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community use of school sports facilities Workbook

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Acknowledgements

This *Workbook* draws on the principles of community use of school sports facilities set out in the *Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities*. Based on both good practice and the experience of the case study schools and their local authorities the *Workbook* aims to assist schools and local authorities plan effectively for greater community use.

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Use of School Sports Facilities: Workbook

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Community Use of School Sports Facilities: Workbook

Introduction

The *Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities* published by **sportscotland** highlights the key issues which schools should consider when seeking to promote community use of their sports facilities.

We suggest you study the *Guide* and then, if you wish to promote greater or more effective community use of your school's sports facilities, use this workbook to help you decide how to go about it.

It assumes that you have already identified a general desire to make your school's facilities available for greater or more effective community use than at present. It does not cover, except in passing, the planning or implementation of any building project which may be necessary to create new or enhanced sports facilities for either curricular, extra-curricular or community use. Specific advice on this is available in the *Guide to Project Development* (see references in the *Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities*).

The workbook is designed primarily for local authority secondary schools but can also be adapted for use by schools in the independent sector. Achieving worthwhile community use, however, is not simply a matter of making facilities available. Creating and maintaining a balanced programme for a range of sports requires a range of management and promotional skills. Because of their limited resources, and need to give priority to their educational role, most schools will not have either the skills or staff time available. For this reason, **sportscotland** suggests that schools wishing to achieve effective community use of their sports facilities should normally seek to work in partnership with their local authority sport and recreation service.

First, however, three words of warning:

- Planning and promoting effective community use can take considerable time and effort so do not assume the process is an easy one. There are many things you will have to consider and standard school procedures - for example for dealing with emergencies - will not always be suitable for community use.
- Do not assume that whatever you want to do will automatically attract financial support from agencies such as **sportscotland**'s Lottery Fund or your local authority. This is especially the case if your desire to promote community use is driven primarily by a belief that it will generate net income for your school or create enhanced facilities for the delivery of the PE or wider curriculum. Certainly, *Levelling the Playing Field*, **sportscotland**'s Strategic Plan for the Distribution of Lottery Monies 1999-2003, indicates that a key priority will be projects which will help to foster effective links between school and community based sport. However, the Fund will never meet all the costs of a particular project, no matter how good it may be. This means if you see a need to make physical improvements to your existing facilities, or provide new ones, in order to promote community use, you will have to find a source of additional funds. Your local authority should normally be your first "port of call", but many if not most local authorities have been forced to cut their sport and recreation budgets significantly in the past few years and are unable to take on extra funding commitments. For this reason, it will nearly always make sense to contact appropriate local authority officials before undertaking any significant work on planning a community use project.
- Do not assume that your school's devolved budget will be adequate to meet the extra costs which will arise from community use, or that you will be able to retain the income it generates. You will probably need to obtain a supplementary community use budget from your local authority and may also need its approval to retain income.

Some schools have found it helpful to engage consultants to assist them. However, any school considering engaging consultants should always discuss its ideas informally with its local authority first. There is no point in incurring consultancy fees for a project which is clearly not going to be achievable.

The Planning Process

You will probably find it helpful to split the planning process into two main sets of tasks:

- **Initial appraisal:** a "broad brush" overview to assess the overall potential for community use and the main constraints on developing it. This is probably best undertaken by the school's management team, or one or two members of it.
- **Business plan:** the preparation of a detailed plan for community use. This is best undertaken by a specially formed Project Team involving representatives of the school and its local authority.

Each of these splits into a number of smaller steps or activities. You will probably find it sensible to work through them in the order below, although for fairly simple projects you may be able to simplify the process.

What is Effective Community Use?

Before you start, it is desirable briefly to define effective community use. **sportscotland** believes that it involves an appropriately balanced mix of casual use, club bookings, introductory classes, coaching courses and other sports development initiatives, often plus occasional special events. What that balance should be will vary from one community to another and depend partly on the range of other sports facilities available in the area. However, in general terms, **sportscotland** recommends that during winter peak times on mid-week evenings, and at the weekend, the managers of school facilities should aim for approximately:

- **50% casual use:** this will provide opportunities for those individuals who prefer not to participate as part of a club or other organised group. The most popular activities for people in this group will normally be exercise to music, badminton, 5-a-side football, tennis, squash, swimming, table tennis and fitness training.
- **25% club use:** this will provide opportunities for local clubs and other groups to meet regularly and develop their sport in a social and/or competitive way. The most popular sports for clubs will normally be badminton, swimming, basketball, netball, volleyball, 5-a-side football and the martial arts.
- **25% sports development initiatives:** these initiatives should be designed to introduce to people to new activities or provide them with coaching. In some cases they may be targeted at particular individuals in the community; for example, women-only or 50+ sessions or after-school coaching classes.
- **Special events:** there are various special events which might be staged in school sports facilities and could disrupt the normal community use programme. They are likely to range from sports tournaments and competitions to local gala days, occasional drama productions involving local groups and of course school events such as end of term discos. Whenever such events are held, regular users should obviously be told well in advance.

Initial Appraisal

It is obviously impossible to achieve a full programme of use immediately that school facilities are first made available for community use. Accordingly, it may be desirable to have a greater proportion of club use and less casual use in the first season or year, increasing the amount of casual use as local people become more aware of the availability of facilities and demand develops. This will certainly be better than keeping facilities available for casual use and therefore failing to meet initial income targets. In addition, there is normally less demand for casual use in summer as many indoor participants may prefer to take part in outdoor activities and of course have other commitments such as looking after their gardens. Accordingly the proportion of club use in summer might also exceed the 25% guideline, although many clubs do not operate during the summer holiday period.

Sport has the potential to generate many social, health and self-image benefits for its participants but they tend to depend on regular activity. For this reason, **sportscotland** believes that schools should make their sports facilities available to their local community on both mid-week evenings and at the weekend, in both school terms and the school holidays. Indeed, this is normally a condition of any grant from **sportscotland's** Lottery Fund.

The initial appraisal of key issues should probably be undertaken, or at the very least overseen, by the school's management team. Much of this initial appraisal is best undertaken at a meeting involving appropriate people from the school and its local authority. Before you do anything else, however, we suggest you read the Guide. It will provide you with an overview of what effective community use entails.

Key Issue 1: What are the school's sports needs?

Sport and physical education are important subjects in all schools and the fundamental reason why they have sports facilities in the first place. Developing a meaningful partnership with local community sports structures has the potential to bring with it extra resources which may help to deliver the PE curriculum and pupils to take part in "community" sport - provided the school recognises that a true partnership exists only when everybody gains.

Start by reviewing the school's own sport and PE needs to ensure they are fully understood. The main issues to consider are usually:

- Are there any significant gaps in the PE curriculum? If so, why do they exist? What will be needed to fill them? Do they have to be filled on-site, or could an off-site partnership with some agency be workable?

- What programme of after-school activities or extra-curricular sports clubs does the school currently offer its pupils?

Are there any sports at which the school has traditionally been very successful and, if so, why has this been the case? Is it likely to continue? Some schools have concentrated on a limited range of sports, often because of the interest and commitment of one or two key teachers. If those teachers leave or retire, will the key importance of these sports also be lost?

Key Issue 2: What existing programme of community use is there and what does it achieve?

Many schools allow local clubs or community education groups to use their facilities and can justifiably claim that their sports facilities are well used by their local community. Very often, however, they know little about the nature of that use. It may actually achieve little or nothing in terms of wider objectives such as social inclusion, encouraging school pupils to get involved in community sport, encouraging local people to try new sports or the development of individuals' sports skills and enjoyment. A fairly simple review of any existing use may identify examples of:

- The same small group of people playing badminton at the same time each week
- Community education or other introductory courses and classes which do not provide pathways for participants to continue to develop their skills and enjoyment through local sports clubs
- Football clubs which book school facilities for "training" but actually just have a casual kick-about

Key questions to ask in a review of existing use include:

What existing community use of the school's sports facilities is there? We suggest you consider midweek evenings, weekends and the school holidays separately.

Midweek evenings in term time

Mondays

Tuesdays

Wednesdays

Thursdays

Fridays

Weekends in term time

Saturday mornings

Saturday afternoons

Saturday evenings

Sunday mornings

Sunday afternoons

Sunday evenings

School holidays

Mondays

Tuesdays

Wednesdays

Thursdays

Fridays

Weekends in school holidays

Saturday mornings

Saturday afternoons

Saturday evenings

Sunday mornings

Sunday afternoons

Sunday evenings

What does this existing use actually achieve in terms of:

- Encouraging and enabling the school's pupils to take part in community sport?

- Providing coaching for young people in the local community?

- Promoting social inclusion?

- Promoting increased participation in sport by all members of the local community?

- Encouraging local people to gain increased skills and enjoyment?

- Enhancing the image of the school within its local community?

Key Issue 3: Which of our sports facilities do we wish to open up for greater community use?

The school may not wish to make all of its facilities available for community use. For example, grass sports pitches may not be able to sustain community use without significant deterioration to the playing surface and this could damage the school's PE or fixtures programme. Make a list of the various facilities which might be made available for community, ignoring for the moment how that community use might be managed and funded:

The sports facilities we could open up for greater or better community use are:

Key Issue 4: What are the initial views of the departments responsible for Education and Leisure Services in your local authority?

You will almost certainly benefit from working in partnership with your local authority and it will be aware of local sports needs and priorities. It owns your school so you may need its formal approval for any building works. There may also be opportunities for you to work in partnership with other sports facilities, governing bodies of sport or local clubs. The earlier you can identify and make contact with them, the better, as this will allow you take full account of their needs from the start.

In broad terms, you will probably find it best to try to work most closely with those clubs or governing bodies which can provide out of school opportunities for your pupils. At the same time, however, you should be aware that some may not want to "go back to school" to take part in sport, even through a local sports club. Ideally, your local authority will have a sport and recreation strategy which will help you to identify opportunities for the school to contribute to local sports development or target particular types of use. Arrange a meeting with appropriate officials from your local authority to get their initial views and advice. Examples of topics it should be worth discussing include:

- Does the Education Department or Committee have any policies relating to the community use of school sports facilities you will have to respect? Will the school be allowed to keep all the income generated from community use?
- What are the basic aims in the local sport and recreation strategy and how could the school contribute to the achievement of them?
- What does the local authority regard as the best opportunities facing the school?
- Is there a local need for more sports facilities of the type available in the school?
- Are there any local target groups the school should be seeking to attract to its facilities?
- What balance between club and casual use or classes and coaching courses should the school seek to promote?
- What physical changes, if any, are needed to make the school's sports facilities more suitable for community use?
- What practical help can the local authority offer the school? (For example, can it offer any technical help

or advice from its planners, architects or sports development officers? Any relevant experience from elsewhere and pitfalls to avoid? Any introductions to people or organisations the school should consult? Any advice on managing community use? Any help with promoting the school's facilities to the local community? Any capital or revenue funding? Any equipment which could be "cascaded" down to the school from some other facility when it is upgraded?)

- Are there any potential sources of capital or revenue funding the school should be investigating?
- Are there any other schools, or indeed local authority sports facilities, it will be worth visiting to gain insights or experience in relation to developing effective community use? You may also be able to get potentially invaluable advice on income and expenditure.

Key Issue 5: Why do we want to promote community use of our sports facilities?

There are various reasons why you might want to promote greater or better community use of your facilities and it is essential that you are absolutely clear as to what they are before you enter into any commitment to develop it. You may have to modify your initial or draft objectives later in the planning process but it is desirable to come to an initial view on what they should be before starting any further, more detailed work. However, if one of your key objectives is along the lines of "To make money for the school", we suggest strongly that you think again. Promoting effective community use will generate income, certainly, but it will also result in additional costs which you will have to meet from that income. Community use should almost never be driven by income generation, important though it obviously is. As it is always better to have a few rather than many objectives, try to identify only two or three things you really believe in and want to achieve. The list below should give you some ideas:

Which of the following possible objectives are most important to you? Rank them in priority order, adding any further ones you regard as more important. Strike out any you do not regard as appropriate or of low priority.

Rank

_____ To develop pathways for school pupils to community or voluntary sports clubs

_____ To provide an opportunity for pupils" to learn social skills

_____ To promote higher standards of sports performance amongst pupils

_____ To promote higher standards of sports performance within the local community

_____ To enhance the image or raise the profile of the school within its local community

_____ To develop a specialist training centre for a specific sport (which one?)

_____ To develop a local "central venue" for a specific sport (which one?)

_____ To help school pupils to gain coaching or other governing body qualifications

_____ To promote social inclusion

_____ To promote exercise, health and fitness amongst people in the local community

_____ To generate income for the school

_____ To promote participation by specific target groups (which ones - eg girls and women, senior citizens, people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities, unemployed people, young people?)

_____ To improve the performance of school teams

_____ To give local young people something worthwhile and enjoyable to do in their leisure time

_____ To widen the range of sports opportunities available to pupils in a community setting

_____ Add any others you regard as particularly important here:

Congratulations, you have completed the initial appraisal! By now you should now have a broad idea of:

- What you want to achieve, both for the school and its local community
- Whether you are likely to be supported by your local authority
- The type(s) of community use you wish to promote

One of the things you will have realised is that the management of schools and community sports facilities are very different things. School pupils can be required to behave in certain ways – for example, to take part in school sports activities on a regular basis. Community users, on the other hand, have to be attracted in the first place and then persuaded to come back. Moreover, they are likely to have used other sports facilities and, as a result, expect the school's facilities and equipment to be well maintained and clean and staff to treat them as valued customers. They will also expect facilities or services which may not be required for school use: for example, lockers in changing rooms or sports equipment set up and ready for them to use at the start of a booking.

These different expectations, and the extra wear and tear which inevitably come with higher levels of use, can create tensions between those responsible for overseeing school use and those responsible for community use. Managing and promoting community use is not something which can simply be “bolted on” to the existing duties of the head teacher or other key staff. There will also be extra costs for the school to meet - for example, extra staffing and energy costs and a need for planned maintenance programmes - although community use will also generate some income to meet the additional costs which are inevitable. Before proceeding to draw up your business plan, therefore, ensure that all school staff (including support staff such as janitors) are fully aware of your desire to promote community use and endorse it.

Planning for Community Use

Step 1: Set up a small project team

Asking the school's management team or the School Board to take on the task of drawing up a business plan for community use is unlikely to work; they both have more than enough to do already. Instead, set up a small Project Team of four or five people, ideally consisting of:

- One or two representatives of the school's staff, at least one of whom should come from the PE Department
- A representative of the School Board
- A representative of the local authority sport and recreation service
- A representative of the local authority education service

Make a note of their names, addresses and telephone or fax numbers and e-mail addresses here:

1

2

3

4

5

Step 2: Study sportscotland's Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities

Before starting to draw up your business plan, make sure all members of the Project Team are familiar with sportscotland's Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities. It sets out the broad policy context for community use and the key issues you will have to consider. You will probably find it helpful to go through and discuss the issues identified in the *Guide* before doing anything else and identify any particular concerns the school or Project Team members may have.

Step 3: Assess the local demand for additional access to sports facilities

If the school concentrates only on meeting its own needs, and tries to slot community access in around them simply in order to try to attract extra funding or other resources, it is unlikely that community use will ever be completely successful. In addition, there is no sense in a school competing unnecessarily

with other nearby facilities or promoting activities for which there is little or no local demand. Accordingly, one of the first things to do is to try to assess whether there is likely to be local demand for the facilities the school has to offer. You need to investigate both the activities or facilities for which there is likely to be local demand and when this demand is likely to arise on both weekdays and at the weekend.

Some members of the Project Team may think it desirable to undertake a survey of local people at this point, but this is usually sensible only if it can be co-ordinated by someone with considerable relevant experience of undertaking surveys. This said, there may sometimes be a case for getting a group of senior pupils to do a survey, under close supervision from an appropriate teacher, but only if doing so will also meet clear educational objectives and the survey results are seen almost as a bonus. If so, take care to be realistic. There is no real point in discovering that local people would like the school to provide a new swimming pool, tenpin bowling centre, ice rink and cinema.

Instead, the best way of assessing local demand is usually to gather relevant background information and consult individuals involved in planning and promoting local sport and recreation, such as:

- Your local authority's planning department
- Your local authority's sport and leisure service
- Local sports development officers
- The managers of comparable nearby facilities
- School Sport Co-ordinators in your area
- Established local sports clubs in your area
- Your local Community Council - some may be interested in local sport and recreation

The topics it will be useful to discuss are likely to include:

- **Possible changes to the population of the school's catchment area.** Planning officials in the local authority should be able to give an estimate of possible demographic changes in the area. Think through the implications of any anticipated changes. For example, the development of a significant number of family houses could result in a need for activities for young parents and their pre-school children during the school day and older children and couples in the evenings and at the weekend.
- **Priority sports in your local area.** Nearly all local authorities, and some governing bodies of sport, employ sports development officers (SDOs) with either a generic or sport-specific remit. Generic SDOs are usually concerned with promoting all forms of sport, or sport for particular groups of people such as women, while sport-specific ones concentrate only on one or two sports. Find out who they are, together with their remit, and invite them to visit your school, see your facilities, tell you of their perception of local needs and advise you on how best to meet them. One or more may be willing to attend a meeting of your Project Team and, later, help to develop community use. Be open to their ideas because it is their job to know what is going on in local sport. They may be able to suggest good ideas you had not considered or identify one or more local clubs looking for access to facilities with whom you could work in partnership. For example, if your school wants an artificial turf pitch, they could introduce you to local hockey clubs.
- **The use of the nearest comparable facilities in the area.** Ask the advice of the manager of the nearest local authority sports or leisure centre (assuming there is one) or nearby schools which promote

community sports use. They are likely to be in the business of maximising the use of their facilities and aware of local sports needs. There may be some local needs or demand their facilities cannot meet and you have overlooked. In addition, there is no point in competing with them for customers and so you should seek ways of working in a complementary manner.

- **The views and experience of any School Sport Co-ordinators in your area.** All secondary schools - including yours - are able to apply to **sportscotland's** Lottery Fund for financial support to have a School Sport Co-ordinator. Their job is to develop extra-curricular sport and encourage school pupils to make use of local community sports facilities and join local clubs. Established Co-ordinators should be able to give you valuable advice on how to go about developing effective school-community sports links. There may be opportunities for you to work in partnership; for example, instead of competing for users, your school could provide specialist badminton coaching for both your own pupils and those from a nearby school, while it concentrates on basketball.

- **The views of local sports clubs.** Consult any established sports clubs or other groups using the school's sports facilities at present to establish their views and potential to help deliver the draft objectives determined in the initial appraisal. It will obviously also be essential to speak to any local clubs you want to attract to use your facilities. This may be especially important if they are involved in a sport which is particularly popular or successful at the school. What do or could they offer the school and its local community? Are they open to all? Do they have a junior section which school pupils are already members of or could join? Do they have adequate child protection protocols in place? Do they offer coaching to their members?

- **The views of local community and youth workers.** There may be community education or youth workers active in the area around the school, especially if it is located in an area of social disadvantage. They should be aware of local community needs and may be willing to work with you to promote community use.

Step 4: Audit the suitability of your sports facilities and campus for community use

Older schools may have been designed and built with relatively little thought given to community use and their sports facilities are usually fairly basic. However, community customers may expect them to be comparable with local authority sports and leisure centres. All schools will also be concerned to ensure the safety of both pupils and community users and avoid community and school users having to share facilities at any time. Use the checklist overleaf.

The school's external areas:

- Are there adequate signs or notices advising potential users of the facilities which can be seen from the public road? _____
- If there is more than one entrance to the school campus, should community users be confined to only one or two? _____
- Are they clearly identified? _____
- Is there a clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian routes for school and community users when on the school campus? _____
- Is there adequate parking for community users and is it overseen by CCTV cameras to minimise theft and vandalism? _____
- Is there secure covered bicycle parking, overseen by CCTV to minimise theft? _____
- Are the parking facilities for community users, including clearly marked spaces for disabled use, close to the entrance to the sports facilities and well away from school playgrounds? _____
- Are all routes within the campus which community users might use adequately signed, as first time users will not know their way around? _____
- Is there sufficient external lighting at night for women and children to feel safe? _____
- Do you have (or need) a CCTV system to enhance security and safety? _____

The school's buildings

- Where on the campus is the entrance to the sports facilities which community sports users will use and how is it supervised? It is obviously undesirable for community access to be hidden "round the back" of the school, or for community users to use more than one entrance or different entrances at different times of the day. _____
- Are there adequate directional signs and notices to guide community users around the school? _____
- Are fire doors and assembly points clearly signed and accessible to people with disabilities? _____
- Is there a reception desk at the entrance to the sports facilities where community users can pay, book facilities, obtain information or seek the help of staff? _____
- Does the reception desk have its own telephone line for users to make bookings without having to go through the school office? _____
- Does the reception desk have a "back office" for staff and secure cash storage facilities? Is there a public address system? _____
- Are there changing and toilet facilities for staff separate from those available to community users? _____
- Is there a payphone in the entrance area? _____
- Are all the various sports facilities accessible to people with disabilities? _____
- As well as fairly obvious measures such as ramps or a lift whenever there are changes in level both inside and outside the school buildings, are there adequate and easily found disabled parking and WC facilities? _____
- Is there a Minicom system at the office or reception area? _____
- Are there secure lockers and hand or hair dryers in the changing rooms community users will use? _____
- Are there adequate facilities for reception or attendant staff on duty during community use? _____
- Is there a first aid room in a sensible location? _____
- Where are the light switches for areas which will be accessed by community users? _____
- How is the heating controlled in those areas to which the public will have access out of school hours? _____
- Can the heating system keep warm those areas which will be used by the community out of schools hours warm when the heating in the remainder of the school is off? _____
- Is there air conditioning or comfort cooling in fitness areas? _____
- Is it possible to identify the energy or fuel usage attributable to community use? _____
- Is the decor of an acceptable standard for community users? _____
- Is there an area which could be used as a creche? _____
- Are there easily seen clocks in all areas? _____
- Will users of the sports facilities be able to access any other parts of the school building unsupervised? _____

- Are cleaning regimes and standards sufficient to meet public users' expectations? _____
- Is there sufficient storage for all the cleaning equipment which is likely to be required? Cleaning materials and equipment should be in dedicated stores, rather than areas which the school may not require to use such as disabled toilets. _____

Sports and PE equipment

- Is the school's PE and sports equipment of a suitable standard to be used by community groups? _____
- Is there sufficient sports equipment for the types and standards of community use envisaged? _____
- Is there adequate storage for sports equipment? _____
- Are gymnastics or other foam mats, which constitute a significant fire hazard, kept in a securely locked store with its own external access? _____

Budgets

- What does it cost at present to operate the school's sports facilities? Is it possible to identify the costs relating to any existing community use? _____
- What is the school's annual budget for replacing sports or PE equipment? _____
- What is the school's annual budget for building repairs and maintenance? _____
- How much of it is normally expended on the sports facilities? Community use will inevitably increase the need for repairs and maintenance, although it may also help to reduce vandalism at night. _____

Step 5: Identify the improvements (if any) needed to the school's facilities or equipment and how you will fund them

The audit in Step 4 is likely to have identified a need to improve the school's sports or other facilities to make them suitable for community use. Make a list of them here, grouping them into "essential" and "desirable" categories. In addition, consider whether there is a need for any new facilities to complement those you already have which will help you to attract users and generate income

Essential improvements:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Desirable improvements

1

2

3

4

5

New facilities required:

1

2

3

You now need to get an idea of how much these improvements will be likely to cost. This will probably best be done by seeking help from your local authority's architects and quantity surveyors. They should have records relating to your school's buildings and be able to advise you how to make the necessary improvements and the approximate cost. At this stage, do not ask them actually to design the improvements for you as this will incur professional fees; all you need is a broad estimate of cost. **sportscotland** publishes a series of guidance notes on the design of sports and ancillary facilities such as changing rooms which may also be helpful.

When estimated costs for the various improvements required are available, discuss with your local authority how you might seek to pay for them. In some cases you may be able to apply for an award towards the costs from **sportscotland**'s Lottery Fund, but you will still need some local funding. **sportscotland** has allocated a total of approximately £7.6M per year for grants to improvements to local sports facilities. It will give the highest priority to projects which will convert, adapt or increase the accessibility of existing sports facilities in schools or local sports clubs. In school facilities, these projects will relate primarily to the provision or improvement of reception areas, changing facilities, lockers and fixed or portable equipment. Within the overall scheme, **sportscotland** will give the highest priority of all to projects in deprived communities and urban or rural areas of special need. Projects designed to provide new sports facilities such as halls or pitches will generally be a lower priority.

Step 6: Determine your preferred management approach

Broadly speaking, there are two main ways of managing community use of school sports facilities: single or dual management. With single management, the head teacher carries overall responsibility for both school and community use, including all staffing issues and the budget relating to community use. In practice, much of the day to day work can obviously be delegated, for example to a specially appointed

“community manager” who should be a member of the school's management team, but the head retains overall responsibility. With dual management, the head teacher remains responsible for all school matters but the school works in partnership with some other autonomous agency responsible for everything to do with community use, including financial matters. The most common partnerships are with the local authority's sport and recreation management contractor or the Community Education Service, although there are also other possibilities such as a local club or an existing or specially formed local sport and recreation trust or even a private sector contractor. For obvious reasons, any such partnership should be the subject of a formal written agreement between the school and the agency responsible for promoting and managing community use. The process of drawing up a comprehensive business plan will allow you determine which approach you wish to adopt and set out in detail how it will work.

You should determine the most appropriate management structure from the point of view of delivering your objectives and the outcomes you seek related to them, not for the administrative convenience of the school or its partners. Who is actually responsible for managing community use is much less important than ensuring that it is done efficiently, effectively and economically. The Guide highlights the main topics you may need to consider. Perhaps the most important is that community users will have to be treated differently from school pupils and may be highly critical if they perceive the condition or management of school sports facilities as not meeting their expectations. Will school staff have the skills, experience and time to manage community use effectively? If not, who will be responsible for this?

At this stage, you need to come to a view on two key aspects of management:

- Who will be responsible for setting and, if necessary reviewing, policy; and
- Who will be responsible for the day to day operation of your facilities

The main options are likely to be:

- School management
- Management by specialist contractor (which may be in-house or a contractor set up and operated by a local authority, possibly on an “arm's length” basis, or a private sector company)
- Management by community education
- Creation of special company/trust
- Management by a local club - involving a successful local club may allow it to expand and take on staff

In many instances, and particularly when the school has extensive sports facilities, you will probably conclude that it is better to entrust the task to your local authority's sport and recreation management contractor, rather than divert some of the time and energies of the School Board or management team. This will bring experienced leisure management skills into the school and allow it to benefit from the wide range of back-up services available through the contractor such as established normal operating and emergency procedures, child protection policies and protocols, quality assurance systems, specialist training, marketing experience and a pool of staff able to provide cover for holidays and illness. If you do decide to hand over the management of community use to an outside organisation, however, you will have to decide how to safeguard the school's interests. These interests will rarely relate only to the work of the PE Department. For example:

- The school's sports facilities may be required for examinations at certain times of the year and possibly other activities such as school plays or concerts, parents' evenings and end of term discos
- Many schools maintain their buildings on a "breakdown" basis - when something goes wrong they fix it - but it is better to maintain public facilities on a preventive basis by investing on a planned basis before things go wrong. Planned maintenance should be timed carefully so as to minimise the disruption to both the school and community users. If the maintenance of the school's buildings is under the control of a specialist technical services unit within the local authority, this may require changes to way in which it operates.
- The attitude of sports facility staff and effectiveness of customer care policies will impact on the image of the school as a whole

Safeguarding the school's interests is usually best achieved through either a joint school-management advisory (or executive) committee or service level agreement or contract between the school and management, clearly setting out the school's requirements and expectations. Your local authority should be able to provide an example of suitable agreements or contracts for the Project Team to study. It will normally be sensible for the Project Team to prepare a first draft of the main points to be included as doing so should help to identify any potential sources of tension or reservations amongst the school's PE or other staff. Discuss any such issues with staff throughout the school, from janitor to head teacher. Do they welcome community use as a means of enhancing the work of the school - or see it as a potential nuisance which will result in extra work and inconvenience for them and extra wear and tear on school facilities and equipment? The more that their fears or concerns can be explored openly at the outset the easier it should be to ensure that they are respected and arrangements made to ensure they are not realised.

Step 7: Estimate staffing needs and costs

The next step is to make a first estimate of how you - or your management partner - will staff your facilities during times of community use. In order to do this, first decide when your facilities will be available for community use, based on the conclusions you reached in Step 3 on the likely pattern of demand. For most schools, the "start time" for community use will normally be from about 1700 or 1800 hours on weekdays and around 0900 or 1000 hours at the weekend. If you hope to receive a grant from **sportscotland's** Lottery Fund you will have to make your facilities available during the school holidays as well as in term time because this will help to maximise levels of use all year round. If clubs and other users have to cease their activities during the school holidays they may well try to gain regular access to other facilities in preference to yours.

The main peak time for community use is traditionally Monday to Thursday evening, especially in winter. Many people take part in other activities on Friday evenings so demand is likely to be lower then. Most local authority sports facilities remain open until about 2200 or even 2300 hours on midweek evenings while many school facilities have closed at about 2100 hours, partly because this is the time when most evening classes end and partly to give janitors some time off. If you decide to have your sports facilities open until 2200 or 2300 you will probably need to ensure that your janitors do not have to take on onerous extra duties at unsocial hours. You may also have to amend your insurance policies.

Weekends can also be popular times for sport with Saturday and Sunday mornings especially so for junior clubs and other activities.

It is easy for a school to assume that community use is possible only outside normal school hours, but as lifelong learning and new community schools are developed (see the Guide) there is likely to be some community demand during the day. In addition, other changes in society - such as early retirement and home or part time working - mean that there are growing numbers of people keen to participate in sport or recreation during the day.

The next step is to decide the programming, or use, of the various facilities. If your facilities are already used by clubs or other groups at peak times for casual use you should review their needs with them and consider whether they could be programmed at other times. In addition, remember that different programme sessions may require different levels of staffing. For example, swim club training will probably require a lower level of lifeguard supervision than casual public recreation in a pool; an after-school coaching session will require the services of at least one coach while an adult badminton club later in the evening will probably not. By careful programming you should be able to make the most cost-effective use of staff.

We recommend strongly that you give particularly careful consideration to promoting, developing and staffing a comprehensive programme of after-school extra-curricular activities for children from your own school and possibly other, nearby ones. The New Opportunities Fund should be a useful source of revenue funding for these programmes. In addition, think carefully about the school holidays as well as term times. The fact that local schools are on holiday will create the opportunity to promote special holiday programmes for children from the area around your school, whether they attend it or not. Ideally these programmes should be targeted at children of different ages. At the same time, remember that many school janitors work reduced hours during the holidays so you may have to allow for extra caretaking costs. This may also make it difficult to allow access for cleaners.

Overall, you will probably need five different types of staff:

- **A community manager:** you will almost certainly need someone who will have experience of co-ordinating and managing community use and other issues such as programming, marketing and promotion. They will also be responsible for training the other community staff and setting up the various systems needed to ensure effective management and budgetary control and high standards of customer care. Depending on the scale of the facilities you will be making available for community use, it may be possible for you to share a manager with another school in your area or local authority leisure centre.
- **Leisure attendants:** responsible for supervising community use and setting up sports equipment for community users. They are normally also responsible for some cleaning duties. Leisure attendants should have a first aid qualification and some may also have or seek governing body awards which will equip them to provide coaching. If you have a swimming pool any attendants you employ must also have appropriate lifesaving qualifications.
- **Receptionists:** responsible for taking bookings and general clerical duties associated with your reception area, including cash handling and equipment hires or the sale of small items such as shuttlecocks and shampoo.
- **Cleaners:** you will have to arrange for the cleaning of changing rooms and possibly other areas both at the end of each school day and before school starts in the morning. This is an extra clean compared

with facilities used only by the school for which one clean a day will normally suffice.

- **Coaches or leaders:** it will be obviously desirable to seek to attract new participants or help existing participants - especially young people - to enhance their skills and therefore enjoyment through coaching. This will require an input from trained coaches or leaders, with effective policies in place in relation to the selection and supervision of individuals who will work with children. Members of school staff may be able to provide a certain amount of support for after-school programmes but it will almost certainly be necessary also to make use of outside coaches and leaders.

As a general guide, there should always be a minimum of two members of staff on duty at times of community use, although more may be needed for extensive facilities. The reason for this is simple: if there is an emergency, one person will normally be able to deal with it while the other seeks assistance. As the manager cannot be expected to be present throughout community opening hours you may have to make special arrangements for another member of staff to act as a "duty officer" at certain times. They must be briefed to deal with any emergencies which may arise and have sufficient authority to be able to make appropriate decisions in the event of a customer demanding to speak to "the person in charge". If you plan to open your facilities for community use only on midweek evenings you should also be aware of the impact this will have on staffing patterns. It is unlikely that you will be able to find full time staff willing to work a permanent "back" shift and this may necessitate mainly part-time staffing and create problems in ensuring adequate staff cover.

You should be able to get details of normal wage rates for different grades of staff from your local authority Leisure Services, together with guidance on the typical on-costs you will have to meet for uniforms, training, national insurance, holidays and sickness. There will probably be different employer's on-costs for full and part-time staff. This information will allow you, or your management partner, to draw up an estimate of the staffing costs associated with community use. They will probably represent around 50-65% of the operating costs associated with community use.

Step 8: Prepare a draft revenue budget

The next step is to prepare a revenue budget and, if the management of community use is to be undertaken by an agency other than the school, a separate estimate of the potential financial implications for the school's own budget. Ultimately, all of the costs associated with both school and community use will have to be met somehow and they will inevitably be significantly higher than for school use alone. You may be able to get some help from your local authority Leisure Services but however you prepare your draft budget be careful to set out all your assumptions clearly.

In most school and community use situations it will be difficult, if not impossible, to accurately apportion costs of school use (curricular and extra-curricular) and community use particularly in relation to energy costs, cleaning and repairs and maintenance. In these circumstances it may be appropriate to take a pragmatic view of the costs each partner should meet either separately or jointly.

The main headings to use for the operating expenditure estimate are normally:

Staff costs

- Salaries and wages (note that this may include some additional overtime costs for the school's janitors)
- Employer's superannuation and national insurance contributions

- Uniforms
- Training
- Recruitment
- Travelling expenses

Property costs

- Fuel and power
- Rates
- Water and sewerage
- Repairs and maintenance

Supplies and services

- Cleaning
- Equipment repairs
- Marketing and promotion
- Consumables (eg toilet rolls, soap)
- Stationery
- Postage
- Telephones
- Maintenance contracts (eg for fitness equipment or lockers)
- Office supplies
- Computer systems and supplies
- Licences (eg for the music used for exercise to music classes)
- Insurance
- Customer surveys and market research
- Security cash uplifts and bank charges
- Refuse collection
- Audit fee

As well as day-to-day operating costs, you will also need to make some allowance for replacing those things which will wear out over a number of years - most items of sports or fitness equipment, for example. Equipment items hired out to users, such as badminton rackets, will probably have to be replaced fairly frequently.

Income is best calculated by estimating the likely level of use - which is likely to vary from one part of the year to another - and then multiplying by the charges you intend to levy. These charges cannot be significantly higher than at other similar facilities in the area. You should take the advice of your local authority's Leisure Services department on the extent to which it may be desirable - or your local authority's policy - to offer concessionary prices to certain groups of people in order to help promote junior use and social inclusion. Your local authority will also be able to advise you on the likely take-up of these concessionary prices - never assume that everyone using your facilities will pay the full admission charge. The main headings to use for the income estimate are likely to be:

Income from school use

- Payments to cover the marginal costs of school use (eg heat and light; cleaning)
- Extra-curricular activities and clubs outside normal "school" hours (but note that normal school hours will probably extend to 1700 or 1800)

Community use

- Casual use
- Club bookings
- Term time sports coaching courses and classes
- School holiday sports programmes

Other

- Special events
- Profits from vending
- Miscellaneous sales eg shuttlecocks

The end result of the draft revenue budget may be an expected surplus, a deficit or break-even. As a simple rule of thumb:

- Swimming pools will normally require a significant subsidy
- Sports halls and similar areas can sometimes break even, but do not always do so
- Well-equipped fitness areas should generate a small surplus

There is one other, very important rule of thumb you should bear in mind. If your draft budget indicates a surplus of income over expenditure, and you start thinking about diverting some of your existing school sports facilities budget to some other purpose, go back over the figures once again. You have almost certainly either overstated income or failed to estimate some essential expenditure.

For obvious reasons, it will be sensible to get someone who is involved in the management of comparable local sports facilities to check over your draft budget. Either your local authority Leisure Services or another school, operating similar facilities to your own, should be able to do this. If you forecast a deficit you will obviously need to establish how it can be funded. You may be able to obtain a community use budget from your local authority, especially if your proposals accord with its policies in relation to issues such as social inclusion. In addition, check with your Education Department that you will be allowed to keep all of the income generated from your sports facilities in order to meet the costs of community use - some Councils have policies which may not allow this.

When you have a draft budget, prepare a "sensitivity analysis". This is way of assessing key financial risks - for example, what will happen if you generate less income than anticipated, or incur additional costs you have not foreseen. For obvious reasons, concentrate particularly on those parts of your budget which are most significant to the "bottom line" - whether you end up with a net surplus or deficit. For example, if you budget £100 for the profit on vending but the actual profit turns out to be only £80 this will be much less serious than if you budget £50,000 for staff and the actual cost turns out to be £60,000. The reason for doing this is to establish where the greatest risk lies so that you can re-examine your assumptions for these items. In terms of expenditure, they are likely to be staff costs, energy and repairs

and maintenance; on the income side, the most difficult things to predict are user numbers and the likely proportion of concessionary users. Later, assuming that you proceed to promote community use, these are also the budget heads you should monitor most closely.

One area where you will almost certainly need advice - most likely from your local authority sport and recreation service or finance department - is in relation to VAT. The VAT regulations relating to sport are complicated and can vary according to who operates a particular facility as well as who uses it and how. For example, block bookings of ten weeks or more and "educational" programme sessions are not subject to VAT, while most other uses are. The proportion of use on which you charge your customers VAT may also affect the amount you can reclaim on your expenditure.

Step 9: Review your draft objectives and business plan

You may now need to review your original objectives in the light of your draft business plan. You may find that you need to refine them; if so, go through the business plan once again to see what impact this is likely to have. You should also check at this stage that all the staff in the school support the proposals. You may also be able to highlight some areas or programmes for which you may be able to seek sponsorship from local companies. However, never rely on sponsorship to meet financial targets for the basic operation of your facilities. If you can arrange some local sponsorship, it should really be for something you would not otherwise be able to do.

Step 10: Seek the agreement of your School Board

While School Boards have not generally sought to be involved in the community use of school sports facilities, you will still have to obtain its agreement to your proposals.

Step 11: Draw up an implementation plan

If your School Board approves your broad proposals, you will probably need an implementation plan. This will set out "who does what" during the implementation of your ideas and may include such things as:

- Obtaining the agreement of the education authority
- Commissioning a design team to prepare proposals for altering your sports or other facilities to make them more suitable for community use
- Applying for planning permission
- Applying for external funding or fund raising
- Defining the role and membership of any management committee(s)
- Drafting any necessary documents such as a service level agreement, joint use agreement or management contract
- Obtaining quotations for any new equipment or other items which may be required
- Recruiting and training staff
- Opening a bank account

- Arranging for the payment of staff and supplies and services
- Obtaining insurance
- Designing and preparing publicity material
- Arranging an opening ceremony

Step 12: Draw up a management plan

You will also need is a management plan, setting out how you will operate your sports facilities on a day to day basis. This should cover all of the key issues highlighted in the Guide:

The Best Value Key Issues:

- Challenge
- Comparison
- Consultation
- Competition

Additional Key Issues:

- Culture
- Clarity of purpose and roles
- Community
- Customer care and staffing
- Consistency
- Collaboration
- Courses and classes
- Casual users
- Coaches
- Child protection
- Charges
- Condition
- Cleaning
- Contracts
- Community safety
- Control and security
- Costs
- Cash
- Communications
- Changes to school facilities
- (A)ccreditation

In addition, it should set out:

- The remit of the management committee (if any) in relation to the School Board
- Job descriptions and reporting responsibilities

- Administrative and financial systems
- Normal and emergency operating procedures
- Health and safety procedures - existing school procedures are unlikely to be adequate
- Security procedures
- Monitoring and review procedures, related especially to those areas in your budget with the greatest potential for serious error

Step 13: Go for it!

Finally, when everything is in place - implement the plan.

