

**REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 2009**

INCREASING ADULT PARTICIPATION IN SPORT (NI 8)

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Bob Dimond, Medway Park and 2012 Sports Development Manager

Summary

To outline proposed actions to help Medway meet its agreed Local Area Agreement target NI8, to increase adult participation in sport to 23.2% by June 2011, an increase of five per cent in three years from the agreed base figure.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The priorities for the Local Area Agreement (LAA) flow from and are consistent with Medway's Community Plan, adopted as part of the policy framework in November 2006.
- 1.2 The Council formally approved the 'refreshed' LAA 2008-2011, including specific target levels to be achieved on 28 May 2008.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2005 Sport England conducted its inaugural Active People survey. This was a nationwide survey designed to identify the percentage of the adult population (16+) engaged in regular sport and active lifestyles. The benchmark used by Sport England as a definition of active was those undertaking 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on three or more occasions per week.
- 2.2 The 2005 survey interviewed 1,000 people per unitary/district authority boundary. The results indicated that adult participation in Medway was at 18.2%. This figure placed Medway in the bottom quartile both within the county and nationally.

- 2.3 Following publication of the Active People results, increasing adult participation in sport was identified as a national indicator priority for the Local Area Agreement.
- 2.4 Nationally, Sport England has a target of increasing adult participation in sport and active lifestyles by one per cent per year. Due to the low base figure arising from the Active People survey plus the authority's commitment to increasing physical activity across all age groups, a three-year target to increase adult participation by 5% was agreed.
- 2.5 During the period between the target being agreed and the proposed actions being implemented, Sport England implemented a further Active People survey, this time with a survey sample of 500 (out of an adult population of circa 199,300 – a percentage sample survey of just 0.25% of the adult population).
- 2.6 The updated survey indicated the percentage of adults actively participating in sport and active lifestyles had dropped significantly, to a new level of 14.1%. Based on these figures, Medway now has to achieve a 9% increase by 2011 to reach the agreed 23.2% target.

3. Adult Participation Survey – June 2009

- 3.1 Medway had concerns about the quality of the Active People survey. The sample size was extremely small, as outlined above, and the definition of an active person (3x30minutes per week) would not include, for example, an individual who may play football on the weekend and train once during the week – even though that individual will be undertaking more than two hours physical activity per week.
- 3.2 However, Medway recognised it had no authoritative research of its own which would either refute the findings of the Sport England Active People survey, or alternatively would support the Active People research.
- 3.3 Therefore, Medway commissioned its own independent adult participation survey, undertaken in June 2009. The sample size was 2,000, reflecting the area and population demographics. The survey was conducted using a mix of telephone and face-to-face interviews to give a more representative population spread. The survey asked the same basic questions as the Active People survey, as well as adding an additional question to identify what percentage of the population were undertaking more than 90 minutes sport and physical activity per week (but not necessarily 3x30 minutes per week).
- 3.4 A full copy of the survey can be provided to Members, if requested, but the headline figures indicate 45% of the population do 30 minutes of sport or active recreation on at least three days per week. This result is more than three times higher than those being reported by Sport England through the Active People survey. That figure rises to 68%

when the question is rephrased to ask about 90 minutes of sport and active recreation per week.

- 3.5 The results of Medway's independent survey paint a vastly different picture of sport and active recreation in the area, placing Medway as one of the top performing areas in the country. The findings of the survey have been relayed to the Audit Commission and received positively. Ongoing discussions are being held with Sport England, and a meeting has been sought with the Government Office for the South-East.

4 Medway Gets Active

- 4.1 While the independent survey findings are very positive, Medway is committed to a course of action which will bring further benefits in the short-term, and lay the foundations for long-term improvements.
- 4.2 Earlier this year, funding was agreed from NHS Medway to undertake a one-year campaign, entitled Medway Gets Active.
- 4.3 There are a number of strands of activity linked to this campaign, including:
- NHS Medway funding
 - Medway Gets Active Website
 - Adult participation officers
 - Club funding
 - School sports partnership funding
- 4.4 NHS Medway provided approximately £150,000 funding for one year to allow Medway Council to establish and implement the Medway Gets Active campaign. The funding has been split between marketing of the opportunities for adults to participate in sport and physical activity, plus a number of targeted projects to encourage participation.
- 4.5 The marketing campaign for Medway Gets Active is centred on the development of a website, designed as a dynamic one-stop shop for all sport and physical activities, ranging from how to contact sports clubs, what is on offer at Medway's leisure centres and country parks through to places for enjoyable local walks. The aim of the website is to provide one focal point for all activity, whatever an individual's interest and ability, allowing residents to have quick and easy access to all relevant information.
- 4.6 The Medway Gets Active website went live at the end of September, supported by a marketing campaign developed by the authority's communications department.
- 4.7 Providing detailed, up to date information for the Medway Gets Active website is one of the roles and responsibilities of the two adult

participation officers, who form part of the Medway 2012 and sports development department.

- 4.8 Both officers are on one-year contracts, one paid for through the NHS Medway funding and one jointly funded by the through the Medway 2012 and sports development department, and the leisure department.
- 4.9 Each officer has been given specific responsibilities, with one targeting outdoor activity, and one indoor activity linking with our leisure centres. Since taking up position in June 2009 each has developed a work programme and since the beginning of September has been implementing the work programme.
- 4.10 Each officer is targeted with attracting 2,500 new participants during the year. For the purposes of this target, new is defined as individuals who begin physical activity where previously they were undertaking none, or progressing a previously casual participant to meet the 3x30 minutes per week target.
- 4.11 In addition to generating activity through the appointed adult participation officers, NHS Medway funding has been used to encourage Medway's leading clubs to introduce initiatives to raise adult participation.
- 4.12 Using Medway clubs which have achieved Clubmark – the national standard for clubs recognised through Sport England – a level of funding was provided with an agreed target for each club to encourage new participants (following the same definition of new as above).
- 4.13 Funding has also been provided, on the same basis as to clubs, to Medway's school sport partnerships to deliver increased participation among 16-18 year-olds. This is an age group where nationally there is a significant drop off in participation, a figure reflected locally through the annual schools sport survey.

5 University of Kent research study

- 5.1 The activities outlined above are designed to provide a kickstart to increased adult participation in sport and physical activity throughout Medway.
- 5.2 However, it is recognised that a longer-term solution will be required if the impetus given over the coming year is to be maintained.
- 5.3 Therefore, as part of the NHS Medway funding, the authority has commissioned the University of Kent to undertake research designed to identify the particular barriers to participation in Medway and to put forward proposals for what action could be taken to provide year-on-year increases in those participating in sport and physical activity.

5.4 The research is due to report back in the autumn of 2010, and it is hoped it will provide a blueprint for increased participation within the Medway community.

5.5 Below is the synopsis of the research as presented by the university:

The Centre for Sports Studies is based at the Medway Campus of the University of Kent, Chatham Maritime. The Centre has undergone rapid growth in terms of delivery of academic programmes and a developing research profile into a diverse range of topics, from elite cycling to sports injury and sports and exercise nutrition to exercise for older adults with clinically diagnosed disease. Based in the heart of the Medway Towns, it seeks to engage in applied research which is informed by and ultimately influences practice. In this respect the Centre is keen to have an input into shaping and improving the quality of life of the local community.

This proposed research project on adult participation in physical activity; examines an issue which is high on Central and Local Government agendas. Researchers have recognised that physical activity offers both an effective and economic means of disease prevention and management (e.g. obesity, cancer, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes), and a positive impact on general health. This particular period in history presents a unique opportunity to get Medway turned on to physical activity and sport, due to the interest and excitement that will be generated by the 2012 Olympic Games and the particular role that Medway will play in this global event - an opportunity not to be wasted. The proposed research will inform Medway how best to promote and direct effort into initiatives that lead to genuine long-term health benefits.

The ultimate aim of this research project is to enable the adult population in Medway to become more physically active. This project aims to provide informed, realistic and effective strategies that can help shape local policy and practice.

6 Public Health Team

6.1 In addition to the work funded by NHS Medway, the authority is also working with the Director of Public Health on a further range of initiatives for 2010, under the banner Healthy Medway 2010. Full details are currently being developed, with a campaign due to launch in January.

6.2 Discussions have also taken place with the Director of Public Health about a Health Referral Scheme, whereby GPs prescribe physical activity through the Council's leisure centres.

7 Medway Park

- 7.1 In April 2010 Medway will officially open its new regional centre of sporting excellence.
- 7.2 The £11 million Medway Park development will include an eight-lane athletics track, the region's largest multi-purpose sports hall for badminton, basketball, five-side football, indoor cricket, volleyball, netball etc., new fitness suites, gymnastics and judo centres, three new dance studios and upgraded swimming and squash facilities, alongside leading-edge sports science and sport therapy.
- 7.3 This new community facility provides exceptional opportunities to encourage increased adult participation. It is in the heart of a conurbation, adjacent to the new Mid-Kent College and within walking distance of the university campus. Major employers such as the army and the police are nearby.

8 Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
High	Do not meet the agreed target by 2011 as reported by the Sport England Active People survey	Medway to conduct its own, statistically robust survey, to assess level of adult participation. Discussions to be held with Sport England and GOSE on which figure is a more accurate assessment of adult participation
High	NHS Medway funding ceases at the end of the 2009/10 financial year	Discussions are ongoing with the director of public health as to whether funding can continue into the following financial year

9 Financial and Legal Implications

- 9.1 NHS Medway funding has been agreed only for the current financial year. Discussions are ongoing as to whether the funding will continue in the following financial year

10 Recommendation

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to consider the report and support the initiatives to increase adult participation in sport and physical activity.

Background papers

LAA Delivery Action Plan:

www.medway.gov.uk/ni_8_delivery_action_plan_0809.pdf

Contact for further details:

Bob Dimond, Medway Park and 2012 Sports Development Manager

Tel No: 01634 338238 Email: bob.dimond@medway.gov.uk