Welcome to our first Durham County Council Sport and Leisure Service Strategy which aims to set out to clearly define how our sport and leisure service will evolve over the next three years. It has been developed within the context of the Council and its partners being committed to improving the health, well being and aspirations of our residents within an environment of change and financial constraint.

It combines statistical information (local and national), research and consultation to establish the context and a starting point from which we can develop the sport and leisure offer to the county’s communities.

Within the framework of the wider aims and aspirations of Durham County Council, it focuses on a single aim to increase participation, which is seen as a pre-condition of sport and leisure’s contribution to those aspirations.

As a whole it provides an essential background for officers, members and stakeholders, under which all actions can be placed and decisions can be made.

Bob Young, Portfolio Holder
Sport and Leisure
Contents

1 Introduction
2 A Framework for Sport and Leisure Services
3 Service Objectives
4 Strategic Context
5 Service Inputs
6 Service Outputs
7 Conclusion
8 Action Plan
Introduction

Welcome to the first Durham County Council Sport and Leisure Strategy.

The strategy focuses on the future provision of the Council’s sport and leisure activities.
Purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy aims to provide an essential background to future discussion and decisions by the authority in relation to a number of service areas including:

- Indoor sport and leisure facilities.
- Sport and leisure development.
- Outdoor sport and leisure.
- Countryside management.

There are a number of key drivers which make this an appropriate time to review the Sport and Leisure Service. This includes:

- The emerging strength of Durham County Council as a unitary authority.
- The imminent hosting of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- The new, more clearly defined, regional and national sport and physical activity policy context.
- The need to attend to the prevailing economic climate.

The strategy sets out to clearly define how the Sport and Leisure Service will move forward over the next three years. It provides a starting point from which the authority can develop its sport and leisure offer to the community and put in context the continued development of the service within a framework of the authority’s wider aims and aspirations. The strategy sets out the essential background against which future officer, member and wider stakeholder decisions can be made. It defines the links and relationships to key partners both within and beyond the authority. The opportunities offered by sport and leisure help to deliver on the priorities outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2030. Sport and leisure cuts across a number of agendas, such as health, regeneration and education, and is therefore key in achieving performance targets and delivering against the Durham Partnership agendas. Overall this strategy aims to support and help the council meet its vision to achieve an Altogether Better Durham.

The strategy intends to:

- Raise the profile of sport and leisure as a significant contributor to realising the County’s wider aspirations.
- Provide a framework through which key objectives can be identified and delivery coordinated.
- Ensure coordination of the various internal and external partners in delivering sport and leisure related services.
- Determine targets for future sport and leisure investment.
- Identify required resources and potential sources of funds.
- Support the development of more detailed individual service plans.
A Framework for Sport & Leisure Services
There is a need to identify clear aims and outcomes for the service in order to create a platform to the achievement of corporate objectives. The strategy focuses on a single aim to increase participation, as this is seen as a pre-condition of sport and leisure’s contribution to the wider corporate outcomes and under which all actions can be situated. With participation levels in sport and physical activity across the county below the national average, the need to increase and sustain participation levels is seen as a key challenge for County Durham.

Figure 1 below sets out the relationship between the intended outcomes (corporate objectives) the service aim, objectives, inputs and outputs. In structuring the strategy in this way the service will be able to evidence both its value for money and evaluate:

- How well priorities express community need and aspiration?
- How well outcomes and improvement are being delivered?
- What the prospects of future improvement are?

**Figure 1. Sport and Leisure Strategic Framework**
**Contribution to Corporate Objectives**

The strategy is clearly aligned to the Council’s overall aims and objectives, ensuring that service outputs are prioritised against the Council’s key priorities and outcomes. The strategy links to these priorities in the following way:

**Altogether Healthier:** In County Durham the health of our population falls behind that of England as a whole. People in County Durham tend to have unhealthier lifestyles which lead to poor health outcomes and lower life expectancy than people living in some other parts of the country. We know that there is a recognised link between poor health and physical inactivity. Within County Durham, participation rates in sport and physical activity are well below the national average. This strategy focuses on increasing participation in sport and physical activity as the overall aim of the service. The target is to increase participation in sport and physical activity by 2% over the strategy period.

**Altogether Wealthier:** The council has made economic regeneration its main priority and the strategy reflects Sport and Leisure Services’ contribution towards this. Raising the profile or market placement of County Durham through the provision of events and activity at a regional, national and international level, raising vocational attainment and developing a diverse and enticing sport and leisure environment are but a few of the ways that can attract visitors and investment to establish a growth in economic activity. Sport and Physical Activity are part of a strong cultural offer reflected in an emerging Cultural Strategy and associated working group to drive Durham forward.

**Altogether Better for Children and Young People:** Outside of Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPs), no other service will have as much contact with this priority group. The service and strategy will embrace the Every Child Matters agenda, place children and young people at the core of our activities and have specific targets relating to their participation within and beyond the school setting. Out of 1139 young people (aged 10-25) surveyed, the top two priorities for positive activities as part of the, ‘Places to go, things to do’ survey, were sport and physical activity.

**Altogether Greener:** Sport and Leisure Services is a significant energy user through its building stock and has responsibility for a large estate of outdoor environments and habitats including playing pitches, open countryside and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The service must demonstrate responsible management and enhancements in biodiversity of all these areas. County Durham can also boast some of the finest countryside in the UK. The strategy clearly defines how the service will encourage residents and visitors to embrace the leisure opportunities that exist in our natural environments in a sustainable and affordable manner.

**Altogether Safer:** It is widely recognised that Sport and Leisure Services can play a key role in community cohesion and the provision of diversionary activities. By aiming to be of high quality, fully inclusive and reaching all communities, the service is supporting improved safety for our residents. The strategy reflects a partnership approach engaging with other service areas and Area Action Partnerships.

**Altogether Better Council:** As the council continues to transform into an effective Unitary organisation, it is important that areas of former best practice are rolled out county-wide in order to drive forward high standards that are affordable and achievable. The strategy clearly identifies how we will move forward with this process by placing harmonisation and value for money at the heart of the decision making process.

Specific targets will also be developed around each of these priorities.
**Key challenges for the Service**

There are a number of key challenges currently facing the service which this strategy is looking to address, namely:

- Defining the nature, scope and priority of the Sport and Leisure Service.
- Determining Sport and Leisure Services’ contribution to corporate priorities.
- Establishing equality and equity of provision across the County.
- Addressing the services top quartile spending status.
- Attending to the county’s facility stock to both reduce its liabilities and increase its effectiveness.
- Determining service standards for quality and performance.
- Establishing a clear and effective delivery system for sport and leisure that engages all stakeholders and defines delivery models.

This strategy sets out how we intend to address these challenges over the next three years.

**Service Aim: Altogether Better Participation**

It is important that the service retains a clear focus on what it wishes to achieve. In this sense participation is seen as the pre-condition to achieving the wider social and economic impacts to which the authority aspires. By focusing on participation the service will be better placed to transform the lives of County Durham residents.

The aim of the strategy is therefore to:

*Transform the lives of individuals and communities through their participation in a wide and inclusive range of sport and leisure activities that provide positive life experiences and opportunities.*

In order to achieve the aim of the strategy the following objectives have been developed to help amend the Service focus on the building blocks to success:

- **Altogether Better: Participation Levels.**
- **Altogether Better: Prosperity from Sport and Leisure Related Economic Activity.**
- **Altogether Better: Equality of Participation.**
- **Altogether Better: Sustainable Participation.**
- **Altogether Better: Community Participation.**

In achieving the above objectives, the service will contribute to all six of the corporate objectives.
Strategic Context:
Participation levels

County Durham is amongst the most deprived unitary authorities nationally, particularly in relation to health and employment. Rates of obesity are rising in both children and adults and are higher in County Durham than the national average, with areas such as the former districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley being significantly higher. Death from circulatory diseases, heart diseases, stroke and cancers occur across the county at a younger age than the national average.

County Durham has some of the lowest sport and physical activity participation levels in the country, which is reflected in the wide range of health inequalities within the population.

The direct costs of physical inactivity to NHS County Durham are estimated at £8.3m per annum compared to an average PCT cost across the country of £5m per annum (based on 2006/07 data). Increasing participation levels in physical activity by 10% could save 6,000 lives and £500 million per year.

The most detailed and locally applicable data available on physical activity participation levels is derived from the national Active People Survey. The survey, which was undertaken by Sport England in 2005/06 (APS1) and repeated in 2007/08 (APS2) and 2008/09 (APS3), captures data relating to participation levels in sport and physical activity that can be analysed at a local level. (Note this survey took place before local government organisation).

The number of adults in England who participate in sport and physical activity at least three times a week has reached 6.93 million, an average of 21.6%. Nationally, participation rates have risen however results of the Active People Survey carried out between 05/06 and 08/09 show that there has been no significant improvement in the County Durham area.

County Durham’s participation rate is in line with the national average; however, there is a disparity across the former district areas. The map below shows the varying level of participation in physical activity across the region and the county.

The higher rates of participation (i.e. the ‘hot spots’) are shown in the darker colours and the lower rates of participation (i.e. the ‘cold spots’) shown in lighter blue colours.

This map shows that the former district of Easington has the lowest participation rates in the North East whilst Durham City has the highest. This physical activity profile mirrors the deprivation profile within the county (i.e. those areas with lowest physical activity levels are also those with multiple deprivation issues).

As is the national trend, male participation in County Durham has increased but participation among females has decreased. Although overall participation in adults’ age groups 16-34 and 35-54 has increased; there has been a decrease nationally in the 55 plus age group. In line with the rest of the country, the county’s age distribution is top heavy in this category with the older person dependency ratio estimated to double over the next 25 years, placing increasing pressure on health and social care budgets.
In addition to participation rates, the Active People data also highlights below national average achievement in areas which support and link to increased participation. The data indicates that County Durham is below national average in the percentage of adults who have enjoyed tuition which is often a critical component to confident participation. Fewer adults in County Durham engage with regular competitive opportunities or are members of sports clubs, which often provide positive opportunities for social interaction and group belonging, which can increase an individual’s motivation or commitment to participate regularly.

The volunteering rates amongst residents are also predominantly below average. It is well recognised that volunteering in England attributes an equivalent of over 80,000 employees each year into sports participation, and can be viewed as a cornerstone of community sport within England, without which far fewer opportunities would exist to encourage residents to participate. Increasing volunteering is viewed as positive step to support increased participation.

Together, the above statistics illustrate a challenging picture to tackle, which Durham County Council Sport and Leisure Service undoubtedly has a strong role to play both directly and in partnership.
In addition to participation rates, the Active People data also highlights below national average achievement in areas which support and link to increased participation. The data indicates that County Durham is below national average in the percentage of adults who have enjoyed tuition which is often a critical component to confident participation. Fewer adults in County Durham engage with regular competitive opportunities or are members of sports clubs, which often provide positive opportunities for social interaction and group belonging, which can increase an individual’s motivation or commitment to participate regularly.

The volunteering rates amongst residents are also predominantly below average. It is well recognised that volunteering in England contributes an equivalent of over 80,000 employees each year into sports participation, and can be viewed as a cornerstone of community sport within the country, without which far fewer opportunities would exist to encourage residents to participate. Increasing volunteering is viewed as a positive step to support increased participation.

Together the above statistics illustrate a challenging picture within which Durham County Council Sport and Leisure Service undoubtedly has a strong role to play both directly and in partnership.

**What are our partners telling us:**

- **The Government**
  ‘Be Active and Be Healthy’ (HM Govt, 2009) recognises the significance of ensuring a range of ‘starter’ options in physical activity is available, attractive and accessible. These are often the platform for people to become involved in more structured activity, which is seen as a key contributor to motivating and supporting people to participate regularly.

- **Sport England**
  Sport England’s strategy (2008-2011), recognises and seeks to ensure that we not only encourage and attract newcomers to sporting activity, but create a world class community sport system which helps sustain participation and also provides opportunities to excel.

- **County Durham Sport**
  During 2009/10 County Durham Sport, Durham County Council, NHS County Durham and Darlington, together with key local stakeholders developed and jointly adopted a Physical Activity Strategy. This strategy identified improved participation levels as a key aim due to the wider health benefits that improved participation brings.

**Barriers**

National research by Sport England combined with local consultation during the development of the Durham County Physical Activity Strategy has identified the main barriers to participation in sport and physical activity as:

- Lack of Awareness of what is Available/Appropriate.
- Time.
- Lack of Role Models.
- Low Aspirations.
- Need for More Childcare.
- Suitability of Offer.
- Club Capacity.
- Image/Perceptions.
- Health (or Perception of Health).
- Transport.
- Competing Priorities.
- Cost.
Whilst there will always be a proportion of residents who will remain uninterested in being physically active, the Sport & Leisure Service will work with its partners to address the issues where possible in order to remove these barriers. We now have a real opportunity for the county to develop a coordinated and innovative delivery system from foundation exercise to club participation and excellence.

Indeed, one key purpose of the County Durham Physical Activity Strategy produced in February 2010, is to seek to increase coordination between organisations, including Durham County Council’s Sport & Leisure Service contribution, in order to increase levels of physical activity.

The County Durham Physical Activity Strategy identifies a number of issues in relation to the coordination, development, marketing, delivery and funding of physical activity at a county level, which partners should work on improving.

The Sport and Leisure Service’ Strategy and more detailed service plans will consider the context, and national and local research to date, to address barriers and increase participation amongst residents.

**Rising to the Challenge**

- **Improving Participation Levels**

It is important to recognise that the breadth of participation in physical activity extends from everyday activity such as gardening and walking, all the way through to sport such as swimming, regular cycling, exercise fitness and structured forms of competitive sport and pursuits.

Durham County Council’s Sport and Leisure Services are therefore uniquely placed to take on the challenge through the breadth of services offered, from maintaining and developing the County’s countryside and outdoor sports facilities, to provision of leisure facilities and enabling sports clubs to thrive. Tackling participation in sport and physical activity should fully embrace the diversity of services possible from the county’s social capital, built and natural resource, helping to provide an integrated solution to a multi-faceted challenge.

- **Responding to the Strategic Context**

  In acknowledging this context, the challenge to the Sport and Leisure Service and to its partners is to:
  - Assist people to aspire to be healthy.
  - Encourage the community to ‘choose’ to spend their leisure time being active rather than opting for sedentary pastimes.
  - Recognise that at different life stages, drop out occurs, so we need to challenge social and lifestyle habits.
  - Ensure opportunities for participation are accessible, affordable and relevant to communities.
  - Recognise that sustained success relies upon a multi-partner delivery system to ensure countywide opportunities exist to start, sustain participation and excel.

Addressing these challenges will not necessarily mean always increasing the level of provision available. The greater task is to make people more aware of the benefits of participation and the opportunities that are available to participate and to distribute opportunities wisely to enhance access. Providing high quality services and opportunities will also encourage more people to start and sustain their participation.
Service Objectives

This section sets out the detail with regards to each service objective. It details why we want to do it and the policy, focusing on the direction of travel for the next three years.
Why we want to do it:
Informing choice and promoting activity is a key focus of the service. Increasing participation, in all forms of leisure from allotment tending to performance sport, will contribute to addressing issues of health, economic prosperity and community cohesion as well as offering residents the opportunity to enjoy themselves.

What we aim to do:

Raise awareness of the opportunities and benefits of participation in sport and leisure activities: Sport and Leisure Services has a role to play in inspiring and educating on this front.

Offer a comprehensive range of entry level activities and develop Pathways: Attracting new participants will rely on providing an appropriate range of entry level activities that will motivate and encourage people to take part. The service and partners must ensure that the programmes it provides are accessible to those new to taking part and that there are clear pathways for progression. Such programmes need to be sensitive to market trends and demographics such as serving the ageing population.

Promote workplace opportunities: The workplace is an ideal setting for encouraging participation and provides benefits to employers by reducing absenteeism and developing a more motivated and healthier workforce. We wish to develop employee initiatives with a range of organisations to increase participation and, wherever possible, provide and promote opportunities to travel to and from the workplace by walking and cycling.

Strengthen the delivery system: We know that to grow and sustain levels of participation, a delivery system or framework will be vital. Whilst such a system will need to embrace a wide range of partners, the service has a crucial role to play in defining, developing and maintaining such a framework. The development of the Community Sport’s Network is essential to growing capacity and sustaining participation into all corners of the County. Specifically, the service will seek to provide increased support to voluntary clubs.

Deliver an Olympic participation legacy: The Olympic and Paralympic Games offer a unique opportunity to encourage participation and Sport and Leisure Services will harness the games to inspire, celebrate and promote excellence in all we do.

Provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities: An adequate and well trained volunteer workforce is vital to sustaining participation opportunities. As a county we need to build a volunteering culture and provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities. In particular, we need to build skills and capacity within communities enabling residents to directly deliver and support local sport and leisure activity.

Provide all children and young people with the opportunity to access five hours of high quality PE and sport: The service will develop mechanisms and structures with Children and Young People Services to encourage participation in PE, school sport, extended activities and clubs.
**Altogether Better:**
Prosperity from sport and leisure related economic activity.

### Why we want to do it:

The council has made economic regeneration its main priority and it is important that Sport and Leisure Services contribute towards this aim. Raising the profile or market placement of County Durham through the provision of events, raising vocational attainment and developing a diverse and enticing sport and leisure environment are just a few of the ways that we can attract visitors and investment to establish a growth in economic activity and add to the cultural offer.

### What we aim to do:

**Nurturing employment and economic output:** Sport and leisure is a growth sector and a significant employer within the county. Sport and Leisure Services will work closely with partners to ensure the sector has robust and sustainable workforce development plans for all skills within the sector at both a professional and volunteer level.

**Generating investment and regeneration:** Sport and leisure facilities can form the seeds of wider investment and regeneration, whether they are play areas on a local level, the development of major public sport and leisure buildings and facilities or the attraction of private investment into commercial attractions. Sport and Leisure Services will actively support and develop these initiatives both directly and through partners.

**Developing place marketing:** The Durham County Council’s sport and leisure offer can make a significant contribution to the attractiveness of the area attracting new residents, employers, investors and visitors. The service will shape its facility stock, countryside estate and events to maximise desirability of the county.

**Supporting the professional games:** Professional sport as a spectator driven activity has the capacity to generate significant economic activity through employment, ticket sales and merchandise together with secondary spend associated with food, drink and accommodation. Durham Cricket Club is a major asset to the County – supporting its physical and social development and the development of other professional games across the county will form part of the work of the Sport and Leisure Service.

**Developing a major events programme:** The hosting of major events, both spectator and participation driven, can generate significant economic activity. The County currently has a weak events programme and the service will seek to address this by developing resources and a programme to maximise economic impact and tourism particularly in rural areas.
**Why we want to do it:**

Removing disadvantage and ensuring fair and equal opportunity is a theme that runs through the council’s objectives. The distribution of services inherited from the former districts together with the wide variation in health, disadvantage and rurality make this a particular challenge to the service.

The unitary bid makes clear that services will be delivered consistently and that all residents will have an equal entitlement to services. This is a significant challenge to Sport and Leisure Services. As a non statutory service each former council developed services in response to local needs against a background of their own priorities and available resources. This has left a legacy of significant variations in service levels and standards across the county. It will be necessary to address the reapportionment of resources across both geographical and service areas.

**What we aim to do:**

**Reducing risk factors for health:** There is clear evidence that participation in physical activity can have a positive effect on both mental and physical health. In particular levels of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes are particularly high in the county. Participation in a physical activity can significantly reduce the risks for both existing sufferers and those most vulnerable. The strategy recognises the important role that sport and leisure activity can play in addressing health inequalities and by working with other partners will undertake to target those most a risk. Given the aging population a preventative approach to the above is important.

**Providing a fair and equitable distribution of opportunities and facilities:** The strategy takes account of the need to address the current uneven supply of opportunities across the county. Former districts made variable commitments to both nature and scope of services they provided. The strategy undertakes to address this in order to provide a more consistent core service offer.

**Remove disadvantage in the opportunity to access sport and leisure opportunities:** Although the strategy acknowledges the need to provide a fair and consistent core service offer, it also recognises that there are a number of disadvantaged individuals and groups, who due to their circumstances will not be best served through this approach. The strategy supports an increased service offer to target and encourage such groups, in particular:

- Those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- Those affected by physical and mental health issues.
- Those suffering from a disability.
- Women and girls.
- Adult and young carers.
- Looked after Children.
- Ethnic minorities.
Why we want to do it:

As an authority and service we take seriously our responsibilities in delivering our activities in a sustainable and green manner. Sport and Leisure Services currently run and manage some of the authority’s most energy-hungry buildings. In particular our swimming pool stock contributes to making us responsible for over 20% of the council’s CO2 emissions. In addition our services encourage over eight million visits a year; many by car. In contrast, we are also responsible for some of the most outstanding outdoor environments in the County, including a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

What we aim to do:

Enhance, conserve and maximise the built and natural environment to create a sense of place: The strategy recognises that Sport and Leisure Services manage and have responsibility for a large stock of both built and natural environments. It further recognises that these are often key elements in defining the landscape and that as such the service has a responsibility to ensure that they are enhanced, conserved and maximised to enhance biodiversity in a way that makes a significant positive contribution to the county.

Provide increased opportunities for green and sustainable travel to sport and leisure opportunities: Whilst the strategy encourages greater use of sport and leisure sites, at the same time, it also acknowledges that with over eight million visits to directly provided sites this could have a detrimental effect on the environment. The strategy therefore accepts the need to take positive actions to mitigate the impact of travel and to encourage green travel and properly manage and promote the extensive Railway Path network that offers considerable opportunities for both sustainable commuting and recreation.

Reduce the level of carbon emission resulting from sport and leisure activity: Despite representing less than 1.5% of the council’s overall revenue spend Sport and Leisure Services are responsible for over 20% of Durham County Council’s carbon emissions. The provision of pools and leisure centres being the main contributor. The strategy aspires to reduce this to a more proportionate level.

Increase use of the outdoor environment for sport and leisure activities: Raising participation in sport and physical activity should celebrate Durham’s diverse outdoor environment. Green exercise and community participation will form an increasing area of work.

Ensure a flourishing neighbourhood based club, group and society infrastructure capable of sustaining itself in the future: Much participation does not rely on extensive or large scale built infrastructure – instead it relies upon vibrant and active social networks, often making use of either the natural environment or co-located and community based spaces. Increased effort should go towards supporting this infrastructure which is more likely to support lifelong opportunities in our communities. Such opportunities also often maximise the skills and strengths of our voluntary and community sector.
Why we want to do it:

As we shape and form our sport and leisure offer we are keen to ensure that the people of County Durham have a clear and strong voice. We will develop a delivery system that engages with all of our partners and allows people to have a real influence over the nature of services we provide.

What we aim to do:

Provide a delivery system for sport and leisure that engages communities: Increasing and sustaining participation in County Durham relies upon a wide range of partners. Acknowledging and celebrating the strengths and diversity of different delivery partners will help to engage with different communities. Working closely with the Community Sport Networks (CSNs) and Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) will be key to engaging with local communities and ensuring that activities and services are reflective of local needs.

Increase community satisfaction across all sport and leisure activities: High quality experiences go a long way to ensuring sustained participation. Satisfaction in participation relies upon a range of factors including suitable facilities but more so satisfaction often relies upon the quality of the people and the welcome received, whether in a public, private or voluntary setting.

Engender partnership working: Resources for sport and physical activity are rarely sufficient to meet aspirations and opportunity. Sharing skills, knowledge, ideas and facilities is essential to increasing participation. Partnership working enables different strengths to combine to inspire and reach more people to ‘get active’ and to support more participants, coaches, volunteers and officials to start and sustain their participation.

Reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour: Sport and physical activity attracts and reaches young people, who may not otherwise be engaged in formal settings. It has the power to encourage self discipline, educate and support young people who otherwise feel marginalised by society. ‘Places to go, things to do’ strategy illustrates that positive activities such as sport and leisure help many young people develop a sense of self-worth, resulting in a pride in their community and a willingness to be a responsible part of it. Working in partnership with the police, youth offending service and children services –sport and leisure can play a key role but such work must be planned and sustained rather than reactive.

Strengthen community cohesion and capacity: Sport and physical activity are an international language, which welcomes everyone on an equal footing regardless of age, ability, race or religion. It has the power to bring communities together when too often, other aspects of community life and politics create division. We will encourage a stronger and more cohesive community which enjoys watching and playing sport and physical activity together and provides a friendlier place to live. We will also help to strengthen capacity within communities through up skilling of local residents to ensure sustainability of programmes and activities.
Service Inputs
Achieving our aim

Whilst the previous section sets out the aims and aspirations of the Sport and Leisure Service, consideration now needs to be given to resource inputs that can be deployed in order to realise them. This section sets out the nature and scope of service inputs and makes clear how these are likely to change in order to achieve the strategy’s aims.

The strategy recognises that overall resources are likely to decline over the strategy period. The anticipated reduction in public spending whilst being significant to the authority overall, when translated into a sport and leisure context (due mainly to its non-statutory standing) is anticipated to be even greater. The strategy recognises the pending economic climate and assumes a significant reduction in resources. Whilst recognising a decline in overall resource, the strategy gives a clear view on how the available resources will be deployed across the service’s four core areas:

The following outlines the services four core areas and main areas of service activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities</th>
<th>Sport and Leisure Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport and leisure centres:</td>
<td>Voluntary sports club development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 facilities internally managed</td>
<td>Health intervention programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 managed by external organisations</td>
<td>Coach and volunteer development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Sport &amp; Leisure</strong></td>
<td>Holiday activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing pitches</td>
<td>Workforce development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play areas</td>
<td>Partnerships and community engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments - Over 100 sites, with over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 plots across the County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Open Spaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events - Organising sport &amp; leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>events and providing an advisory role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to other services regarding event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Countryside**

- Countryside services:
- 45 areas of nature conservation importance
- 150 km of railway paths
- Three Country Parks
- 30 Picnic Areas
Key Service Links

It is important to recognise where sport and leisure are not the strategic lead. That said the service will ensure that where appropriate a seamless relationship exists between service groupings and partners, and a joined up response to the resident is delivered.

Links to those services, internally and externally that are considered beyond the scope of the sport and leisure strategy need to be clearly articulated. The table below show the links across a number of key council services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouping</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Sport and Leisure Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults, Wellbeing and Health</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Health Improvement Plan 2010 - 2013</td>
<td>Physical activity as an influence on a range of health issues, Priority Area 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Services</td>
<td>Cultural Strategy 2009 - 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>Culture 2013, Facility management, events, dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Young People Services (CYPS)</td>
<td>Achivement</td>
<td>CYPS and Sport Development Plan</td>
<td>Physical Education and School Sport, Club links, Competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Services</td>
<td>Places to Go, Things to Do</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport as a diversionary activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Schools for the Future</td>
<td>Durham BSF Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-location of sport and leisure provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>City of Culture 2013 Economic and Regeneration Strategy</td>
<td>Sport as a provider of economic activity, Durham County Cricket Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recreational use of network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Asset Management</td>
<td>PPG17 – County Durham Open Space, Sport &amp; Recreation Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Playing Pitches, Play Areas, Open Spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to ensure a co-ordinated approach to sport and leisure activity across the county, the strategy recognises the need to work with a wider network of external partners and organisations. The table on page 23 sets out the key relationships with external partners.
Sport & Leisure Resources

In some areas investment is not currently proportional to impact. The strategy period will therefore see a changing emphasis on the resources available due to both the shifting nature of the service’s aims and a change in priorities.

The reduction and redistribution of resources will have a variable impact on the Sport and Leisure Services’ core activities.

The following pages set out how each core function intends to invest its resources by stating ‘what it will do’ to deliver the aims and objectives of the strategy. It will also show the changing proportion of resource it is to receive together with impact on service delivery. In overall terms this means:

- An anticipated reduction in overall resources.
- A significant real term reduction in indoor facility resources.
- Increasing resources allocated to outdoor sport and leisure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/Partner</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Sport and Leisure Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport England</td>
<td>Sport England Strategy for 2008-11</td>
<td>Funding Themes, Data and Information, National Policy interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Governing Bodies of Sport</td>
<td>Whole Sport Plans</td>
<td>Pathway Development, Capital Resources, Club development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham University</td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Sport Facility Development Workforce development Community sport – target groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Sport Trust</td>
<td>Five Hour Offer PE, School Sport and Young People Strategy (PESSYP)</td>
<td>Extending Activities Funding, School Sport Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent public bodies and charities eg Natural England, Age UK etc</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Target groups, use of natural environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Input:** Indoor Sport & Leisure Facilities

**Service Outline:**

The council provides 20 sport and leisure facilities, ranging from small, local community focused centres to facilities with regional appeal. Generally provision reflects population densities, with facilities being located in the towns, as well as the city of Durham. Visitor numbers of 3.75m attend the centres which include 10 swimming pools, 17 gyms, gymnastics and a wide range of other sports.

In addition to the 14 centres that are directly managed, the council also has facilities that are managed on its behalf by a ‘leisure trust’ and a private, national operator.

The County Durham Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment contains a specific section on built facilities. This draws heavily on the findings and analysis contained in the ‘Sub Regional Facilities Strategy’ and identifies the issues and opportunities that relate to indoor facility provision and development:

- There is a shortage of swimming pools across the county.
- The uneven distribution of existing facilities creates gaps in provision particularly in relation to peak time use of sports halls.
- The quality of existing provision is often poor as facilities are generally dated (some 30 to 40 yrs old) which affects demand and leads to users travelling further for better facilities.
- The under use of built facilities during the daytime.
- Accessibility issues particularly for existing school sites.
- The success of ‘volunteer’ gyms in rural areas (e.g. Wellness on wheels)
- The opportunity offered by Building Schools for the Future (BSF) to look more comprehensively at facility provision, accessibility and needs.
- Transport difficulties for getting access to facilities.
- A majority of the sports halls are four court, restricting development of those activities that require larger spaces.
- All facilities are QUEST assessed.
What we will do:

- Develop a transformational project to redefine the facility stock through a range of invest to save initiatives. We will assess and rationalise the number and range of facilities. Evaluation will be made of the existing stock of facilities, its quality and locations and impact within the local community. The facilities exist to sustain and increase participation rates; their location and provision must reflect this.

- Look to deliver high quality sports facilities in conjunction with the council’s school stock.

- Improve the value for money to residents and cost effectiveness of the service to reflect the constraints of the reducing public purse.

- Undertake a management options appraisal to ensure the most effective and efficient method of service delivery and operation. This will provide opportunities for a mixture of public and private partners all contributing to improving participation and performance.

- Improve the consistency of high quality service across the portfolio of facilities. This will be driven by the council’s broader agenda and associated performance framework and systems. Assurance with this will be underpinned using local and national performance indicators and improving QUEST scores and performance reports.

- Provide a dynamic and accessible health and fitness offer to all customers that is based upon high quality gym and studio provision, exciting and innovative programmes and partnership activities and competent, supportive coaching staff.

- Provide a vibrant aquatics programme with lessons and activities for all.

- Improve access and participation via:
  - Targeted activity programmes for specific community groups, in coordination with key partners.
  - Fairer pricing.
  - Better facilities.
  - Better trained employees.
  - Improved marketing.

- Improve customer satisfaction via the attainment of higher service standards.

- Reduce significantly the carbon footprint of the sports and leisure facilities.
## What’s changing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Input as % of spend</th>
<th>Target Input as % of spend</th>
<th>Resource Requirement</th>
<th>Anticipated real term resource available £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Greater emphasis on:

- Co-location and dual use facilities - encouraging a more holistic approach to provision
- Alternative delivery models
- Provision of suitably located, high quality facilities
- Improved work with strategic partners and other facility providers – public, private and voluntary sectors
- Focussed performance management
- Improved quality of service, verified by external awarding bodies
- Focus on core offers including aquatics and health and fitness
- Improving accessibility and equality of opportunity
- Reducing CO2 emissions and improving sustainability
- Communicating with customers effectively
- Use of the outdoor environment

### Less emphasis on:

- Direct delivery
- ‘Typical’ leisure centres
- Non-targeted provision
- Fragmented service provision
**Input:** Sport and Leisure Development

**Service Outline:**

Sport and leisure development seeks to encourage, support and develop a robust and flourishing network of key agencies involved in providing sport and leisure opportunities, throughout the participation pathway.

The service seeks to take a key role in the development of countywide sport and physical activity pathways which provide opportunities for lifelong participation and to help inspire and engage residents of all ages to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to start, sustain and excel in participation.

At a county and regional level, sport and leisure development acts a gateway to the sports specific opportunities afforded by Sport England and National Sports Governing bodies, particularly to support club development, schools and pathways to excellence.

At a local level, the service supports five emerging Community Sports Networks to engage with the full county, encompassing partners from the education sector, community safety sector, community voluntary sector and traditional sport clubs.

It is via this local segment of the delivery system that the service endeavours to engage at a community and neighbourhood level, allowing influence over services and providing strong links into the AAP structures, local health networks and children’s boards, to achieve a shared focus and supporting resource on issues which really matter on a local basis.

The service provides an important connection between Durham County Council’s facility infrastructure and the wealth of partner clubs, schools, voluntary and private sector organisations – by better coordination they will support a more robust delivery system, to increase participation across County Durham.

Beyond developing a multi-partner ‘core offer’, the service also works to maximise funding and align partner expertise to develop targeted services and seek to address the known inequalities in participation levels in sport and physical activity. The service will continue to develop its extensive work with NHS in tackling health inequalities.

Such services often celebrate the potential of sport and physical activity to meet cross cutting targets, from tackling health inequalities and improving community cohesion, to supporting lifelong learning through coaching and volunteering.
What we will do:

- Work with Durham County Council colleagues, NHS County Durham and Durham Health Improvement Team, to establish a shared vision and ‘county-wide model of delivery’ to tackle health inequalities, with the primary aim of improving individual’s health and well-being through physical activity opportunities, lifestyle advice and education.

- Play a lead role in the development of physical activity opportunities and lifestyle advice to Durham County Council employees, in supporting the workforce components of the County Council’s Health Improvement Plan.

- Take a leadership role on a geographical basis to engage with and support the development of five Community Sport and Physical Activity networks countywide, to respond to the needs and aspirations of 14 AAP’s and increase the network of high quality sport and physical activity providers/deliverers.

- Develop consistent county-wide models of working to support the development of high quality clubs, coaches and volunteers which maximise partner and user satisfaction.

- To work with Sport England, National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and countywide partners to establish clear lifelong pathways in nominated priority sports which focus energy and maximise external funding, skills and commitment to County Durham to increase opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.

- To lead on a Durham County Council approach to maximise the inspiration and impact to County Durham residents from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games both during and beyond; to consider the development of a Durham Institute of Sport, to support regional talent with research, facilities and people, to provide the right environment to harness world class performance, coaching and officiating.

- Support the Durham County Leisure Facility transformation by targeting capacity building in areas of need and support sustainable community led spoke sites such as co-located provision, legacy gyms and multi-club environments.

- Work countywide with PE and education providers including further and higher Education, to develop seamless sport and physical activity pathways for young people from education into the community.

- Review resources and our approach towards young people’s play, holiday and diversionary provision. Working with CYPS and partner organisations, seek a model of provision which primarily increases all participation and ensure the approach is appropriate and proportionate offering value for money to residents.

- Improve the focus, quality and consistency of the sport and leisure development service countywide. This will be driven by the council’s performance framework and quality system assurance, underpinned by a robust evidence base, application of local and national measures and by achieving QUEST accreditation.

- Develop a structured sport and leisure workforce development pathway with accredited opportunities for local residents to access the industry. This will include a pathway which maximises national skills funding and encourages a ‘grow your own’ approach to the leisure sector.

- Celebrate success by developing a clear promotional approach to rewarding excellence and commitment to playing, coaching, officiating and sharing good practice.
What’s changing?

Current Input as % of spend | Target Input as % of spend | Resource Requirement | Anticipated real term resource available £
---|---|---|---
13.5% | 15% | | |

Greater emphasis on:
- Enabling rather than direct delivery
- Clearly promoted, core offer in sport and physical activity countywide
- Neighbourhood led programmes from AAP priorities, particularly in deprived and rural areas
- Investment and support to develop capacity amongst voluntary clubs, societies and groups; their programmes, workforce/volunteers and facilities
- Focus sport pathways – providing opportunities for all ages to grow, sustain and excel
- Working in partnership to target health inequalities in a consistent manner countywide
- Supporting pathways for talented and gifted-proportionate opportunities to excel
- More activities for teenagers which have clear exit routes

Less emphasis on:
- Direct delivery and programming, which fails to develop community capacity and sustainability
- Short term programmes which are not linked to a clear pathway for continued participation.
- Specialist cross-cutting programmes of high cost which are not match funded.

Key Partners
- NHS County Durham and Darlington
- Sport England
- UK Sport
- Skills Active
- National Governing Bodies of Sport
- Youth Sports Trust
- County Durham Sport Partnership and core team
- Durham Police
- Regeneration and Economic Development Partnership
- Durham County Cricket Club
- The extended CVS and partner organisations including Age Concern.
**Input:** Outdoor Sport & Leisure Facilities

**Service Outline:**

**Play** - There are over 300 fixed play sites in County Durham which are owned, managed and maintained by various organisations. Play is, however, much more than fixed sites and can take place in both formal and informal settings. The service must reflect the diverse needs of both our children and young people and the communities in which they live and spend their leisure time.

**Outdoor pitches and facilities** - Are where many of our residents participate in sport or physical activity. However, many of these spaces are 'multi-functional' and provide for a range of both formal and informal recreation. Provision of such facilities falls under a range of models. Many sports grounds are owned or leased by clubs or fall under the responsibility to Town and Parish Councils. Standards vary significantly and have in many places deteriorated following the decline of the coal mining industry, especially in the east of the county. The Sub Regional Facilities Strategy identifies an uneven spread of outdoor facilities which creates gaps in provision, particularly in relation to synthetic turf pitches.

**Allotments** - Nationally there is a shortage of available allotments, with waiting lists for most sites in County Durham. Many sites are managed by Town and Parish Councils or allotment societies. Those that remain under Durham County Council control are managed using different policies and procedures inherited from the former district and borough councils.

**Golf Course** - Roseberry Grange Golf Course is operated by Durham County Council, although the operating cost for the facility is low, the course is in need of significant investment. Membership numbers are declining and the facility does not meet its potential. Other golf courses in the county are owned by private clubs or commercial operators.

**Urban Parks** - The strategic management of urban parks is important in ensuring a high quality of life for both residents and visitors to County Durham. Again the ownership and management of these areas falls to a variety of organisations, which leads to various standards and financing issues.

**Events** - Play a major role in the economic regeneration of our county and can raise the aspirations of our residents. County Durham needs to develop a reputation for being a host of high quality events that bring investment to both our urban and rural communities. Our events must be safe, well managed, coordinated inspirational and innovative. Currently County Durham has a weak events programme.
What we will do:

- Play a lead role in delivering a county wide play strategy for our children and young people.
- Play a lead role in developing a new Play Durham Partnership that is a strategic decision making body for play in County Durham.
- Work with Town and Parish Councils and Area Action Partnerships to make sure that service delivery and decision making is delegated to the most appropriate level.
- Carry out an audit of all of our outdoor facilities and set minimum standards that all residents can expect to enjoy.
- Develop a playing pitch strategy inline with the national guidance ‘Towards a Level Playing Field’.
- Work with Sports clubs, National Governing Bodies, County Sports Partnership and other agencies in enabling our clubs to become more independent and self-sufficient.
- Develop a new county wide policy for the management of allotments that ensures available sites are fully utilised and the need to develop new sites is carefully controlled.
- Carry out an options appraisal for the management of our golf course in order to ensure best value.
- Strategically manage our parks assets in order to raise standards and make parks safer, more enjoyable and inspirational places to be.
- Embrace the green flag quality standard for parks and community spaces in order to set and aspire to high standards of service provision.
- Develop a sport and leisure events programme that not only inspires our residents but also attracts visitors to both our towns and rural areas.
- Develop a team of event management experts that will assist other Council Services in delivering high quality, safe and innovative events.
- Work closely with Cultural Services in the delivery of a varied events programme.
- Work closely with Transport and Highways colleagues to ensure an effective network of footpaths and cycle paths etc that can be used for formal and informal activity, and help to encourage active transport.
What’s changing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Input as % of spend</th>
<th>Target Input as % of spend</th>
<th>Resource Requirement</th>
<th>Anticipated real term resource available £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greater emphasis on:
- Play in its widest definition including natural play sites
- Rural events that boost and support a flourishing rural community
- Town and Parish Council initiatives relating to allotments, play areas and pitches
- Improving pitch and changing quality
- Increasing community access to pitches on school sites
- Improved accessibility and equality of opportunity

Less emphasis on:
- Direct delivery

Key Partners
- Skills Active
- Play Durham
- Area Action Partnerships
- County Durham Sport
- Cultural Services, Transport & CYPS
- Town & Parish Councils
- NGBs
Service Outline:
The Countryside Service is responsible for the management and development of Durham County Council’s countryside estate that comprises picnic areas, country parks, the railway path network and local nature reserves. These include a number of sites of special scientific interest, local wildlife sites and other sites with statutory and non-statutory designations and, together, receive almost four million visits each year. The estate is a significant asset to the county providing safe and convenient access to the countryside. The railway path network is one of the most extensive of any authority in the County.

The estate comprises:
- Railway path network comprising some 16 routes and totalling almost 150 km in length.
- Three country parks.
- 30 picnic areas.
- 45 areas of nature conservation importance including eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Countryside Service’s aim is to positively manage Durham County Council’s countryside estate for biodiversity and benefit local communities and visitors through sensitive access, education and active participation.

Information and Interpretation
This aspect of the Sport and Leisure Service’s work raises and maintains awareness and understanding of the work of the Countryside Service by providing a guided walk programme, events and information about facilities, biodiversity and activities and encourages an appreciation and respect of the countryside and the opportunities it presents. Our information service provides a considerable amount of information by giving talks, working with schools, interest groups, community groups and volunteers.

Hardwick Park
The restoration of this historic 18th century parkland has included the construction of a visitor centre that enables the Countryside Service to organise a wide range of events, family activities and walks. We provide a range of events and an historical and environmental education service to schools, families and groups to promote the Park’s importance. The Park is actively managed to enhance both its biodiversity and historic value.

Countryside Ranger Service
The Rangers’ role is to manage the Countryside Estate and ensure the authority’s statutory duties are covered by ensuring sites are safe, well maintained, developed to enhance biodiversity and the management plan objectives are attained and needs of visitors appropriately met. The Ranger team is supported by an extensive number of volunteers, many of whom are members of the Durham Voluntary Countryside Ranger Service (DVCRS).
What we will do:

- Provide opportunities for informal recreation, leisure and sporting activities such as walking, cycling and horse riding together with extensive opportunities for disabled access.
- Promote County Durham’s countryside through a wide variety of information, events and an extensive and comprehensive programme of guided walks, cycle and horse rides. All sites will be effectively signed and promoted with appropriate accessible information and interpretation.
- Develop and strengthen our partnerships and improve our current links with health agendas and new initiatives.
- Ensure that proposed new developments that will become part of the Countryside Estate have a comprehensive revenue funding stream to ensure all future management obligations and the Authority’s liabilities can be effectively covered.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the countryside and provide opportunities for individuals, communities and groups to actively participate in practical conservation and site management activities and encourage and support local community groups to take ownership of countryside sites.
- Further encourage active participation by all sections of the community, we will support and expand the 330 member Durham Voluntary Countryside Ranger Service (DVCRS) and develop and engage with a wide range of other volunteers and run a programme of corporate volunteering.
- Respond to public needs and provide environmental education sessions and events for schools and community groups.
- Encourage visits to the countryside with the railway path network, Hardwick Park and Coast to Coast cycle route, in particular, providing attractive features and a pleasant environment for visitors to the county. The variety of landscape and accessible countryside sites assist in making the county an attractive location for new businesses. Ensuring these flagship facilities are managed to the highest standard will make a significant contribution to many people’s perceptions of the county.
- Provide environmental education and work to encourage all age groups to participate in the Countryside Service’s activities ranging from toddlers to young people engaged with Sure Start, Extended Services, Entry to Employment and Future Jobs Fund projects amongst many others.
- Support active community involvement in local countryside sites ensuring a safe local environment. Also, introducing people to the countryside improves confidence by such simple means as creating safe routes to schools and commuter routes. Greater partnership working with Neighbourhood Wardens will be undertaken to assist in reducing antisocial behaviour associated with several urban sites.
- As the Countryside Estate is the authority’s largest and most significant natural resource, we will commit resources to meet the authority’s statutory duties under the NERC Act to undertake projects to enhance site biodiversity and ensure a specific improvement in the biodiversity management of Local Wildlife Sites.
- Aim to achieve 10 Green Flag sites, which will increase the provision of higher quality and well-maintained sites.
- Take steps to rationalise the Countryside Estate to ensure resources can be prioritised and managed to greatest effect for biodiversity management, appropriate access and community participation.
- Develop and maximise the skills, experience and abilities of staff and volunteers.
- Seek to deliver improvements in site management performance using appropriate new technology.
**What’s changing?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Input as % of spend</th>
<th>Target Input as % of spend</th>
<th>Resource Requirement</th>
<th>Anticipated real term resource available £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Greater emphasis on:**

1. Developing positive, effective and long-term links with Friends groups, community groups and volunteers and take opportunities to engage groups in the management of their local sites.
2. Ensuring all sites are accessible to as wide a range of users as possible and meet current Equality Act best practice.
3. Engage with young people by all appropriate means including Sure Start, Extended Services and Entry to Employment. Develop new aspects of Ranger Service to include Junior Rangers – initially at Hardwick Park.
4. Developing Hardwick into our flagship site that meets our aspirations, the expressed needs of our visitors and our ongoing contractual responsibilities to Heritage Lottery Fund.
5. Developing information provision by comprehensive content for the Countryside Service within DCC website and implementing new and innovative site signage.
6. Ensure the management of all sites and particularly those designated for their biodiversity value to fulfil the Authority’s statutory duties under NERC.
7. Aim to achieve appropriate standards of maintenance on the national recognised Railway Path network that includes the Coast to Coast cycle route.
8. Utilising new technology to increase efficiency and overall management.
9. Achieving and maintaining, with appropriate resources, Green Flag status on all appropriate sites.
10. Ensuring the suite of sites that comprises the Countryside Estate is appropriate to our objectives and those that do not fulfil our requirements are offered for disposal.

**Less emphasis on:**

11. Routine manual maintenance tasks – pass to more appropriate colleagues in Neighbourhood Services.
12. Sites of low value in terms of biodiversity and visitor access.

**Key Partners**

- Colleagues within Sport and Leisure and Neighbourhood Services.
- Durham Voluntary Countryside Ranger Service (DVCRS).
Service Outputs
Service standards for quality and performance

If the aims of this strategy are to be met, we must ensure that a consistently high level of service provision is available to all. Current service standards and performance levels of council controlled facilities vary throughout the authority area and these need to be standardised if participation rates are to be increased. To aid this improvement a robust Performance Management Framework (PMF), which will be embedded into the day to day functionality of the service, has been created.

The PMF is a mechanism that will aid service improvement at both an operational and strategic level. By prioritising what is important and then selecting and monitoring appropriate indicators and their targets on a regular basis, both good performance and areas that require further investigation can be highlighted. Actions can then be taken to drive improvement. However, this does not necessarily mean increased service levels; sometimes improved outcomes can mean delivering improved value for money. Consideration may be given to reducing levels of service in one area to free up resources to be used more effectively elsewhere. The 3 main areas of focus will be:

- Reducing costs and effectively using existing resources
- Having a greater impact on key priorities and outcomes
- Increasing customer satisfaction

Service Cost

The Sport and Leisure Service is a top quartile spending service. This means that its expenditure is high in relation to customer satisfaction and usage. The service needs to demonstrate it is able to deliver high quality services for less, especially as its current net budget of £16.3 million is likely to be significantly reduced over the next 3 years. We will tackle the issue of cost by:

- **Re-apporitoning resources across our core activities.** As detailed in section 7, this will enable us to focus our efforts on those areas that are likely to have greater impact in achieving the overall aim of increasing participation. Moving away from a delivery role to an enabling role, with an improved and coordinated delivery structure, will prevent duplication of effort and free up resources.

- **Re-aligning our facility stock.** The unitary authority inherited a facility stock that is both ageing and often located in the wrong place. 65% of Sport and Leisure Service’s revenue is spent on facilities and this is expected to increase as the stock has a significant and increasing repairs and maintenance liability. The sole purpose of facilities is to support participation and therefore any future investment must be balanced with the participation impact they support. A transformational project will be undertaken which is likely to involve the rationalisation of the number of facilities within the local community.
Moving to a more effective and efficient method of service delivery and operation. A detailed management options appraisal will be undertaken to determine how the service should be shaped to meet its objectives within its available resources. The results will ensure that the management arrangements in place for facilities and services are optimised to ensure the efficient use of all resources. Restructuring may be required to deliver financial savings, efficiencies and accountability.

Service Impact

It is important to be able to demonstrate the impact of our actions on our priorities. In line with our Performance Management Framework (PMF), we have selected a number of Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) that best represent progress to priorities and set targets in line with our desired outcome.

All LPIs and targets are:
- S – specific, significant
- M – measurable, meaningful
- A – agreed upon, achievable
- R – realistic, relevant
- T – time-based, trackable

and are supported by an action plan that includes accountabilities, costs and timescales.

The selected LPIs have been classified as belonging to one of the following 4 areas:
- Participation
- Environmental sustainability
- Fair and equal access to services
- Community engagement and cohesion

and are set out in the following tables;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TBD* the baseline is yet to be determined
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Targets 11/12</th>
<th>Targets 12/13</th>
<th>Targets 13/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prosperity from Sport and Leisure Related Economic Activity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of the service per head of population (£)</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>26.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investment attracted into the Sport and Leisure Service as a percentage of the overall budget</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of visits to Hardwick Park</td>
<td>448,000</td>
<td>489,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair and equal access to services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Number of adult community health checks / appraisals completed</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>QUEST – The average score of those with accreditation</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Sustainability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction in energy used by sports and leisure facilities</td>
<td>9,047,868</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of parks and open spaces awarded green flag status</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community engagement and cohesion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>% of the adult population involved in at least one hour of volunteer work per week to support sporting activity (Active People Survey)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of the adult population that are satisfied or very satisfied with sports provision in their local area (Active People Survey)</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of volunteering episodes actively engaged in Countryside Ranger Service</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>2,530</td>
<td>2,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TBD* the baseline is yet to be determined
To ensure that we are performing well in comparison to others, we also aim to benchmark our service areas by utilising both Sport England’s National Benchmarking Service (NBS) and the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) to benchmark at a national level, identify areas of good/poor performance and share best practice.
Quality Assurance

The Service will endeavour to gain a number of quality accreditation in relation to its facilities and services. These include:

- **QUEST**: The UK Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure. Quest is a tool for continuous improvement, designed primarily for the management of leisure facilities and leisure development. Quest defines industry standards and good practice and encourages

- There are two models that will be used:

- The Facility Management (FM) model which is aimed at the management of any facility which provides an activity for customers; public, private, trust and voluntary sector; and

- The Sports Development (SD) model which is aimed at the management of any team which provides or facilitates participation in an activity; public, private, trust and voluntary sectors.

- **Green Flag** - The benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales.
Neighbourhood Services Sport and Leisure Strategy 2011 -14 is about stimulating opportunity and change. It outlines the existing service and the importance of its contribution within local communities and to achieving corporate goals and priorities.

The strategy sets out to clearly define how the Sport and Leisure Service will move forward over the next three years to better achieve against corporate objectives. It provides a starting point from which the authority can develop its sport and leisure offer to the community and provides a context to the continued development of the service within a framework of the authority’s wider aims and aspirations whilst recognising the current financial constraints facing the authority.

The intended outcome of the strategy is to further develop sport and leisure opportunities across the County to contribute to and improve the quality of life of local residents and also to make County Durham a more attractive place to visit.

The strategy focuses on a single aim to increase participation as this is seen as a pre-condition of sport and leisure’s contribution to the wider corporate outcomes. It is clearly aligned to corporate objectives and sets out the relationship between the Corporate objectives (intended outcomes), the service aim, objectives, inputs and outputs.

Sport and leisure can be a powerful tool in meeting cross cutting priorities such as health, regeneration and education and is therefore key in achieving Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and delivering against the Durham Partnership agendas.

Care will be required to ensure resources are not stretched to a point were key priorities are affected by over ambition. The strategy does, however, seek to raise ambitions and clearly demonstrate how the service can increase aspirations both within and beyond County Durham.

The strategy focuses on improving three main areas -service cost, impact and satisfaction and sets how we intend to do this over the next three years with the ultimate aim of contributing to an Altogether Better Durham.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Responsible Officer</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Risk Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work in partnership to establish and promote a programme of community based physical activity opportunities countywide.</td>
<td>Head of Sport and Leisure</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and launch a new community club and coach support system to increase the number and improve the quality of clubs, coaches and volunteers.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify the governing bodies of 5 focus sports to develop countywide, shared investment and delivery plans.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Define the scope and quality of services to develop the core offer.</td>
<td>Head of Sport and Leisure</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTFP SL13</td>
<td>Review and develop aquatic programmes that increase attendances and participation.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Indoor Facilities</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>SL.RR5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTFP SL13</td>
<td>Review and develop a programme of facility based health and fitness activities that increase attendances and participation</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Indoor Facilities</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>SL.RR6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an inclusive play strategy for the county that maximises opportunity.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish an effective partnership with other green space providers, e.g. Town and Parish Councils, to define the scope and quality of parks and open spaces to ensure consistent service provision.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Key Actions</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Risk Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a structured sport and leisure workforce development pathway with</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accredited opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with the Regeneration and Economic Development (RED) service grouping</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to grow sport as a business and develop professional game opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a clear programme to maximise the impact and legacy from</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>London 2012 Olympics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with the university to develop a Durham Institute of Sport to support</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>world class performance, coaching and officiating.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and implement a countywide playing pitch strategy.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>October 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish an events team and build a corporate events programme that raises</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the profile of County Durham.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Key Actions</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Risk Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with County Council colleagues and NHS partners to develop and deliver a countywide model to target physical activity opportunities and lifestyle advice to communities with greatest health inequality.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with facility providers and clubs to encourage programmes that tackle under-represented groups and those who drop-out at specific life stages.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve access to our countryside sites by developing a programme of compliance to the Equality Act.</td>
<td>Countryside Manager</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake an Equality Assessment audit of all Durham County Council’s fixed play sites.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>October 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carry out an audit of all outdoor sport and leisure facilities to define the scope and quality of services to develop the core offer.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Key Actions</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Risk Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and launch a countywide volunteer recruitment, support and mentoring scheme for sport and physical activity for all ages.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with the community, voluntary and education sector to support the development of inclusive community led sites.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an energy efficiency plan and capital investment programme to reduce the service’s carbon footprint.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Indoor Facilities</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>SL.RR19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review the portfolio of DCC operated leisure facilities to define the scope and quality of services to develop the core offer.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Indoor Facilities</td>
<td>October 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider and implement the most suitable delivery model for managing Sport &amp; Leisure Services.</td>
<td>Head of Sport and Leisure</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate more economic and effective contracts with key service delivery partners.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carry out an options appraisal and undertake consultation in relation to the future of Roseberry Golf Course.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>SL.RR12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Key Actions</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Risk Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play a lead role in the development and support of five Community Sport Networks.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a partnership model of provision to target young people into community sport and physical activity opportunities.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Sport and Leisure Development</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>SL.RR14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish and develop a Junior Rangers scheme to encourage understanding and use of the countryside.</td>
<td>Countryside Manager</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate the feasibility of transferring the management of allotment sites to community groups.</td>
<td>Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>SL.RR16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage sports clubs and community groups to take greater ownership of facilities and sites.</td>
<td>Countryside Manager / Strategic Manager - Outdoor Services</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>SL.RR31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact

For further information please contact
Sport and Leisure Services
Neighbourhood Services
0191 372 9180