Planning Green Paper Review outcome of consultants work. Include leads from "Making the Case for Play" and "Every Child Matters".	Outcome against Brief The plan engages stakeholders and meets guidance	03/2004 03/2005	NW / MD	Time. PDG.
1.2	Creation of more telling links to Corporate direction [CHALLENGE]	Respond to consultation version of HOF.	Continue to influence HOF to be more useful in establishing policy and steering direction	Reply. Links between levels of policy.	06/2004	MD	
1.3	Contribute to work through the Local Strategic Partnership in order to create an agreed basis for collecting and using community information. [CHALLENGE]	Issue of data protocol introduced at LSP agenda. Active lead in Leisure and Tourism CANs. Convenor for Children and Young People CAN for draft strategy input	Work to create operational arrangements for CANS. Data sharing protocol needed.	Signed up membership active in the Community Plan. Clear approach to data management	04/2005		Time Bid for data ?
1.4	Make more effort to ensure key stakeholders are aware of policy documents [CONSULT]	No action yet	Include in Communication Plan	Increased awareness at next survey	03/2005 and annually	Team	Time

1. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES contd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
1.5	Utilise the Cultural Strategy as a means to communicate with stakeholders and help the revision of service plans. [CONSULT]	Initial consultation approved and LSP agreed process. Leisure Service Plan in draft	Sign off Service Plan. Produce time line for Cultural Strategy production.	Cultural strategy exists and meet guidance Service Plans exist and meet guidance	12/2004 03/2004	MD Team	Print Budget for both
1.6	The need for a more cohesive framework for corporate and service planning [OPERATIONS]	Input to corporate review	Assist in final drafting of guidance and final Service Plan.	Framework in place	02/2004	MD	Time
1.7	Arts and Heritage provision – affirmation of direction [CHALLENGE]	Raised need for review. Held 2 workshops Alerted sector Review Panel held.		Stakeholder reaction to Service Plan and any related plans	Done	MD	
1.8	Increased member involvement in direction setting [CHALLENGE]	Past inclusion in plan preparation	Take to a new level with a deeper and continuing involvement. Consider external inputs at the same time.	Use Review Panel to develop ideas Survey of member satisfaction.	Annual 11/2004	MD	Time
1.9	New policy :Adoption of key principles for operation of the team and grant aid policy. [CHALLENGE]	Principles in Service Plan. NFDC grants now in Leisure Portfolio	Complete Present the issues to the decision making process	Adopted by Members. New guidance clear and reflects principles	Done 04/04	MD MD	

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.1	Explore the role of Trusts in the delivery of services [CHALLENGE]	Initial contact with arts trusts	Assess the practice of using an arts trust as a means of delivery	Review paper	08/2005	MD	Time & travel cost
2.2	Communication with stakeholders for information and awareness. [CONSULT]	Created initial list of possibilities and sought comment on them: Exhibitions; newsletter; media contacts,	Establish team identity. Adopt principles Implement list of possibilities	All items implemented. Outcomes reflect survey information (Citizens' Panel)	12/2004 09/2005	Team	Time
2.3	Ensure the assessment of the role of locality based workers [CONSULT]	Raised internally. Include as a CPA / Local Strategic Partnership item		Issue assessed	Done	MD	None at this time
2.4	Make information on services more widely available [CONSULT]	Specific website for disabled people	Need to re- establish the youth web site with its particular identity. Clearer links with tourism information. Ensure information is available in a range of outlets.	Outcomes reflect survey information. Usage by target stakeholders.	09/2005	Team	Budget for www May need more later
2.5	Ensure leader training and volunteer development is maintained and of consistent standard [CHALLENGE+SURVEY + SUSTAINABILITY]	Programmes well established in some areas. Identify role of CFNF	Identify the training elements of all programmes so progress is clear.	Training reference in all programmes Monitor NCFE SLA	03/2004 and annually	Team	Current project budgets

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.6	The Council should be able to show a coherent approach to youth issues. The team can contribute to this. [CONSULT]	Begun with a Service Agreement with the Youth Service. Set up joint team meet. Prompted corporate discussion	Assist in the formulation of the scoping of the corporately cast review.	Skateholders signed up to scoping Evidence of coherent approach	08/2004 03/2007	MD	Time May need bid.
2.7	Fostering the arts and heritage sector outside of the key partners [CONSULT]	Circulated contact details amongst individuals / organisations wishing to network	Assist with training and development in marketing /sales / promotion. Assessment of means to assist with shared equipment e.g. display boards. Cultural Tourism initiative.	Reflect in revised arts plan Programme in place. Programme	03/2007 03/2007 08/2005	MD MD MD	Time Budget
2.8	Performance indicators [CHALLENGE]	Devised interim performance measures Established initial benchmarking arrangements and encouraged others to begin to develop	Create a comprehensive set of indicators	Full set of indicators for all strands of the service	03/2005	Team	Time
2.9	Involvement of Town and Parish Councils [CONSULT]	No action yet	In consultation devise a means of maintaining contact	Agreed action in place	On going	Team	Time

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.10	The relationship with Council members needs development [OPERATION]	Initial discussion with the Portfolio holder and Leisure Review Panel. Survey of members. Leisure Panel agreed work methods and programme.	Reflect annually	Survey response results over time and work plan	11/2004	Team	Time
2.11	Agreements with key partners clear on requirements [CONSULT]	Drafted revision for Arts partners	Finalise arts agreements and devise programme for all agreements including possible district- wide with identified agencies e.g. HWT	Arts finalised Remainder	09/2004 09/2006	MD	
2.12	Clearer relationship to Recreation Centres [SUSTAINABILITY]	Child protection training integrated. Child care approach agreed. Youth outreach programme integrated.	Health prescriptions work to be more integrated Extend to other partners, especially sports	Unified health "offer" with centres Key arts partners	03/2005 03/2006	Team	Budget
2.13	Improved sustainability practice by partners [SUSTAINABILITY]	Green purchasing introduced to some	Green purchasing principles adopted. Integrate to grant scheme	All key partners adopt	03/2007	Team LOG	Time
2.14	Community profiles should be created and used to inform activity [SUSTAINABILITY]	Assembled population data	Influence the creation of an LSP focus to include: health, crime, inclusion and other data	Comprehensive database	03/2007	Team	Time ? ITC bid

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.15	Create more active links with environmental networks [SUSTAINABILITY]	Initial idea mooted	Approach selected key organisations with community links	HWT involved	12/2006	MD	Min
2.16	Make more effort to reduce the use of the car in respect of the team's programme [SUSTAINABILITY]	Started to moot idea of green travel plans with partners.	Green travel plans for relevant partners. Partners to encourage non-car travel to venues / programmes.	In appropriate agreements. In all promotional material	03/2007 03/2007	Team	Print?
2.17	Make better links with the Business Forum [SUSTAINABILITY]	Initial approach to Economic Development Officer	Present information to Forum re: child care	Inclusion in Economic Development Strategy.	03/2005	DL	Budget
2.18	Consider greater emphasis on biodiversity / naturalistic approaches to management of open space [SUSTAINABILITY]	Approached HWT informally re: possible future arrangements	Formal consideration of the issue at a site and management level	Arrangements agreed. Audit Re-assessment	12/2004 03/2005 03/2010	MD	Not known
2.19	Find a means for the greater involvement of partner agencies and stakeholders in plan and activity development [CONSULT]	Activity in some plans eg Play Learn Grow Establishing forms of working that fits the LSP and its support networks. Input to cross – service working in NFDC	Continue to re-inforce and use additional methods for preparation of team plans. Influence future mechanisms to improve working across community interests in NFDC	Evidence of mechanisms in place. Stakeholder survey	12/2004 09/2005	MD Team	

3. COST EFFICIENCY

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
3.1	Grant aid administration, especially for smaller grants [CONSULT]	No action yet	Revise process. Use ICT where possible	Process in place Customer satisfaction survey	06/2004 18/2005	Team	? ICT? Print
3.2	Performance indicators to integrate with Service delivery[COMPARE]	Devised interim performance measures to offer to potential partners. Encouraged others to begin to develop	Create a comprehensive set of indicators	Full set of indicators for all strands of the service	03/2005	Team	Time. Travel costs
3.3	Use best practice that is evidenced from benchmarking [OPERATION+ CHALLENGE + COMPARE]	Started PI collection.	Arrange visits to best practice agencies.	Adoption of improved practice in revised SIP	04/2005 and annually	Team	Travel cost. ? future needs?
3.4	Seek further opportunities to extend partnership income [OPS AND CHALL]	Arrangements achieved in countryside and Branch Out, Sure Start	Include in partner Agreement discussions	Equivalent of 2% pa of current key partner investment	04/2008 with annual review	Team	
3.5	Greater use of business sponsorship [OPS]	Some support for projects in the past	Secure more support	Increase level of support to match current fee levels by end of plan.	04/2008 with annual review	Team	

4. QUALITY

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
4.1	Consistent data gathering on the views of service users. [CONSULT]	Established in elements of the team.	Make arrangements consistent across the team and with key partners	Agreed method - in house - partners	09/2004 09/2005	Team	Time
4.2	Regular collection of satisfaction data from stakeholders [CONSULT]	Started with this consultation plan for the Review	Programme a second and third consultation plan in the five year programme	Implement plan	09/2006 09/2008	Team	Time
4.3	Address employee issues over work conditions and practices [OPERATION + CONSULT]	Identified the issues New office furniture and ICT in place.	Input to corporate review of work / life balance.	Team view as improved at PDI Employee survey	02/2004 06/2005	Team	Office budget

5. FAIR ACCESS

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
5.1	Inclusion of clear diversity and equal opportunities statements in all plans [SUSTAINABILITY]	Highlighted the issue. Explored links to corporate work	Devise elements for inclusion. Training programme Partner involvement	Inclusion in text All team. Inclusion in business plans.	03/2004 12/2004 05/2006	Team	Time
5.2	Assessment of the accessibility of the teams work using a structured audit method	Identified possible audit method	Undertake audit	Audit report. Stakeholder survey.	09/2004 09/2004	Team	Time

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