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guide to community use of school sports facilities

sportscotland



Foreword by the Chairman

Sport is important to Scotland. Not only does it raise the country's profile nationally and internationally it also provides health, social inclusion and pure enjoyment benefits to all those who take part. People participate in sport and physical recreation in a wide range of facilities across the country but until now there has been only a limited use of a major resource - school sports facilities. Therefore it is timely for **sportscotland** to be publishing this Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities and its complementary Workbook.



sportscotland has long argued that the opening up of school sports facilities is a cost-effective means of maximising access for all in the community to sporting opportunities and it remains a key issue identified in the Sport 21 review process. With the advent of unitary authorities as a result of local government re-organisation and the closer relationships which are evolving between the education and recreation services I believe these documents will provide local authorities and schools with the necessary information to plan for greater community use.

What must be stressed however is that it is not only the community that benefits from community use of school sports facilities. The schools themselves benefit from additional and improved facilities, a widening of networks with a whole range of other organisations such as local sports clubs and an improved relationship with their communities. Also, by opening up schools to a wider range of community groups and clubs new pathways are developed to allow young people to make the transition from school sport to community sport and to realise opportunities leading them to a habit of lifelong participation. Where there are links to new community schools the benefits to both individuals and the community will be immense.

sportscotland's Lottery Fund has already launched the Sports Facilities Programme which has this very theme as its main focus. Already local authorities and schools are submitting applications to provide greater links between their schools and the communities they serve and I hope that over coming generations many young people will be encouraged to keep participating and reach their potential in whatever sports they choose.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alastair Dempster". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Alastair Dempster, Chairman, sportscotland



Acknowledgements

sportscotland is grateful to all those individuals from the case study schools and their local authorities who gave of their time and expertise to allow the publication of this Guide and associated Workbook. Also, we acknowledge with thanks the work of Kit Campbell of Kit Campbell Associates who was the principal author of both documents.

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Published by:

© **sportscotland**
Caledonia House
South Gyle
Edinburgh EH12 9DQ

Tel: 0131 317 7200
www.sportscotland.org.uk

ISBN 1 85060 377 4
Price £15.00
October 2000

***sportscotland** is the trading name of the Scottish Sports Council*



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Guide to Community Use of School Sports Facilities

Introduction

Sport 21: Nothing left to Chance, the national strategy for sport co-ordinated by **sportscotland** (formerly the Scottish Sports Council), sets out a vision of Scotland as:

- A country where sport is more widely available to all
- A country where sporting talent is recognised and nurtured
- A country achieving and sustaining world class performances in sport

If this vision is to be achieved, the people of Scotland must be able to use a full range of accessible local sports facilities of an appropriate standard at affordable prices. The recent introduction of Lottery funding has created welcome opportunities for sports clubs, local authorities, educational institutions and other agencies to fill some of the many gaps in local provision. At the same time, however, the thought of new facilities has perhaps diverted attention from the need to make the best possible use of those which already exist. The greatest potential to make positive changes to the use of existing facilities probably exists in secondary schools.

Undoubtedly, many school sports facilities are open to community users. However, it is often the case that there are significant constraints on this use. For example, they may be closed on Friday evenings and at the weekend or available only at a relatively high cost reflecting the need for janitors' overtime; they may be available only during term time; or they may have inadequate provision for people with disabilities. In addition, the pattern of use may be determined by a historical allocation of time to a handful of often small groups which are administratively convenient for the school but achieve little for local sport or local communities. A Study into Current and Future Issues in Sport and Leisure Provision in Scottish Local Authorities undertaken for **sportscotland** in 1998 noted that a significant number of local authorities had '... identified greater community access to school facilities as a policy objective preventing realisation of the benefits:

- Budget limitations
- Physical quality and suitability of premises
- Management and supervision arrangements
- Staff conditions of service'

In many rural areas, schools may have the only sports hall or swimming pool for many miles and therefore community use will be essential if local residents are to have the opportunity to take part in some sports. In urban areas, community use of existing school facilities is obviously preferable to, and much cheaper than, the provision of alternative facilities. Indeed, *Sport 21* makes the argument for greater community use of school sports halls in one simple statement:

'Scotland's pressing need for indoor sports halls would be halved if all current school facilities were available for community use during weekday evenings, weekends and school holidays'

As well as the quantity of community use, there may also be issues relating to the quality or type of use at some school facilities. For example, it can be relatively easy to fill school sports halls with 5-a-side football on midweek evenings but doing so will achieve little for other sports such as badminton, basketball, netball or volleyball. Arguably, these sports need a sports hall more than 5-side soccer, which can be played out of doors.

In a nutshell, **sportscotland** believes that many school facilities have the potential to be more available to community users. In addition, many of those facilities already used by the community could be used more effectively. However, it also recognises that opening up school facilities, or changing established patterns of use, may incur costs which cannot be met from school budgets. This means that whoever manages that use will have both to generate income from community use and, in many instances, work in partnership with other agencies active in the promotion of local sport and recreation. There are various ways in which different schools have sought to do this and no one model will suit all circumstances. Accordingly the time is right for schools and local authorities to review the way in which the community uses school facilities in their areas.

In general it is unlikely that schools, on their own, will be able to develop and sustain effective community use of their sports facilities. They lack specialist expertise in recreation management, their budgets are severely constrained and the pressures on their staff mean that they have little or no time to be involved in promoting and developing community use. It follows that many schools will have to develop partnerships with local recreation agencies in their areas, such as the local authority recreation service (including any non-profit distributing organisations local authorities may have set up to manage publicly provided facilities), local sports clubs and disabled groups or even private sector operators.

Forming partnerships, however, is not always as easy as it sounds; in addition it can also take considerable time and effort to agree how a particular partnership will operate and put in place the necessary budgets.

Two things normally stand out where effective partnerships are in place:

- The various partners are each clear about their own objectives, but willing to interpret them flexibly
- Each partner understands and respects the objectives, views and needs of the others

The main purpose of this document is to help local authorities and schools understand the main issues relating to the development of effective community use of their sports facilities. It is deliberately written from the perspective of sport rather than schools and sets out:

- A number of elements of the national policy context which are relevant when considering community use of school sports facilities
- The sporting context within which community use should be set
- A number of core principles relating to the way in which community use of school sports facilities should be promoted and managed
- The two main approaches to community use adopted in Scottish schools
- The key issues to consider when reviewing the potential for community use

Where possible, “case study examples” illustrate how one or more schools in various parts of Scotland have tackled the various key issues in ways **sportscotland** believes to be effective in terms of promoting community use. In addition, this publication is complemented by a Workbook which local authorities and schools - and any other prospective partner(s) - can use to assess the suitability of school facilities for community use and plan how to achieve it.

There are sound arguments for linking extra-curricular school sport to community sport so as to create pathways for young people who wish to develop their skills and enjoyment and reduce the “drop-out” from sport which so often occurs when they leave school. However, this publication is concerned

primarily with community rather than school sport, although of course school pupils are potential community users out of school hours. It also concentrates mainly on the issues relating to the community use of secondary school indoor sports facilities, although the same broad principles apply both to outdoor facilities and those on primary school sites.

Community use of school sports facilities is inevitably set within a changing national policy context. Some of the key factors affecting it include:

- *The School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988:*

under s14 of this Act, School Boards control the use of school premises outwith school hours, subject to the directions of the education authority on various matters such as charges.

- *Devolved Management of Schools:*

since the mid nineties, head teachers have had devolved responsibility for a wide range of financial and management issues formerly controlled by education authorities. The purpose of this reform was to give them greater flexibility to respond to the particular needs of their schools and pupils. Devolved budgets are unlikely to be sufficient to allow schools to meet the additional costs which will arise if they decide to make their sports facilities available for community use. They will then need to seek additional resources from their education authority. In addition, they may also have to seek their education authority's agreement to them retaining the income generated from community use: historically, some Councils have not allowed this.

- *New Community Schools:*

The Prospectus (Scottish Office 1998) invites local authorities throughout Scotland to take part in a pilot programme of New Community Schools, designed to promote social inclusion and raise educational standards. Pilot schools are required to embrace a number of key principles which include 'engagement with families, engagement with the wider community, health education and promotion and a set of integrated objectives and measurable outcomes'. Although *New Community Schools* does not mention sport and recreation even once, clearly community use of school sports facilities has the potential to help deliver some of the government's objectives. As the programme develops, it is likely to have an increasing impact on the way in which community use of all school facilities is integrated with daytime educational use.

- *Interchange 56: Schools and Community Education in the Learning Age (Scottish Office 1998)*

is concerned mainly with the partnership between schools and community education. However, the principle of schools working in partnership with other agencies with distinct but complementary roles can obviously be extended to other areas such as partnerships with local sports bodies to promote community use of school sports facilities.

- *The Modernisation of Local Government:*

various recent White Papers have highlighted the importance the UK government gives to improving local services as a key objective within its plans to modernise local government. The “Best Value” regime will have far-reaching impacts on the way in which all local authority services are planned, delivered and reviewed. In particular, all local authority services - including education and community education - will be required to have clear objectives and Councils will have to involve their communities more in setting targets and planning services. This could have far-reaching impacts on the way in which schools, local communities and local community education services use all school facilities.

- *The 1996 re-organisation of local government:*

the creation of unitary local authorities should have the effect of making it easier to form partnerships between the departments responsible for education and leisure and recreation. One of the lessons from the case studies is that it can be difficult if not impossible to establish the true costs attributable to community use of sports facilities. Fortunately this should be less important in a unitary authority responsible for both education and sport and recreation than in the former split of these responsibilities between Regional and District Councils. In addition, it should now be easier to develop effective sports development pathways from school to community sports participation and ensure that school sports facilities are at the heart of local sport and recreation strategies.

The Sporting Context

Sport 21 recommends that schools: “...should make positive provision for school sport in the overall development plan for the school. In particular, schools should establish a staffing responsibility within the school for the development of the extended curriculum and develop further the links between sport in school and sport in the community’

The appointment of School Sports Co-ordinators was designed originally to promote the development and delivery of the sports elements of the extended curriculum. **sportscotland**’s Lottery Fund School Sport Co-ordinator Programme, launched in early 1999, provides schools and local authorities with the opportunity to gain funding towards the appointment of Co-ordinators. However, Lottery funding is not available to support the provision of sports facilities required only for school curricular activities, although it may be available for alterations or additions when accompanied by realistic proposals for community use of whatever facilities result. **sportscotland** will provide details of available Lottery award programmes on request. The creation of links between school and community sport, however, has almost always depended on community rather than school-based sports development structures. The remit of School Sport Co-ordinators is likely to extend progressively in this area in accordance with government policy relating to the central role of schools in local communities. As school physical education and sport, on the one hand, and communitysport, on the other, are different things organised in different ways with a different ethos, the way in which school sports facilities are promoted and managed out of school hours is likely to have a significant impact on whether these links are effective.

There is also a highly significant issue relating to the quality of school sports facilities. In some schools, community use will be neither desirable nor achievable at realistic cost. Many, if not most schools can justifiably claim that they do not have adequate maintenance and repair budgets. The funds they do have available have, of necessity and by law, to be focused on school needs. At the same time, the advent of

sportscotland's Lottery Fund has significantly increased the financial resources available for new or enhanced community sports facilities. Progressively, and inevitably, new Lottery-funded facilities will raise community expectations with the result that dilapidated or outmoded ones - such as those found at many schools - may well find it increasingly difficult to attract users. Ensuring that the quality of school sports facilities, together with their programmes and management, are able to meet reasonable community expectations will not be easy and depend on funding other than that currently available from school budgets. This means that community use of school sports facilities should be a key issue in most local sport and recreation strategies. *Sport Matters: Planning for the Future* gives guidance to local authorities on the preparation of these strategies.

Some schools have an established tradition of promoting and being successful at a certain sport and can therefore take the view that they will be an ideal location for a local "centre of excellence" for it. However, creating a specialist centre of excellence is probably more difficult, and involves significantly more work, than many imagine. A partnership with the appropriate national governing body (NGB) will be critical if the school is likely to need a Lottery Fund award to allow the implementation of such schemes.

Core Principles

From a sports perspective, it is possible to state a number of core principles relating to the way in which community use of school sports facilities should be promoted and managed:

- *Developing effective community use of school facilities involves much more than simply opening the doors.*

The challenge is to promote and manage community use in ways which will achieve worthwhile results in terms of sport and generate community satisfaction, without being in any way detrimental to the over-riding educational role of the school or socially exclusive. It may also be necessary to generate significant income to help meet the additional costs which follow from community use. Striking an appropriate balance between potentially conflicting requirements - such as attracting low participant groups and income generation or the provision of a high quality service at affordable charges - is not easy and will involve skills most schools do not have.

- *Schools do not exist in isolation.*

The managers of school sports facilities, whoever they are, should be fully aware of and seek to play a key role in the preparation and implementation of local sport and recreation strategies, where they exist.

- *School sport should ideally provide clear pathways to community sport.*

The educational ethos of schools should mean that they have a natural affinity to the principles of sports development. In spite of this, some simply sell space to local clubs on a "long let" basis and do little to promote sports development (for example, by offering courses and coaching) or promote access by the wider community. Ideally, extra-curricular sport for pupils and participation in community recreation and sports development should be linked to create pathways for young people from school to community clubs and governing body structures. Accordingly, it may be desirable to seek to form school-club partnerships with those clubs which will offer quality opportunities to young people and, ideally, coaching.

- *Voluntary clubs are an important way in which most community users participate in sport.*

They provide a social context for sport and the best and most “development-minded” clubs are well run and will welcome new members of all ages and both genders and seek to integrate people with disabilities or learning difficulties. For some activities, such as team sports, gymnastics and martial arts, a vibrant club structure is almost essential. However, not all clubs - particularly those able to obtain only limited lets of school and similar facilities - have the potential to be development-minded. A policy of restricting club lets on the grounds that clubs may be exclusive or elitist can therefore be self-fulfilling. At each separate school facility, it may be better to work in partnership with only one club for each sport and help it to develop than offer facilities to a range of small clubs for only limited periods each week.

- *Club bookings should be balanced by both courses or classes and opportunities for casual participation.*

Some sports participants do not want to be members of clubs and for some sports, such as swimming, badminton, keep fit and aerobics, opportunities for casual recreational participation are vitally important and should be encouraged. Introductory and instruction courses and classes should also be an important part of the programme at most facilities, especially if they can be linked to club participation opportunities.

- *Programmes should develop over time.*

The demand for sport is not static but evolves as different sports go through periods of particular popularity. A good example of a short term - but annual - trend is the sudden rise in interest in tennis every year during Wimbledon. In addition, several schools have fitness facilities primarily because they have been able to convert a former squash court as interest in squash has reduced. Sports facility managers must seek continually to develop innovative programmes which respond to local and national trends.

- *Schools should complement not compete with other local sports or facilities or community centres.*

Where school sports facilities are located close to other similar facilities, whether they are school, public, voluntary or commercial, whoever is operating the school facilities should seek to work in partnership with these other facilities to ensure their programmes are complementary.

- *School facilities which are available to community users should be designed, maintained and operated at least to public sports facility standards.*

In some instances this may require relatively minor changes to school facilities, such as the provision of induction loops at reception points or braille buttons in lifts. It will always necessitate regular inspection of all facilities and equipment used by community participants and therefore higher repair and maintenance budgets than many schools have available. It will also require recreation management skills and experience in order to ensure that all aspects of customer care are up to public facility standards.

Approaches to Community Use of School Sports Facilities

Schools and local authorities have generally approached arrangements for the community use of school sports facilities from an administrative perspective. Broadly speaking, they have opted for one of two main models for the management and funding of community use of school sports facilities:

- *Single management:*

in this model, a single agency is responsible for managing the facilities at all times, including school hours, and all operational staff are employed by that agency. It follows that there is normally a single budget

covering both school and community use. The management agency can be the school, a single client department within the local authority, a management contractor or even an independent agency such as a trust. Where the facilities are not managed by the school it may be invoiced for their use but it is unable to dictate how the overall budget is spent.

- *Dual management:*

In this model the sports facilities are managed by a partnership between the school (responsible for overseeing and funding school use) and some other agency (responsible for all aspects of community use). It follows that the overall budget for operating the sports facilities is split between the partners and each controls their own proportion of it. Effective co-operation between the partners is then essential if this money is to be spent wisely. Again, in theory it does not greatly matter what the school's partner agency is, but in practice it often tends to be the community education service or something similar.

With the introduction of the best value regime, community use of school sports (and other) facilities will have to focus more on community and customer needs and a desire to achieve agreed and clearly stated sporting, social and financial outcomes. This is also one of the key messages in *New Community Schools*. Essentially, current objectives, performance indicators and targets relating to community use of school sports facilities - where they exist - tend most often to relate either to educational *inputs* (such as the number of courses provided with either a major or minor educational content) or controlling a budget.

This is not to deny the importance of administrative issues and budgets: clearly, they are critical to the continued community use of school facilities. But when budgets are severely constrained, it is all the more important to ensure that the available money is spent effectively and not just efficiently. Few schools making their sports facilities available to community users seem to set and monitor targets relating to, for example, utilisation rates; the promotion of junior sport; the promotion of sport for girls and women; the promotion of sport for people with disabilities; or the development of sports clubs. All of these are likely to figure in many if not most local sport and recreation strategies. *Sport Matters - Planning for the Future* highlights how typical sports objectives can link to appropriate performance indicators and targets. For example, an objective of "to promote women's football" might lead to a performance indicator of the number of teams playing regularly in a women's league and targets of:

- A development officer in post within 6 months
- At least 4 teams in a new league within 12 months
- At least 2 new teams in the league in each subsequent year

Case Studies of Community Use in Practice

In order to provide background material for this publication, **sportscotland** invited a number of local authorities to suggest case studies of the community use of secondary school sports facilities in their areas. All were chosen to be typical rather than necessarily represent best practice. Inevitably, they approach community use in different ways.

The case studies are summarised briefly below with further comparative material - for example, information on hours of opening, staffing and charges - in an appendix..

Single Management Case Studies

The single management case study schools are:

- *Aboyne Academy and Deeside Community Centre:*

this community school has a 25m x 4 lane pool, a 4 badminton court sports hall, a squash court and a fitness area housed in a former squash court, all of them available to community users. (Note: for the purposes of this publication, a “community school” is defined as one which allows adults and other non-pupils access to its facilities during the school day, whether for educational or recreational purposes) The sports facilities are an integral part of the main school building, which was built just before the 1975 re-organisation of local government by the former Aberdeenshire County Council. The sports facilities were part funded by money raised voluntarily throughout Deeside and therefore there has always been a need to maximise community use. Until recently, the school operated with a dual management system under which the Rector was responsible for everything during school hours and the Community Education Service for all out of school hours activities. Recently, however, all management has been harmonised into a single system under the Rector. The School Board is not involved in overseeing community use but trusts the professional staff to ensure it is well managed.

- *Arbroath Sports Centre:*

at Arbroath High School, the sports facilities consist of a 25m x 6 lane pool with learner area, 6 badminton court sports hall, 2 squash courts, a fitness area, school gymnasium and social facilities. They make up a stand-alone block with its own entrance on the school campus and were built by a partnership between the former Tayside Regional Council and Angus District Council. Angus Council, which inherited the facilities at the 1996 re-organisation of local government, has handed over the management of the complex to the Recreation Services Department. On-site management is now provided by the Council’s Contract Services with the Recreation Department as its client. The Council’s Education and Recreation Department has a formal service level agreement to ensure that curricular and extra-curricular educational needs will be met. The agreement also includes the constitution of an Advisory Committee whose role is to advise the Director of Recreation and management contractor on any matter affecting the use of the centre. The school has a role in the management of the sports facilities through a nominated representative on the Advisory Committee. In addition, there is ongoing liaison between both the Centre Manager and Rector/Principal Teacher of PE and senior headquarters staff of the various Council departments involved.

- *Musselburgh Sports Centre:*

this stand-alone centre was developed by the former East Lothian District Council on part of the Musselburgh Grammar School campus. Originally it consisted of “dry” facilities - a 6 badminton court sports hall, squash courts and fitness area - but East Lothian District Council subsequently added a 25m x 6 lane pool with movable floor and bulkhead, a health suite and children’s play area. Sport Plus, East Lothian Council’s leisure management contractor, operates the complex with the Council’s Education and Community Services Department as the client. The School Board has no involvement in the way the complex is operated.

- *Queensferry High Recreation Centre:*

the 20 x 7m pool, 4 badminton court sports hall, 2 badminton court size gymnasium and a newly refurbished Pulse Centre (fitness suite) at this community school had all been used by various clubs and community education groups for a number of years, but there was hardly any sports development and casual or weekend/school holiday use. To widen the appeal of the programme in an area with an identified need for community sports facilities, a partnership of the former Lothian Regional Council, City of Edinburgh District Council and **sportscotland**, with the support of the School Board, upgraded the pool changing for community use and provided additional dry sports changing and an entrance/reception/social area. It subsequently arranged for the sports facilities to be managed by Edinburgh Leisure (the company limited by guarantee set up by the City of Edinburgh Council as its leisure management contractor) instead of the school and community education service. The management operation is based on a written agreement among the original partners. This provides for the School Board to delegate control of community use of the sports facilities to an Executive Committee consisting of representatives of the local authority and **sportscotland**. This sets overall policy which is then implemented by a Management Advisory Committee made up of the Head Teacher and Principal Teacher of PE plus representatives of the local authority, School Board, community and Council. **sportscotland** Information Digest *FM26, Queensferry High Recreation Centre, A Partnership Project, (March 1997)* describes the way in which the development of community use was planned and progressed.

- *St Andrew's High School, East Kilbride:*

built without community use in mind, the sports facilities at this school originally consisted of a 4 badminton court sports hall and standard school gymnasium in a stand-alone block, which also contains changing facilities and the school's music department. There is also an outdoor synthetic 5-a-side area. In 1989-90, the former East Kilbride District Council entered into a formal agreement with the former Strathclyde Regional Council which allowed it to build a reception desk, lounge area and improve the changing areas and take over the management in order to facilitate community use. South Lanarkshire Council, as the successor to East Kilbride District Council, now provides on site management with the Recreation Department as the client. The School Board has no real role in the operation in the sports facilities for community use.

- *Black Isle Leisure Centre, Fortrose:*

this stand-alone "dry" centre is adjacent to Fortrose Academy and consists of a 4 badminton court sports hall, fitness room, a general purpose room, a cafe/lounge and a community room. In addition there is a Highland Council "Service Point" where local people can pay their community charge, register births and deaths and otherwise interact with the Council. It was developed by a partnership between the former Ross and Cromarty District Council Leisure Services and the former Highland Regional Council Education Department and operated in accordance with a formal dual use agreement. Since the re-organisation of local government in 1996 it has been operated by the Cultural and Leisure Services Department of Highland Council with a subvention of £20,000 from the Education Department and £7,000 from the Chief Executive's Department, the latter to meet costs associated with the Council's Service Point. The School Board has no involvement in the management of the centre although the manager has a close working relationship with school staff.

Dual Management Case Studies

The dual management case studies are:

- *Culloden Academy:*

This relatively recently built school has a sports wing, attached to the main school building, consisting of a 20 x 7m pool, 4 badminton court sports hall, a standard school gymnasium and a small fitness area. There are also outdoor facilities consisting of tennis/basketball courts and sports pitches. Originally intended as a community school, a significant rise in the school roll has resulted in community use being possible only outside school hours. This use is developed by the Highland Council Community Education Service through an on-site Senior Community Education Worker and managed by a Centre Co-ordinator under the aegis of a Management Committee, a sub-committee of the School Board. The school and community education service operate separate budgets, with the community education service one made up of income from the use of the facilities plus limited subvention - towards salary costs - from Highland Council.

- *Kirkcaldy High School:*

this community school has a 4 badminton court sports hall, squash court, fitness area (converted from a former squash court), balcony area, a standard school gymnasium and outdoor facilities. Community use is managed by the "Head of Centre" who reports to the Head of Community Services of Fife Council; the Rector, on the other hand, reports to the Director of Education. Both control their own budgets, although they work together where possible on a pragmatic basis. There is no school board because no parents have been willing to stand for one, but the Rector and Head of Centre have a very close and harmonious working relationship. Both are fully committed to community use of as much of the school as possible. The school also has access to a 7 x 5 m pool in the nearby St Andrew's High School and the Head of Centre manages community use of it as well as the Kirkcaldy High School facilities.

Key Issues

The experience from the case study schools is that a number of key issues has to be tackled if schools sports facilities are to be used effectively by the community:

The Best Value Key Issues:

- Challenge
- Consultation
- Comparison
- Competition

Additional Key Issues:

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

Challenge

Challenging their aspirations and delivery record is the first of what are likely to be the obligatory elements of the best value reviews local authorities will be required to undertake in relation to the services they provide for their local communities. However, unlike many traditional service reviews, best value will focus on making continuous improvements in the future and evaluating the capability of management structures to deliver those improvements. This may well require significant changes to the way in which some school sports facilities are operated, particularly where there are long-established letting policies and minimal pro-active development work.

Comparison

Customers may well compare what a particular school has to offer with other facilities and programmes in its area, if they exist; good practice is for those responsible for the management of community use of school facilities to do the same. In some instances - for example fitness facilities - it may be necessary to compare what the school has to offer with private sector competitors. The purpose of comparing the school's facilities and programmes with those on offer nearby is not necessarily to match them, but to find ways of differentiating the school in positive ways which will allow it to attract different users. Comparison is also at the heart of "best value" and makes it desirable for those responsible for the management of school sports facilities to gather and maintain sufficient management and usage information to be able to compare the performance of different facilities. Traditionally, management information has related to such things as levels of use, income and operating expenditure. In future it will be desirable to move to more sophisticated outcome measures.

Consultation

Many people outside the education and community education world are likely to have an interest in the way in which community use of school sports facilities is managed and therefore be potential partners in the promotion and development of that use. They include:

- **Users:**

A growing number of school and public facilities set up regular discussion groups or advisory committees which allow managers to obtain the views of users and established user groups such as clubs.

Case Study Example:

Several of the case studies, including Kirkcaldy, Arbroath and Queensferry, have an Advisory Committee on which users are represented. At Aboyne, the Recreation Officer has regular meetings with school staff, including janitors and community education, to ensure a wide ranging programme and resolve any perceived problems relating to community use. In addition, the results of a postal questionnaire led to alterations to the fitness room so that it reflects community rather than school requirements and expectations.

- **Non-users -**

who can also be thought of, more positively, as potential users. Consulting non-users is not easy and may be best achieved through general market research relating to the production of a local sports and recreation strategy. However, it may be possible even at the level of a single facility.

Case Study Example:

Culloden commissioned a specialist market research agency to undertake a local household survey and identify local community sport and community education needs. At Fortrose, the manager regularly consults the local Community Council.

Competition

In most urban areas, schools will not have the only sports facilities open to community users and may then have to compete for users. Equally, school PE teachers may be able to take classes to community facilities for some activities not possible on the school campus. It will hardly ever be sensible to attempt to compete purely on the basis of price - assuming that this is possible - as this may reduce income and result in reduced opening hours or a need for increased local authority subvention. Effective competition should normally be based on:

● *Responsiveness to customers:*

School sports facilities will only be used by members of the local community if they *want* to use them: unlike school pupils, there is no requirement on them to do so. This means that it can take time for community use of school sports facilities to build up. It also means that those responsible for managing community use have to find ways of meeting the needs of their customers through a variety of means including programming, the provision of coaching and providing essential back-up services such as meeting rooms for club committees.

● *Quality of facilities:*

community users are likely to be critical of substandard facilities and “vote with their feet” if a better alternative is available. The experience of various user surveys suggests that changing rooms are the area users are likely to criticise most, followed by actual sports facilities. If community users are to be attracted, and to keep returning, changing rooms must be clean and warm and offer reasonable privacy (for example, some women do not like open plan changing and many do not like open showers) and lockers for clothes storage.

Case Study Example:

In order to promote greater community use, Queensferry completely refurbished the pool changing to provide cubicles and lockers for users and added dry sports changing and lockers.

● *Effective promotion:*

Many users of school sports facilities will probably live fairly close to them and therefore should have a fairly high awareness of what the school has to offer. However, this will not always be the case and it may be necessary to promote the facilities the school has to offer to its local community. Effective means of doing this are likely to include school newsletters distributed to parents and the local community and “corporate” advertising by the local authority leisure and recreation service. Regular editorial coverage in a local newspaper is also highly desirable but paid-for advertising is usually less effective: “half of all the money spent on advertising is wasted, but no-one knows which half”.

Case Study Examples:

All of the case study schools use their newsletters to promote their sports facilities to local community users and advertise courses and classes.

Community use of school sports facilities will work well only if there is a clear commitment to it on the part of the school and all staff from head to janitor(s). In this the attitude of the Head Teacher is critical: he or she must actively promote a “community culture” - and ideally a supportive “sports culture” - throughout the school. In addition, however, school staff must also accept that the culture and organisation of community sport and recreation are very different from those of PE and school sport. As such, they require management attitudes and inputs which the school itself may not be able to provide.

Case Study Example:

At Kirkcaldy, the Rector is an active sports participant and encourages his staff to be involved in community sport, for example as officers of governing bodies of sport or coaches or tutors for community classes arranged by the Head of Centre. This helps school staff to understand and appreciate the differences between school and community sport.

Clarity of Purpose and Roles

The management of school facilities used by the community has not generally been subject to compulsory competitive tendering (CCT). One result is that the way in which community use is managed tends to lack the rigour imposed on public facilities by management specifications and contracts. Without adopting all of the negative aspects of the CCT philosophy - which, in any case, the government is superseding with a duty of best value - there is a need for those responsible for managing community use to have clear objectives with related performance indicators and targets. They are probably best stated in a formal agreement between the school and local authority sport and recreation service, reflecting both the school's ethos and local sport and recreation strategy. Such agreements can also usefully define explicitly the role of the different partners involved in promoting community use. This is an essential part of effective management: ultimately, the buck must stop with someone. Where the school has no direct involvement in the management of its sports facilities it will normally be desirable for there to be a service level agreement between school and the agency responsible for managing community use. This will help to persuade the school that its interests will be adequately protected and respected.

Case Study Examples:

At Arbroath, there is a Service Level Agreement between the Education Department (the purchaser) and the Recreation Services Department (the provider) which sets out: the service to be provided in the Sports Centre; the obligations of the purchaser; monitoring, review and communication; performance; variations; information and confidentiality; and charging method. As a result both school and community sport benefit. Broadly similar formal agreements also exist in East Kilbride, Queensferry and Aboyne. At Fortrose, Highland Council's Cultural and Sports Strategy has a significant influence on the way in which the centre is managed and programming priorities.

Community

“The community” is a fairly imprecise term. Schools naturally tend to define it in relation to the area from which their pupils are drawn, but other definitions are possible, particularly in the context of “community use”. For example, it can be defined geographically (like the school catchment), socially (for example in

terms of particular target groups or, at some facilities, members) or even in terms of sports participation (for example club or casual users or participants in a particular sport or sports). Deciding how it should be defined is a key element in setting clear objectives and may well influence the range of performance indicators and targets set for the operation and use of the school's sports facilities. For example, a suitable objective might be to provide a quality service which is valued by customers. An appropriate performance indicator could then be the proportion of users rating the level of service good or better in user surveys; and an appropriate target at least 90%. It is also critically important to be clear what is meant by "the community" if planning market research amongst non-users. Finally, having defined the community the school's sports facilities are intended to serve, it should be seen as a key partner in promoting community use.

Case Study Examples:

East Kilbride undertakes regular user surveys to establish customer satisfaction while Queensferry and Musselburgh use computerised tills to capture and monitor management information such as the proportion of men and women using the facilities. Queensferry undertook market research amongst shoppers in the local supermarket. Aboyne has used a postal self-completion questionnaire sent to both users and non-users in the school's catchment area to identify local views on the programme and facilities.

● ***The local authority Sport and Recreation Service:***

Sport Matters - Planning for the Future recommends that the local authority sport and recreation service should be the "conductor of the local sports orchestra". The local authority is also the democratically accountable body responsible for ensuring that there is adequate provision for local sport and recreation. Even if the Department responsible for sport and recreation does not have an up to date strategy, it will be aware of the needs of local sport and should be in touch with local clubs and governing bodies. In addition, many employ sports development officers who may be either sport-specific (for example, for football or gymnastics) or generic (for example, concerned with all sports or sometimes for particular target groups such as girls and women or people with disabilities). To be effective, they depend upon access to facilities to promote courses and classes and foster the development of clubs. They are potentially a very significant local resource for the managers of school sports facilities wishing to develop community use.

Case Study Example:

Junior sports development programmes and coaching at Kirkcaldy are set within the context of Fife Council's sport and recreation strategy.

Customer Care and Staffing

Community users cannot be treated like school children and instructed to behave in certain ways. Out of school hours, pupils are also community users and must be treated as such: they are learning how to live as members of the community. Staff responsible for supervising public users must be polite and helpful; the best run centres give all such staff - including janitors - training in customer care skills.

Case Study Examples:

At East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire Leisure Services is in the process of working towards QUEST registration for the management of all its sport and leisure centres. Angus Contract Services has recently achieved registration for all its sport and leisure facilities. (Note: QUEST is the UK Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure.) At Aboyne, all school staff who come into contact with community users have been given training in customer care and this has resulted in noticeable improvements in staff-customer relations. At Queensferry, Edinburgh Leisure undertakes an annual "servqual" (or service quality) survey.

The level of staffing required in any facility will depend primarily on:

- The need to ensure customer safety: as a general rule - although, for a variety of reasons, not always possible - there should be a minimum of two members of staff on duty at any time. In an emergency one member of staff can then deal with it while the other summons help. Swimming pools generate particular safety issues and *Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools* gives advisory guidance on a number of topics, including the number of lifeguards needed to supervise pools of different sizes and occupancies.
- The need to set up and move equipment: clubs can sometimes be expected to help set up equipment while casual users should not.
- The need to ensure the security of the building and collect user charges or handle requests for bookings.
- Site-specific emergency and normal operating procedures. Both schools and community sports facilities should always have both normal and emergency operating procedures. Where the sports facilities are linked to a school it is clearly desirable that they are common as much as possible, but some procedures which may be appropriate for a school will not be suitable for members of the public. It will be necessary to ensure that key staff - eg janitors - are familiar with both sets of procedures and understand the reasons for any differences.
- Legislation or related regulations, for example the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations

Consistency

The school's educational needs must clearly have priority over community use during the school day. In practice, those responsible for promoting community use normally meet with PE staff before the start of each school year or term to discuss their curricular and extra-curricular needs and ways of accommodating them. It is all too easy for PE staff to insist that "their" facilities must be available exclusively to the school throughout the school day, preventing activities such as swimming or play gym for parents and toddlers or swimming, badminton, keep fit and carpet bowls for senior citizens. All of these activities, if carefully programmed at times when facilities would otherwise be empty, will have very little impact on school use. Changes to daytime community access from term to term lead directly to a lack of consistency in the community use programme. Unfortunately, this will nearly always have the effect of reducing the level of this use and therefore income. Community use is likely to be highest when particular users can participate in sport or recreation at a certain time of the day on a week in, week out basis: this allows them to build sports participation into their normal week. Chopping and changing the programme, on the other hand, causes some users to "drop-out". While school needs will have priority in school hours, therefore, school PE staff should also be flexible enough to allow the development of a consistent community use programme.

Case Study Examples:

Aboyne, Musselburgh and Queensferry all offer community users daytime access to sports facilities not required for school PE programmes. At Arbroath, Angus Council has a policy that there should be equal levels of school and public access to the swimming pool throughout the school day.

Collaboration

Effective community use of school sports facilities can only be achieved with the goodwill of school staff. School heads and their staff, including janitors, must work closely with those responsible for managing community use. In all the case studies, those responsible for community use and head teachers had an excellent working relationship and this usually followed through to other school staff. Where problems had occurred, they did so primarily because equipment had been left in the wrong place or damaged by either school or community users. School PE staff, in particular, do not have the time to hunt for equipment which has been put away in the wrong place or tidy up a space left in a mess by community users. For PE staff to support community use of school sports facilities, it is vital that their curricular and extra-curricular work is not damaged by it. Both school and community staff must do their best to understand each other's problems and ethos, but also be flexible in their approach. This may require training. A service level agreement can give school staff confidence that their needs will be met.

Where there are several publicly funded facilities in an area, it will also be sensible for them to collaborate with each other in order to promote new participation rather than re-distribute existing demand.

Case Study Examples:

All the sports halls in Kirkcaldy are on secondary school campuses - there are no "public" facilities in the town. The Rector and Head of Centre plan their community programme in the light of what other schools are doing to make sure their school is offering complementary rather than competing opportunities for sport. In East Kilbride, different school facilities specialise in promoting particular sports: for example, Greenbills Sports Centre, less than a mile from St Andrew's, concentrates on gymnastics. At Queensferry, the school and Edinburgh Leisure have jointly purchased items of equipment that could not have been afforded if paid for from a single budget. At Aboyne, all sports equipment is purchased jointly with the school for use by both school and community. At Fortrose, all sports equipment is shared by the school and community users and the school and community budget take "turns about" to pay for the replacement of damaged equipment, irrespective of how it may have been damaged.

Courses and Classes

At many school sports facilities, a programme of courses and classes is inherently desirable and of course a good "fit" with the educational role and ethos of schools. However, courses and classes with no obvious pathways or "exit routes" to clubs or other continued participation opportunities tend to achieve little other than generate some short term interest which is not subsequently sustained. This can even be manifest in high levels of drop-out from courses and classes - which means that it is normally sensible to seek payment for courses in advance rather than on a lesson by lesson basis. In almost all cases, it is good educational and sports development practice to encourage those who are introduced to a particular activity to move on to higher levels of proficiency and enjoyment, whether at the school or some other venue. For this reason welcoming, development-minded, centre-based clubs with adequate access to appropriate facilities are a desirable complement to programmes of courses and classes; such clubs can also help to provide them.

Case Study Examples:

At Queensferry, the operation of the sports facilities by Edinburgh Leisure has allowed the management to tap into the City's swimming development programme. This means that there is a comprehensive and well structured programme of professionally supervised classes and training opportunities for those children who wish to improve their swimming skills and perhaps move on to competitive swimming. At Aboyne, the Recreation Officer is working with the local Sports Development team to develop coaching for both adults and children in a range of sports so as to develop pathways from junior to adult participation. At Fortrose, Highland Council's Sports Development Officer is allocated time within the Centre to organise courses. The manager encourages his staff to take part in these courses so that they can help to organise further sessions for local youngsters.

Where community use of school facilities is managed by the community education service, there is often a strong educational ethos underlying the programme, expressed through a comprehensive programme of courses and classes. In extreme cases, however, some community education workers can be hostile to organised sports clubs which they may regard as exclusive or elitist. Where this approach is at odds with local sports and community preferences it should be reviewed. It is also the case that some small classes can become cliques every bit as much as some small clubs.

Casual Users

Block bookings giving particular clubs or other organised groups a long let of facilities (usually for a minimum of 10 weeks, because of VAT rules) are administratively convenient but discriminate against those who are not or do not wish to be members of them. In addition any facility which depends almost exclusively on club bookings may well find it difficult to fill the "out of season" periods for the sports played by those clubs.

"Casual users" can be either individuals who book facilities for a single pay and play session or more or less organised groups which seek occasional rather than regular bookings or lets. Indoor casual use tends to be badminton or 5-a-side soccer (in sports halls), recreational swimming, squash, aerobics and the use of fitness facilities. In any area, there should be readily available opportunities for both types of casual use; but they do not have to be available all of the time. This is therefore another area in which collaboration with any nearby facilities makes sense, particularly as casual use will often require a higher level of staffing than club use. Ideally, there should be a balance between the three main types of use: courses and classes; clubs with long lets; and casual. What that balance is will vary from one facility to another but should reflect the priorities of any local sport and recreation strategy. **sportscotland** believes that an appropriate programme balance will generally be along the lines of 50% casual use, 25% courses or classes and 25% clubs. At most schools there will also be occasional special events.

Case Study Examples:

At East Kilbride, 5-a-side bookings are allowed only at times which are not peak for casual use, such as 1700-1800 or 2200-2300 hours. At Aboyne, in response to community demand identified through a self-completion questionnaire, more time in the sports hall has been allocated to casual use. In addition, any spare time during the school day is advertised and made available to the local community. At Fortrose, there is an informal but effective arrangement which allows local people to pay at the Service Point for a visit to the fitness area during the school day when there are no "community" staff on duty.

Coaches

In any area, there may be many sources of potential coaches and course leaders, including the school's PE or other teachers, NGBs, local clubs and local sports development officers. In some schools, parents may also be able to assist. A basic NGB qualification should be regarded as the acceptable minimum in order to promote good practice.

Child Protection

All coaches or leaders who may come into contact with children should be vetted by checking with the Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO).

Case Study Example:

Edinburgh Leisure has adopted a comprehensive child protection policy which it implements at all the facilities it operates, such as Queensferry. This gives both parents confidence that their children will be safe and the management clear guidelines and procedures for dealing with any suspected or alleged case of abuse. All the case study centres undertake SCRO checks on coaches.

Charges

The charges at publicly-funded sport and recreation facilities are generally set at a level which the local authority believes will be affordable by the vast majority of potential users. For obvious reasons, this general principle should be adopted at school facilities. However, charges at school facilities can really only be the same as at other public facilities if they offer comparable facilities, an equally acceptable programme and similar standards of customer care. On the other hand, research for **sportscotland** has demonstrated that low charges are not an effective way of maximising use and low charges can result in users lacking respect for facilities and abusing them. In addition, the Accounts Commission for Scotland has recommended that local authorities should adopt a more systematic approach to the way in which they set charges.

Unless charges are set at a very low level, it will probably be the case that some potential users will not be able to afford them. In order to make it easier for these people to take part in sport, schools should follow the lead given by the local authority sport and recreation service in promoting schemes such as "Passports to Leisure" which offer concessionary prices to juniors, senior citizens and those who are disadvantaged in some way.

Facility managers should also have the discretion to use common sense and be innovative when hiring out their facilities. For example:

- When most of the other facilities in a centre are in use, it can be better to have a particular area, normally hired out at £10, used for £5 than not used at all
- A free creche - perhaps supervised by one or more parents in a rota - can make it possible to attract mothers of young children to women's mornings
- A composite off-peak "fitness and swim" ticket can be attractive to many potential community users

Case Study Examples:

Aboyne has let local groups use facilities for meetings and other activities at a lower than normal charge while other parts of the centre are in use at times when insisting on the full normal payment would have meant the area lying empty. Queensferry uses “promotional pricing” throughout the year to maximise levels of use at certain times or promote particular activities. The case study examples generally offer some form of concessionary pricing scheme targeted, for example, at families in receipt of Council tax rebate, unemployed people, registered disabled people, retired people over the age of sixty, students in full time education, “Young Scot” card holders and members of governing body national squads. At Fortrose the manager has discretion to reduce charges when he considers it appropriate.

Condition

Facilities and equipment which are seen as good enough for school pupils are not necessarily so acceptable to paying customers. Because of the nature of much of their use, and the limited repair and maintenance budgets available to most schools, many school sports facilities are in a less good condition than nearby public ones. The same criticism is likely also to apply to equipment. Schools tend to be maintained on a breakdown or crisis basis but facilities used by the community should be subject to regular inspection. If there is a quality management scheme in place - as at many public facilities - this will almost inevitably include regular formal checking of the condition and operation of all parts of the building and sports equipment. The cost of implementing effective preventive maintenance procedures can appear to be a burden on limited school and community budgets but should actually save money and help to maintain income levels. A good example is the re-lamping of sports halls. Some schools have a policy of replacing failed lamps when a set number or proportion are no longer working - only for others to fail shortly afterwards. The result is that customers perceive the hall as almost permanently under-lit and dilapidated. A better approach is to re-lamp all the fittings at this point as all lamps of the same type should have roughly the same life. Moreover, the main cost in replacing lamps in a sports hall is often the hire of scaffolding, rather than the cost of the replacement lamps, and so it makes sense to undertake the operation as infrequently as possible.

For obvious reasons, school maintenance tends to be carried out during school holidays. The maintenance of school sports facilities used by the community should also be undertaken, as much as possible, at times which will not disrupt community use programmes. Where this will not be possible, community users must be given ample notice of any necessary closures. In addition, whenever elements of school sports facilities are replaced this should be done to public rather than school standards. In some instances this may require the incorporation of specific measures not normally included in most schools, such as induction loops or disabled hoists in pools.

In addition, there is a tendency for local authorities to cascade fitness or other equipment to school facilities when it is replaced in a public leisure centre. Where this happens, many users may view the school facilities as outmoded - although it can often be upgraded quite simply and cheaply, for example by re-covering seat squabs. An alternative approach, such as leasing more modern equipment, may sometimes be preferable and lead to higher income levels with which to meet the leasing costs.

Case Study Examples:

Queensferry maintains separate equipment for hire by community users (eg badminton racquets, shuttlecocks, footballs) from that used by the school as the condition of some school equipment means that it is not suitable for use by paying customers. At Aboyne, school janitors are responsible for regular maintenance checks and minor “bandyman” repairs. At Fortrose, Highland Council operates to a five year maintenance plan which is agreed with the manager of the centre.

Cleaning

Thirteen year old schoolboys and thirty year old women generally have very different attitudes to dirt. Community use of school sports facilities therefore automatically necessitates additional cleaning. Following extra-curricular school activities, there may be a short "window of opportunity" of only some 10-15 minutes before the start of public use when cleaning can take place and the school management and cleaners have to understand this when planning cleaning regimes. At all of the case studies, changing rooms were cleaned before and at the end of school use each day; in some of them, there were also two daily cleans of other areas. Clearly there is a cost associated with this extra cleaning which the school cannot normally be expected to meet.

Case Study Example:

At Aboyne, pool staff clean the "wet" facilities and school cleaners the "dry" areas. Where any special cleaning is required as a result of club use the cost is charged to them. When Fortrose opened, all cleaning was undertaken by part time leisure attendants who came on duty at the end of the school day but the centre now also employs a cleaner in the mornings during term time.

Contracts

Although they have not been subject to CCT, schools are no strangers to contracts relating to such things as catering, cleaning and maintenance. The case studies suggest that schools have not always been satisfied with the quality of service they have received under contracts of this type, whether from private or local authority contractors. One reason for this may be that contract specifications have perhaps tended to concentrate more on inputs than outcomes. However, this does not necessarily mean that contracts should be avoided; instead, there is a need to specify better what is expected of the contractor and possibly institute more effective monitoring procedures. The local authority sport and recreation service will normally have greater experience of this than most schools.

Community Safety

Although not deliberately so, most schools are designed for use primarily during daylight hours. Moreover, sports facilities tend to be "round the back" rather than close to and obvious from the main entrance. In some instances, car parking may be a significant distance away. At night, this can sometimes give rise to concerns relating to community safety, particularly if the facilities are close to dark playing fields or wooded areas. Overcoming these concerns may involve the provision of additional lighting and closed circuit television.

Case Study Example:

At East Kilbride, the sports facilities are "round the back" of the school and adjoin playing fields which can appear threatening at night. Accordingly, when the former East Kilbride District Council took over the management, the alterations it made to the facilities included additional external lighting and a CCTV system. Kirkcaldy found that the provision of additional external lighting and CCTV supervision resulted in significant reductions in vandalism.

Control and Security

All schools are acutely aware of the vital importance of ensuring that pupils and staff are as safe as possible while in school. They tread a fine line between making their premises open and welcoming, on the one hand, and adopting a "fortress school" approach, on the other. All schools now operate rigid procedures requiring, at the minimum, visitors to check in at the school office and receive a badge before accessing any other area of the school. Nonetheless, opening up sports or other facilities for community use obviously has the potential to compromise school security during the school day.

Effective security is easiest when any sports facilities which can be used by the community are stand-alone or have their own identifiable "community" entrance (or can be provided with one) in a position which community users can access without passing through any part of the school. Conversely, it is most difficult when access is through the main school building. In large schools, for example, it is quite easy for first time or occasional visitors to get lost, particularly as schools tend to lack the directional signage found in most public sports facilities. In either case, any day-time community users within sports facilities should not be able to make their way unsupervised into the main area of the school. This may require special arrangements to control doors or corridors linking the main part of the school with its sports facilities. Security is also important out of school hours, particularly as it is at these times that most vandalism occurs. Community use generally begins around 1700 or 1800 hours, after any extra-curricular programmes operated by the school. Historically, school janitors have been responsible for out of hours security such as locking up at night and in order to reduce what would otherwise be essential overtime community use at some schools ends at around 2100 hours. However, longer opening hours are desirable for sports facilities used by local communities and therefore additional or alternative locking-up procedures may be needed. It may also be necessary to review insurance arrangements.

Case Study Examples:

Culloden has been built with a single entrance for both school and community users, with the main car park immediately adjacent to it. On entering the school building, the sports facilities are to the left and the remainder of the school to the right. There is also a single office controlling access to both parts of the building. Aboyne also has a single school and community entrance and operates a "sign in/sign out" system during the school day. Queensferry has separately controlled "school" and "community" entrances to its indoor sports facilities, while at Arbroath the sports facilities are in a stand-alone block with its own entrance. At Fortrose, as there are no staff on duty during school use, PE staff use a security access code to allow pupils into the building.

Costs

Community use of school sports and other facilities inevitably results in increased costs for things such as wear and tear on the building and equipment, heat and light and supervision and staffing. However, devolved budgets given to schools for educational purposes cannot be used to subsidise community use of sports or other facilities or replace equipment worn out or damaged as a result of community use. Accordingly, as far as possible, schools need to be able to identify the operating costs arising as a result of community use and find a way of meeting them, whether from activity income, sponsorship and local authority or other subvention. This is rarely easy. For example:

- Unless environmental servicing systems at the sports facilities are separately metered - and those meters monitored closely - the costs of energy use cannot be apportioned accurately to school and community use
- Out of school hours, a janitor may nominally be helping to oversee community use and perhaps paid from the community budget - but actually undertaking school-related tasks
- Wear and tear on building fabric and environmental servicing systems cannot easily be apportioned to school and community use
- Sports or other equipment used by both school and community will wear out more quickly than if used by the school alone
- Insurance costs cannot easily be allocated to school and community use

The evidence from the case studies is that payroll costs can usually be allocated fairly easily to the school or community budget, but other costs are often apportioned on what is ultimately an arbitrary basis. In some cases this probably works to the school's advantage, in others to its disadvantage, although with dual management it tends to be the school rather than the community budget which is more likely to meet "hidden costs". The case study schools, however, were all able to identify direct benefits to the school from community use which could be expressed in cash terms, including reduced vandalism and additional resources for maintenance and repairs. In some instances they had also been able to attract additional capital funding for enhanced facilities which benefited pupils as well as their local community.

In general, cost allocations seem to be done primarily for budget purposes with on-site school and community staff subsequently working pragmatically to juggle the total devolved and community use budget as best they can. In theory at least, this is more acceptable than when Regional Councils were responsible for education and District Councils for sport and recreation. The proportion of total costs met by different services or departments does not affect a unitary local authority's "bottom line".

Clarity over operating costs should be an important part of determining user charges but clearly in many cases it is not. Two of the case studies, for example, have a stated policy of "cost recovery" for hires by commercial groups but in reality cannot calculate what this means and so simply charge an arbitrarily higher amount than the charge to clubs and other community groups.

Cash

The promotion of community use of school sports facilities - particularly when casual use is involved - creates a need for cash handling, invoicing and payment procedures which the school may not have in place. It may also be necessary to create a special bank account or create a number of dedicated accounting codes. In addition, the school safe may not be available to the community management at the time when it is likely to be most needed - on midweek evenings and at weekends. This can result in concerns for the safety of staff and a need for night-time security pick-ups (which cost money) or a "community" safe.

Case Study Example:

At Aboyne all income is split into "building" and "programme" accounts and kept in safes in the school office and reception area with school janitors responsible for the banking of cash as required.

Communications

Partnerships between different agencies depend on commitment, honesty, clarity of purpose and mutual understanding. Even when these are all in place, however, there will always be some constraints and tensions between those responsible for promoting school and community use. These can be managed and overcome only through effective two-way communication and for this reason it is desirable that there should be:

- A close and trusting relationship between the head teacher and whoever is responsible for managing community use on a day to day basis
- Some kind of forum for the discussion and resolution of management or other issues

Changes to School Sports Facilities

Sports facilities designed according to Scottish Office guidelines for school PE facilities are not automatically suitable for community use. The most common changes needed are likely to include:

- A reception area backed by an office with secure storage for cash
- A staff mess room
- A small social area with one or more vending machines
- Lockers in changing areas; although if the provision of lockers in a school changing room used by dry sports users would reduce its size significantly, or create nooks and crannies out of view of the entrance to the area, lockers can sometimes be provided in an adjacent corridor instead of within the area
- Additional cubicles and privacy screens or curtains in changing and shower areas (especially those used by women) and measures to prevent users looking over the top of one changing cubicle into an adjacent one
- Additional sports hall storage
- Upgrading of facilities for people with disabilities
- A first aid room
- Signage
- External lighting and closed circuit television

Case Study Examples:

The “community extensions” at East Kilbride and Queensferry both included a reception desk with back-up office.

Accreditation

Increasing numbers of schools are seeking to gain various forms of accreditation for their management practices such as “Investors in People” or “Charter Mark” status. They can generate pride among staff and give confidence to parents, education departments and councillors. The management of school sports facilities used by the community should also be subject to appropriate quality assurance procedures and independent accreditation. QUEST, the UK Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure endorsed by the four home country Sports Councils, sets good practice standards and benchmarks against which service delivery can be measured.

Case Study Examples:

Both South Lanarkshire and Angus Councils have adopted the Quest standards for the management of all their sports facilities with Arbroath (Angus Council) already having achieved accreditation. Edinburgh Leisure has developed its own in-house quality system. At Aboyne, the Recreation Officer is planning to benchmark the facilities against those in similar centres.

Conclusions

Community use of school sports facilities is a simple and obviously sensible concept. Unfortunately, however, it can be made unnecessarily complicated by:

- Entrenched attitudes, whether of school staff (from janitors to head teachers), established user groups (“we’ve a right to...”) or development partners
- Overpreciousness on the part of school staff
- Poor vision by those planning or managing community use
- Territorialism (“we need/want our own...”)
- An inability to understand or consider others’ point of view
- Lack of clarity over objectives and costs
- Inadequate funding

Effective community use of school sports facilities involves much more than simply opening the doors to community users. Giving long lets of school sports halls to 5-a-side soccer groups or badminton clubs gets them used and is usually cost-effective, but may achieve little for sport and the wider community. It may also not pass the emerging test of best value when seen in the context of local sport needs.

The most important thing - and it has been a recurring theme throughout this publication - is that community use of school sports facilities should be seen and managed in the context of a local sport and recreation strategy every bit as much as, and possibly more than, the school's educational objectives. Effective community use of school sports facilities is not simply a matter of filling space, generating income and promoting the school to its local community. It also involves helping to develop local sport and recreation; ensuring that all users are treated with respect and receive high standards of customer care; providing value for money; and good working conditions and job satisfaction for staff. Most important, it requires specialist sport and recreation management input which most schools are probably unable to provide on their own. Effective recreation management inputs should create worthwhile and tangible benefits and outcomes for both schools and their communities, including:

Benefits to the school

- Enhanced educational value
- Additional resources of people and money
- More or better sports equipment
- Access to information, contact and skills development networks
- A widening of the school's culture and values
- Pathways to community sports participation for pupils
- Enhanced local image and profile
- Less vandalism
- Better maintenance
- Work experience opportunities for pupils

For the local community

- Access to professionally managed local facilities
- Access to local coaching and instructional classes
- Greater sense of community and involvement with the school
- Personal enjoyment and fulfilment
- Improved health and fitness
- Active promotion of sport and recreation to young people

Finally, the administratively-led classification of “single” and “dual” structures for the management of community use of school sports facilities may be increasingly inappropriate. Under the best value regime, structures should be designed to deliver agreed outcomes, not determined by administrative convenience. Among the case studies, Arbroath, East Kilbride, Musselburgh and Queensferry - where specialist leisure management contractors operate the sports facilities - appear generally to have the most balanced programmes and achieve the most for local sport. They also help to maximise the relevance and importance of the school to its local community. The schools involved, albeit after initial misgivings in some instances, view the involvement of professional sport and recreation management very positively. It allows them to concentrate on their "core business" of educating pupils and ensures that their sports facilities are better maintained at lower cost to them than if they were responsible. As the on-site managers are employed by specialist recreation management contractors, they have access to a range of back-up services such as management information and quality assurance systems, maintenance contracts for sports equipment, child protection policies, specialist training and marketing and promotion. It is very easy for schools to be unaware of them and therefore under-estimate the benefits they can create for both school and community users.

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Community Use of School Sports Facilities

Comparative Data on the Case Studies

Note: these data refer to financial year 1999-2000

Sports Facilities

	Pool	Sports hall	Gymnasia	Squash courts	Fitness	Other
Aboyne	25m x 4 lanes	4 badminton courts	No gymnasia	1	Yes	Lounge, GP room, Residential unit, Coffee bar, Meeting room, Outdoor pitches.
Arbroath	25m x 6 lanes with children's area	6 badminton courts	1	2	Yes	Lounge (used for dance), GP room, Resource base, Outdoor pitches - area about 30 acres.
Culloden	20 x 10 m	4 badminton courts	1	No squash courts	Yes	Outdoor tennis and basketball courts, Grass pitches: 2 football, 2 hockey, 2 rugby.
Fortrose	No pool	4 badminton courts	No gymnasia	No squash courts	Yes	Committee room GP room (also used as crèche) Cafeteria
Kirkcaldy	Access to nearby St. Andrew's High School pool - 7 x 5 m	4 badminton courts	2	1	Yes	Balcony area used for some activities eg ballet. 3 tennis courts 6 outdoor pitches Meeting rooms
Musselburgh	25m x 6 lanes pool with health suite (Jacuzzi, steam and sauna)	6 badminton courts	No gymnasia	2	Yes	Soft play area Meeting rooms
St Andrew's	No pool	4 badminton courts	1	No squash courts	Yes	2 tennis courts - little used Synthetic grass area Blaes football pitch
Queensferry	20 x 7 m	4 badminton courts	No gymnasia	No squash courts	Yes	Pitches/playing fields

Management Structure

	Aboyne	Arbroath	Culloden	Fortrose	Kirkcaldy	Musselburgh	St Andrew's	Queensferry
<i>Type of management</i>	Single	Single	Dual	Single	Dual	Single	Single	Dual
<i>Local authority committee responsible for approving community use budget</i>	Aberdeenshire Council Education Committee	Angus Council Recreation Committee	Highland Council Education Committee	Highland Council Cultural and Leisure Services Committee	Fife Council Education Committee	East Lothian Council Education and Community Services Committee	South Lanarkshire Council Recreation Committee	City of Edinburgh Council Recreation Committee
<i>Advisory Committee Structure</i>	There is no advisory committee, only a management team of the Rector, Depute rector, two Assistant rectors and the Recreation Officer.	An advisory management committee was formed when the centre came under the Education Department and involved a representative from each of the schools using the centre, a representative of the Community Education service; a representative of the local Community Council; the local Councilors; a representative of the users; and the centre manager. However, as the Centre is now run by Contract Services to a written specification there is little role for the Committee although it still exists.	Informal management advisory committee consisting of representatives of the School Board and each of the local Community Councils with the school's Rector, the Senior Community Education Worker and the Centre Co-ordinator as advisers.	No advisory committee structure. The centre is operated by Highland Council Cultural and Leisure Services in accordance with centrally determined policies.	Advisory Management Committee consisting of three school representatives (one of whom is the Rector); the Head of Centre (employed by Fife Council Community Services); the local Councilors; four user representatives; and the Fife Council Locality manager responsible for the letting of school premises.	Community Use Advisory Committee with 3 from the school (at least one a pupil), the local Councillor, representatives of the Community Council, four community users (at least one a young person), the Locality Manager, Head of Centre and a representative of the Head of Community Services.	No advisory committee structure; instead the Centre is operated by South Lanarkshire Leisure in accordance with the mission and objectives of the South Lanarkshire's Leisure Services department.	Management Advisory Committee consisting of: Head Teacher, School Board representative, sportscotland representative, community education representative, Edinburgh Leisure representative, user group representative and Manager.

	Aboyne	Arbroath	Culloden	Fortrose	Kirkcaldy	Musselburgh	St Andrew's	Queensferry
<i>Agency responsible for on-site management of community use</i>	School	Angus Council Contract Services (leisure management contractor)	Community Education	Highland Council Cultural and Leisure Services	Community Services Department	East Lothian Sport Plus (leisure management contractor)	South Lanarkshire Leisure (leisure management contractor)	Edinburgh Leisure (leisure management contractor)
<i>Relationship between management of school and community use</i>	Integrated	Angus Council Education Department has a service level agreement with Angus Council Recreation Services	Informal	Informal	Informal	Informal	Informal	Formal Management Agreement
<i>On-site individual ultimately responsible for community use</i>	School Rector	Centre manager (employed by Angus Council Contract Services)	School Rector	Centre manager (employed by Highland Council Cultural and Leisure services)	Head of Centre (employed by Fife Community Services Department)	Centre manager (employed by East Lothian Sport Plus)	Centre manager (employed by South Lanarkshire Leisure)	Centre manager (employed by Edinburgh Leisure)

Non - School Staffing

	Aboyne	Arbroath	Culloden	Fortrose	Kirkcaldy	Musselburgh	St Andrew's	Queensferry
<i>Management</i>	Recreation Officer	Operations Manager	Senior Community Education Worker, Centre Co-ordinator	Centre manager (also manages Dingwall Leisure Centre)	Head of Centre, 4 Deputies - all teachers in the school	Manager	Manager	Manager Duty Manager
<i>Supervisors</i>	2 supervisors and 5 part time relief supervisors	3 charge hands employed by Angus Council Contract Services with no involvement of school janitor	Pool supervisor	None	Full time secretary 3 supervisors Janitor 1800-2300 Also pool attendant and 1 janitor and 1 attendant at St Andrews HC for 12 hrs a week	2 senior leisure attendants	None	
<i>Leisure attendants</i>	12 part time leisure attendants	A mix of full and part time leisure attendants	Around 12 part time leisure assistants	1 full time leisure attendant and 4 part time leisure attendants	5 part time leisure attendants 4 part time pool attendants	6 full time 9 part time	2 full time 2 part time	8 part time
<i>Reception</i>	4 receptionists	1 full time senior receptionist and 1 part time receptionist	3 part time receptionists	2 part time receptionists, supplemented by staff in the Highland Council "Service Point" during the school day	1 full time secretary 3 part time evening receptionists	2 part time with leisure attendants also covering reception as required		2 part time clerical receptionists
<i>Other</i>	2 Clerical Assistants, 1 Senior Community Education Worker, 2 Adult Education Workers, 1 Under 12 Worker and 5 Youth Workers	Part time tutors and instructors as required	30 part time tutors and instructors, Clerical Assistant Janitors' overtime from 1900 at all times. 50% of pool supervisor's salary		30 part time tutors 4 part time janitors Cleaners	6 cleaners		About 16 coaches
<i>Role of school janitors in relation to community sports use</i>	Responsible for setting up community equipment and supervising the building after office hours	None	Community use budget pays for janitors' overtime on midweek evenings and at weekends	Carries out minor "handyman" repairs as necessary	Community use hours paid as overtime			Janitors open and secure facilities, treat pool water and undertake minor maintenance

	Aboyne	Arbroath	Culloiden	Fortrose	Kirkcaldy	Musselburgh	St Andrew's	Queensferry
<i>Casual swimming</i>	Adults: £1.70 Concessions: £0.85	Adults: £1.70 Concessions: £1.00	Members: Adults: £1.20 Concessions: £0.85 Non-members: Adults: £1.85 Concessions: £1.25	Not applicable	Adults: £1 (40 minutes) Concessions 45p Junior: 70p (40 mins)	Adults: £1.75 Concessions: £0.95 Juniors: £0.95	Not applicable	Adults: £1.20 Concessions: 70p
<i>Sports ball</i>		Half Hall plus room: £18 per 2 hours Adults: £1.70 per person	£20 for first hour then £12	Adults: £20 Concessions: £12 Out of normal hours: £35	Adults: £20.30 (50 minutes) Juniors: £12.00 (50 minutes)	Adults: £3.59 Juniors: £19.80	Adults: £24.40/hour Juniors: £12.20/hour	Adults: £22 Juniors: £10
<i>Badminton court (per hour)</i>	Adults: £1.60 Concessions: £0.80	Concessions: £1 per person	Members: Adults £1.20 Concessions: £0.85 Non-members: Adults £1.85 Concessions £1.25	Adults: £5.00 Concessions: £3.00	Adults: £4.40 Concessions: £2.20 Juniors: £2.95 Concessions: £1.50	Adults: £3.25 Concessions: £1.65 Juniors: £1.65	Adults: £6.10/ hour Juniors: £3.05/hour	Adults: £5.20 Concessions: £2.40
<i>Fitness suite</i>	Adults: £1.60	Concessions: £1.70	Members: Adults £1.20 Concessions: £0.85 Non-members: Adults £1.85 Concessions £1.25	Adults: £2.75 Concessions: £2.00	Adults: £9.85/hour Concessions: £4.92 Juniors: £7.25/hour Concessions: £3.65	Adults: £2.70 Concessions: £1.40		Adults: £3.40 Concessions: £2.00
<i>Squash court</i>	Adults: £1.60 Concessions: £0.80	Adults: 85p/30 minutes Concessions: 50p/30 minutes	Not applicable	Not applicable	Adults: £2.15 Concessions £1.10 Juniors: £1.45 Concessions: 75p	Adults: £4.55 (45 minutes) Concessions: £2.55 (45 minutes) Juniors: £2.55 (45 minutes)		
<i>Additional notes</i>			Pitch charge is £20 per match	Highland Council operates a "Loyalty Card scheme" offering a range of benefits including reduced charges.	The "Fifstyle Card" allows users a 50% reduction in admission charges on a Fife-wide basis			



