

- Within the next five years Sport England, in consultation with DCMS, DfEE and DETR, will produce guidance to enable Local Authorities to complete playing fields audits and to develop local playing field strategies linked to specific local Sports Development Objectives. Sport England has started this work which forms part of the NOF Green Spaces initiative.
- DCMS will encourage organisations funding green spaces to prioritise their funding allocations in line with local playing fields strategies where they are available.
- A consultation draft of the new PPG 17 will be issued very shortly by DETR. It will include updated guidance which will direct Local Planning Authorities to produce playing field and open space strategies as an integral part of Local Development Plans.

**3.8 In addition, as with school playing fields Government is determined to protect existing community playing fields and create more wherever possible:**

- Existing protection of playing fields will be further reinforced and the NOF Green Spaces initiative under delegated powers to Sport England will provide extra resources (£31.5 million in England) for the development of more playing spaces. New developments will be based on strategic need and locally agreed objectives.
- DCMS, DETR, DfEE and Sport England will maintain their common approach to playing fields, working alongside CCPR and NPFA.

## Indoor Community Sports facilities

**3.9 Sport England will examine the feasibility of expanding their facilities database and planning model to include comprehensive details of all facilities accessible by the public over the next 3 years. Priority will be to include those most used by the general public**

- Local Planning Authorities will be encouraged by Sport England, through its regional offices, to consider both public and commercial provision when drawing up development plan policies for sport and recreation and also the role of planning obligations in providing and maintaining more socially inclusive community sports facilities.
- A new consultative body - the Community Sport Alliance - will encourage good practice in the development of community facilities and also identify best practice in ensuring the inclusion of community and social provision in alternative facility management models.

## Social Inclusion and Community Development Through Sport

**‘Sport has the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Sport can create hope where there was once only despair. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand.’**

**Nelson Mandela**

**3.10 At national, regional and local levels, sport is often at the heart of complex, inter-agency initiatives and we need to ensure that advocacy**

for sport is clear and coherent. In particular there is emphasis through the local government modernising agenda on working in partnership across sectors and encouraging Local Authorities to respond to the needs of local communities. The partnership approach is emphasised through the development of Local Strategic Partnerships and neighbourhood renewal initiatives with community planning and Best Value concentrating on delivering needs and aspirations of local communities. It is essential to pull these national and local strands together so that those responsible for planning can have an overview of sport-centred opportunities and initiatives. The policy framework set out in this report sets targets for sport which embrace all stakeholders while recognising their distinctive contributions. To encourage the exchange of information and ideas:

- By Summer 2001, DCMS will oversee the creation of a national strategic planning forum, the Community Sport Alliance, to bring together key stakeholders at national, regional and local levels to identify the key challenges facing sport in the community. As a priority, the CSA will draw up a plan setting out what is required to tackle those issues.

3.11 If sport is to play its full part in promoting the social, economic and environmental well-being of communities, and equality of access for all, there will need to be greater flexibility and more targeted intervention at local level.

3.12 Increasingly, Local Authority community planning is focused on inter-agency working and partnerships. Sport is a powerful tool for the development of individuals and communities and can play a major role in local regeneration partnerships. Other Government initiatives have done much to prepare the ground. For example Best Value can offer Local Authorities a better

understanding of community aspirations, and through it Local Authorities will be provided with a growing body of evidence that sport can do much to encourage individuals to engage positively with their communities. Cultural Strategies also prepare the ground for understanding community needs by setting out strategic choices and overall performance and resources. Local health strategies recognise the beneficial effect of physical activity on health and well-being and can dovetail with initiatives such as the Countryside Agency's Walking the Way to Health, which targets sedentary people who are turned off by competitive sport.

3.13 For work to tackle social exclusion to have real impact, Government must take a strong lead:

- Over the next year DCMS will continue to promote the importance of sport in regional policy making through contributions to the work of regional agencies including the Regional Cultural Consortia.
- Building on the success of the appointment of a joint DfEE/DCMS advisor, DCMS is exploring the possibility of agreeing joint departmental advisory secondments with the Department for the Environment Transport and the Regions (to focus on Local Authority sport and leisure provision); Department of Health (to focus on the role of physical activity in promoting good health and addressing health inequalities), and the Home Office (to focus on the role of sport in tackling crime reduction and drug abuse).
- DCMS, Sport England and the LGA will start this year to co-ordinate existing and ongoing research into the contributions that sport can make to the social inclusion

agenda. The aim will be to create a robust body of evidence which must be effectively disseminated to inform policy making.

3.14 Equity principles will be integral to every level of the Government's plan for the sporting future of the country. Gender, race, disability ethnicity, economic status and age should not result in any individual being excluded from the fun, sense of achievement and companionship that participation in sport brings. Government acknowledges its leading role in promoting equity:

- Sport England will continue work already begun with the National Governing Bodies and the LGA to support the development of equitable national, regional and local activity and dissemination of information about provision to all equity target groups.
- DCMS, Sport England and NGBs will continue to consult equality agencies within and outside sport to ensure that equality and inclusion are at the heart of all provision and development programmes.
- DCMS and Sport England will continue the drive to put the implementation, monitoring and review of equality targets at the heart of all sports policies and funded initiatives.

3.15 We also recognise the part voluntary sports clubs can play in contributing to local equity and inclusion policies. There are over 110,000 amateur sports clubs throughout the country. These clubs, often at the heart of their local communities and fully representative of cultural and social diversity, are run on a shoestring by millions of volunteers. The Government recognises the view of sports organisations that the discretionary nature of rate relief leads to wide discrepancies in the granting of relief across the country and

uncertainty for recipients as to whether such relief will continue to be granted in successive years. To address the financial burdens on clubs:

- The Government proposed in the Modernising Local Government Finance Green Paper that small non-profit making sports clubs should receive an element of mandatory relief, on the same terms as proposed for small businesses.
- However, we believe that Local Authorities will always be best placed to decide whether or not an individual sports club benefits the local community and so propose retaining an element of discretionary rate relief, in addition to any new mandatory relief.

3.16 Funding of sports projects and National Governing Bodies must incorporate the principles outlined above. In particular:

- From April 2001, Sport England will make the development and promotion of equity and inclusion action plans a prerequisite for the delegation of powers and funding to NGBs
- From April 2001 a requirement to monitor and evaluate impact on inclusion and equity must be built in to all funded projects.

3.17 We have also identified other ways in which funding mechanisms can support the equity and inclusion agendas:

- DCMS will ask Lottery Distributors, NGBs and other funding providers to ensure that local consultation is carried out on community-targeted initiatives.

3.18 As with the development of school sport, strategic leadership will be an essential element in community sport development. DCMS now

includes a national target for sport participation in their Public Service Agreement. The cross-governmental endorsement of the plan for sport and the inclusion of culture and sport in guidance on the make up of Local Community Strategies, Health Improvement Plans and Local Strategic Partnerships are to be welcomed. In terms of delivering and supporting sport development through revenue programmes, guidance and advice, Sport England regional offices are well placed to take a strategic lead locally. To support the principle of funding and decision-making being as close to the grass roots as possible:

- We are asking Sport England to look at ways to devolve funding focused on the development of communities through sport to its regional offices by the end of 2001 and what the future role of Regional Sports Boards might be in this context.

3.19 DCMS will continue to negotiate for better funding of cultural and sporting services within the Environment, Protection and Cultural Services block. To support this we wish to see:

- Links between the actions recommended in this report and other emerging regional and local strategies promoted and secured through close and continuous working between DCMS, the LGA and other Government Departments, including Health.
- Sport provision and services continuing to feature in Local Cultural Strategies, and thus promoted at the core of community development.
- Building on Sport England's recent work with Local Authority representatives, the development of sport Performance Indicators as part of Best Value.

3.20 The importance of identifying and disseminating good practice cannot be underestimated. DCMS will initiate these steps in partnership with Sport England during the next six months:

- Multi-agency good practice case studies will be identified and promoted to all Local Authorities.
- DCMS and Sport England will explore the feasibility of offering a National Sports Card, including discussions with the Connexions agency about how this might link with the Connexions card.

3.21 A key driver of local planning in the next few years will be the expansion of the School Sport Co-ordinator programme and linked school-based initiatives. These will generate demand for community providers to create quality exit routes for young people. We need to consider the future of all: whether our most gifted and talented youngsters or those school leavers who need help in securing employment. The Prime Minister announced in January a pilot scheme to give young people on the New Deal opportunities to train and gain qualifications while working as sports assistants

- DfEE and DCMS will jointly commission a pilot study to run in two areas from April 2001 to test the feasibility of offering unemployed people on New Deal programmes opportunities to work and train as sports assistants to School Sport Co-ordinators. If the pilots are successful over the next year, we will extend the initiative across the country by 2004.

## The Development of Sport in the Community

3.22 The transition from participant to high level performer remains an issue to be resolved in most sports. Many, perhaps too many agencies are engaged in this crucial area of work and there is a need for structures and delivery methods to be simplified and rationalised. This will require all involved in sport development to be willing to undertake critical examination of the status quo and to commit to change. A vision of the needs of the participant and of those who are no longer participants, because they have become excluded, should drive this process. Much needs to be done to arrive at the goals of access, and clear, well signposted progression routes within, throughout and across sport for participants of all abilities

3.23 Many youngsters, even those who enjoy and excel at sport, stop participating when they leave school because local opportunities are limited. Our key competitors, notably France and Australia, have excellent club structures. In the United Kingdom, club structures are often fragmented and, as has been said, heavily dependent on volunteers. Talent identification and coaching development go hand in hand with club development, and these are the keys both to future national sporting success and also to good quality of life for those who love sport but who will never make it onto the medal podium. Government will encourage Governing Bodies of sport to provide club development programmes, enable talented performers to maximise their potential and build partnerships with local agencies:

- DCMS and Sport England, in consultation with the devolved administration Sports Councils, will identify initially 6 National Governing Bodies of sport to work up and implement a framework for talent

development. DCMS will support and facilitate the framework development by Easter 2001.

- NGB, Local Authority and club development officers will develop an accreditation scheme, including open access awards for generic services to juniors, for clubs within NGBs which have frameworks.
- Within 12 months Sport England will give direct financial support to Governing Bodies to fund clubs working within agreed frameworks.
- Sport England will work with other funding mechanisms which directly support clubs, such as Awards for All, to ensure that all such grants support common principles of good practice by Spring 2002.
- As part of its first year's work, the Community Sport Alliance will explore an incentive scheme linked to the Best Value process for facility providers, developers and owners to share facilities with NGB identified clubs.
- For a year-long research project into best practice, DCMS will ask Sport England to commission a desktop review of multi-sport clubs and set up 4 pilot projects based on two European models: one site multi-sport clubs, and geographically close separate site clubs sharing support services.
- By August 2001, DCMS will convene a representative group of club and talent development stakeholders to consider current strategies and delivery of club and talent development programmes.
- Sport England will continue to ensure that all agencies actively support the work of disability sport agencies to provide access to both disability and mainstream sports.

