



Suffolk
County Council



Abbeycroft Leisure
INSPIRING A HEALTHIER YOU



PARTNERSHIP
SWISS

Community Use Support Framework Review & Case Studies



Community Use Support Framework

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1.0 Executive Summary

The Community Use Support Framework was created in response to a number of factors driven by local and national initiative and policy.

At a national level Sport England has a planning objective to:

“Enhance the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities: Sport England wishes to see the best use made of existing sports facilities through improving their quality, access and management. Sport England has developed a wide range of supporting advice on understanding and planning for facility provision, including efficient facility management such as community access to school sites.”

At a local level Suffolk County Council, partners and stakeholders see community use of school facilities as part of its Most Active County initiative (MAC) which was born out of creating a legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Specifically the MAC initiative identifies the community use support framework as a means to meet the following key aims:

- To improve the use of physical assets and the environment for sport and physical activity
- To address sport and health inequality
- To deliver national governing body plans for an active lifestyle
- To increase activity amongst children and young people

The CUSF also aims to broaden access to sports facilities by supporting schools to create financially sustainable models and programmes which both improve the quality and consistency of service and drive participation in sport and physical activity.

The programme operated over an 18 month period and worked with 12 schools in Ipswich and South Suffolk, involving schools operating community use with varied methods of management. Whilst the project was focused on 12 schools certain parts of the programme were available to any school in Suffolk or beyond.

Initial findings indicated that schools generally had poor operational systems, had a lack of understanding of catchment areas and marketing skills including pricing as well as no strategic framework to understand how community use integrates with educational policy.

The CUSF utilised a number of techniques to deliver the programme including;

- Options Appraisals
- Workshops
- Templates & Advice Notes
- Strategic Plans
- Bespoke Support
- Access to third party products
- General Advice

The CUSF has evolved over an 18 month period and the key learning and challenges in the project can be summarised as follows:

School Engagement - There has to be an external or internal driver for schools to engage in the CUSF and in turn improve their approach to Community Use.

Customer Insight – There is a lack of understanding with regard to the wants and needs of local communities outside of education.

Ofsted – The emphasis on the Ofsted regime and the lack of opportunity to demonstrate how community use could positively impact on the curriculum and student learning has a significant impact.

Every School is Different – Whilst it is acknowledged that schools face similar issues not one size fits all and this is determined by a number of factors.

Aspirations for Community Use – Every school has a desire to provide community use, however this does not connect with the overall strategy of the school.

Benefits – Schools are not in a position or have a will to measure or demonstrate the benefits of community use to ensure that it is valued by all stakeholders.

Finance – The lack of understanding linked to the approach to finances related to community use and a pragmatic approach to these issues is a barrier to full utilisation of facilities.

Risk – Schools are risk adverse by nature and issues such as child protection, health and safety and insurance are a constant barrier to increasing the use of school facilities.

The CUSF has produced a number of outcomes that improved the approach to the use of schools facilities as well as improved key stakeholders understanding of what is required.

Influencing

Influencing

The CUSF has provided a positive challenge to the providers of community use facilities and whilst opinions differed regarding approaches there was clearly a shift in mind-set regarding the provision of these services. The project also raised the profile of community use and encouraged schools to think about the issues associated with this important area of provision.

Reduction in Deficit Funding

During a period of financial pressure the CUSF has enabled partners to reduce the level of deficit funding within these facilities by £40,000 per annum. By removing the reliance on deficit funding it has created a more secure and sustainable future for community use.

Confidence

The support programme provided by the project has enabled schools to increase their confidence in the operation of dual use facilities.

Efficiency

The support mechanism provided by the framework has generated at least £65,000 through both income generation and efficiencies in expenditure.

Strategy

The CUSF has allowed schools and stakeholders to work together and achieve a strategic approach to leisure provision that includes complimentary facility provision as well as complimentary programming and pricing.

Industry Awareness

The CUSF has enabled school staff to better understand the sport and leisure landscape by making them aware of programmes and initiatives to support the delivery of community use. This has also created a support network of contacts to ensure that staff can look for advice in the right place.

2.0 Introduction & Background

This document examines the progress of an 18 month project commissioned by Suffolk County Council to support 12 schools in Ipswich and South Suffolk who work together through the SWISS Partnership with aim of increasing the opportunity to utilise school resources for the community at large with an emphasis on provision for sport and developing opportunities to participate in physical activity.

The schools offered some form of community use by two main methods with four schools operating traditional dual use sport centres with the balance managing a lettings based approach.

Whilst this document specifically reviews the work carried out by the most recent element of the programme it should be acknowledged that there were a number of phases associated with the delivery of this programme which commenced in 2010. This was a four stage process and involved:

The four stages involved:

1. Identifying the current state of community use on school sites by carrying out a community use audit and analysis
2. Developing a support strategy and recommendations for improving the community use of school services
3. Implementing improvements through a 'Community Use Support Framework' (CUSF)
4. Dissemination of learning from the pilot area across the whole county and beyond

Learning from the first two phases indicated that:

- Schools generally used poor operational systems and procedures – such as inefficiencies in bookings, administration and cash collection processes
- There was a lack of understanding of catchment areas, target markets and limited marketing activity
- An approach to pricing that was not optimised for commercial or community users
- The lack of a strategic plan for the operation of community use facilities.

Abbeycroft Leisure were appointed to the role of Community Use Support Framework Provider to deliver the practical support to assist the schools implement measures to improve their approach to community use taking into account the learning from the initial phases of work.

3.0 Community Use Support Framework Overview

The approach of Abbeycroft Leisure as the Community Use Framework provider originally focused on reviewing the initial work that was undertaken and meeting the schools engaged in the project. Whilst there was a planned approach to the project it was clear from the early meetings that flexibility was going to be key in supporting the schools requirements.

It was agreed that the project would focus on assisting the traditional dual use schools first due to the challenges they faced in operating facilities of this nature. The latter part of the project provided more assistance to lettings based schools to improve their offer. The project used a number of methods to support the schools dependent upon their circumstances.

Options Appraisal

The CUSF carried out a number of mini options appraisals for schools who were undecided about their current or future approach. The options appraisals examined the widest range of options linked to delivering community use including outsourcing and partnership delivery models. Each options appraisal took account of the current performance of facilities, the catchment, local competition and resources available to the school. This was presented to the school in a simplistic format highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach with a suggestion of the preferred model based upon the advice of the CUSF provider. The school was able to consider the options available to them, decide the approaches they would like to examine further and then receive further support to change their processes if required.

Workshops

The themes coming out of early meetings with schools indicated that a workshop programme where industry best practice could be shared was in need. The CUSF provider ran three workshops during the 18 months running across three themes:

- A Commercial Approach to Community Use
- Developing a Customer Journey – Lettings Based Schools Only
- Operating a Safe Community Use facility

These workshops generally operated for a day and included speakers from within the leisure industry who were experts in their field. Whilst there was a focus in the areas described above speakers also addressed a number of issues such as insurance, child protection, customer satisfaction, bookings and administration, terms and conditions of hire, staffing as well as access to National Governing Bodies of Sport initiatives.

The main reason behind providing the workshops was to share best practice but also to provide staff engaged in community use provision an environment where they can share issues with colleagues in a similar situation, find solutions and network.

These workshops were made available to all schools across the county and even had attendees from outside of the county from Essex. Therefore the information and learning shared from these workshops was shared beyond schools from the SWISS Partnerships and influenced community use generally. In fact one of the case studies included in this Document, Thurston Community College, were not part of the original pilot.

Templates & Advice Notes

The CUSF provider developed a number of tools and templates for use by schools. Some of these were developed in advance of the project for dissemination but others were specifically developed in response to issues identified when working with schools. The following templates have been made available to schools:

- Performance Reporting Template
- Terms & Conditions of Hire
- Pricing Review
- Service Level Agreement
- Joint Use Agreement
- Job Description
- Job Specification
- Procedure Template
- Strategic/Business Plan Template
- Insurance Advice Note
- VAT Advice Note

Strategic Plans

The CUSF provider developed strategic plans for three of the facilities. These plans were specifically developed for the relevant school. The plans examined the strategic link between the schools overall aims and objectives and its community use provision ensuring that any approach would fit the schools purpose. The plans also took account of the chosen model of operation as well as current levels of use, demographic analysis, competitor analysis, latent demand in the area, staffing arrangements marketing and promotions and financial resources.

It should be noted that a number of tools were used to complete these plans including the Sport England Market Segmentation Tool, Local Sport Profiles and Active Places database.

Bespoke Support

The CUSF provider also engaged in providing bespoke support to schools that required particular aspects of their operation to be reviewed. Examples of this included providing a resource to research potential customers and actually contract them to the facility, carrying out staffing reviews as well as examining the opportunity available to a school through changing their operating model from a lettings based facility to a dual use facility.

Third Party Products

The CUSF provider was able to negotiate set packages for schools to access that allowed a financial discount against normal prices. This is something that the schools would not be able to access individually or without prior knowledge of the industry. Suppliers provided solutions for marketing and promotion, fitness equipment purchasing, IT Solutions and Health and Safety Advice.

General Advice

The CUSF provider made available a number of officers who could take calls and provide support with general areas of concern. Where specialist advice was sought the CUSF provider was able to access third party advice or draw upon industry best practice and guidance to assist the school in their query.

4.0 Community Use Support Framework in Action – Case Studies

4.1 Hadleigh High School

Scenario

The facilities at Hadleigh High School (HHS) had been operated on a traditional dual use basis directly managed by the school and the facility was deficit funded by a number of stakeholders. HHS utilised the facilities during school hours and the fitness facility was open to the public in the evenings and operated specifically for exercise referral clients during off peak morning sessions. Generally the facilities and equipment were quite aged with the exception of a recently installed artificial pitch.

The school needed to review its approach in light of two key factors. The first was that stakeholders wished to remove the deficit funding for community use but wanted the school to continue to provide community use opportunities. The second issue was that the local leisure centre was undergoing refurbishment and as part of this development would introduce a high quality fitness facility which would compete with that of the school.

Support

The CUSF provided support to the school by carrying out an options appraisal that highlighted some of the approaches that could be taken. Following discussions it was agreed that the school would like to explore opportunities to partner with a local provider to find a workable solution with regard to community use provision.

The CUSF provider approached the local Trust, South Suffolk Leisure, which managed the local authority's facilities to see if they would be interested in a partnership arrangement. The CUSF continued to provide independent advice to formulate an agreement to operate the community use facilities. This involved the provision of an outline service level agreement and advising specifically issues relating management arrangements and leisure specific issues. This impartial advice ensured that both parties felt comfortable and a balanced approach was taken to all issues during negotiations.

Outcome

The provision of community use was transferred to South Suffolk Leisure in September 2012 with a number of benefits:

- Deficit funding was withdrawn with community use provision still available
- The school reduced the financial risks linked with the operation of Community Use
- Improved booking arrangements
- Complimentary facility provision with all fitness centre users moving to the improved leisure centre and the school only retaining a fitness facility for school use
- Reduction in school back office, establishment and salary costs
- A strong partnership with a local leisure provider that allows for brand awareness and improved operational standards
- Improved leisure offering for the residents of Hadleigh

It should also be noted that following on from this project South Suffolk Leisure are now working with Sudbury Upper School in a similar capacity. It is clear that the CUSF has played a key role in getting operators and education establishments to understand the requirements of each type of organisation and this new partnerships are unlikely to have materialised if it was not for the project.

4.2 Suffolk New Academy (SNA) Scenario

The original Chantry High School was built in 1962 and the sports centre was part of the original build. The facilities were originally operated by staff from Ipswich Borough Council but transferred to the school who took full responsibility for the operation of community use.

The Governors and Head took the decision to seek an alternative operating model to reduce the subsidised funding and as a result of a competitive process Nuffield Health were appointed on a 3 year contract. The school received the support and consultancy services from Nuffield in return for a monthly management fee. A new reception, Fitness suite and meeting room were developed as part of the Big Lottery Funding programme with assistance from Suffolk County Council. This enhancement has improved the look and feel of the facilities which in turn has meant it has become an established community facility.

Support

The SNA established three key outcomes that it required from engagement with the CUSF:

- Move away from a third party support mechanism
- Realise operational savings and generate a surplus to assist with a sinking fund
- Increase community usage

The CUSF undertook a review of the operation and management of community use provision which included:

- The development of a strategic planning document
- A review of operational procedures
- A review of the staff structure

Further support was also provided to enable the school to engage with national governing bodies to improve the programme on offer

Outcome

The support provided by the CUSF enabled the school to achieve the following:

- Move away from the third party support mechanism
- Reduce costs linked to the third party provider
- Reduce staffing costs due to the staffing review
- Establish accurate financial reporting and allocation of costs linked to utilities
- Improved confidence in the operation and management of the facility
- Improved the programming of facilities through partnership working

4.3 Thomas Wolsey School

Scenario

The Thomas Wolsey School (TW) is a special school in North West Ipswich catering for children with moderate to severe physical and associated learning difficulties. It is situated on the edge of a large housing estate much of which is social housing. TW is adjoined by the Ormiston Academy which accommodates in the region of 800 pupils.

The school operated a number of community use facilities including a swimming pool that was made available through lettings based management arrangements.

The aims for the school were to increase community use and generate additional revenue for the school with minimal impact upon resources both financial and people.

Support

Initially the CUSF undertook a desktop business planning exercise and explored operating models to give the school some background information into various management methods. This included information on the following scenarios:

1. Increased lettings
2. An in-house leisure managed option
3. Working with a leisure delivery partner/specialist
4. Closure

This exercise explored the advantages and disadvantages to each option, risk analysis and a financial modelling exercise. This initial exercise was followed by the CUSF providing the school with a resource to provide the following support:

- Review of policies and procedures and updating as required
- Development of a brochure/flier to promote the community use facilities
- Writing press releases
- Developing a contact list for PR purposes
- Actively seeking additional usage and creating a directory of clubs etc.
- Working with local partners to identify potential user groups
- Undertaking benchmarking exercises
- Independent review of plant and plant room procedures

The resource also provided support by contacting potential bookings and trying to secure their use of facilities.

Outcomes

The CUSF completed its work with the school in July and ensured the school had a plan to follow up opportunities created out of this work. The CUSF has been recently advised that one of the contacts created by the CUSF is about to commence generating a letting of 18 hours per week which in turn will bring a significant income stream to the school.

The review process has also given the school confidence in its processes and procedures and has laid the groundwork for a new appointment that will assist the school increase utilisation of community use assets.

4.4 Thurston Community College

Scenario

Thurston Community College secured Sport England and Local Authority funding in the region of £1.3m that allowed for a programme of redevelopment and upgrades which were completed early 2012.

The facility had been open for community use with limited uptake and only used via clubs and committed bookings and was managed by on-site care takers/sports assistants who were employed directly by the school.

Historically, usage was intermittent and the facilities were not fully utilised both in terms of footfall or programming. Use was limited to some local clubs who had block booked and a few fitness and aerobics classes per week.

Support

Thurston Community College approached Abbeycroft Leisure to support the facilities following a CUSF workshop. As mentioned earlier the school were not part of the SWISS Partnership Pilot but were made aware of the possibilities after attending a workshop. Initially support was in the form of staffing arrangements and general advice but the school needed a more permanent solution. This has seen Abbeycroft Leisure partner with Thurston Community College to undertake the operation of the leisure facilities in the evenings and at weekends under a full dual use agreement. This agreement allowed for a 12 month pilot period to understand how this operation would work and for both parties to consider options moving forward.

There were a number of aims and outcomes in relation to the project:

1. Ensure curriculum requirements were achieved
2. Increase community use
3. Develop specific sports and new initiatives
4. Ensure safe operational procedures were in place at all times
5. Develop use on the new outdoor facilities
6. Become cost neutral and generate an operating surplus and to split operational costs

The agreement is monitored utilising a quarterly review mechanism which involves the Chair of Governors, Principal, Assistant Principal, Business Manager and the Head of P.E.

Outcome

The Pilot has been operating for 9 months under a formal dual use agreement and both parties are pleased with the progress to date. The benefits for the partners have been as follows:

- Improved financial performance with the school recovering a portion of central overheads and the Centre achieving a small operational surplus.
- A 75% increase in membership uptake growing from 25 to 100 and further growth anticipated
- Improved access through increased opening hours and improved booking arrangements to enable bookings even when the school or sports centre are not in operation.
- A diverse programme of activity utilising NGB initiatives such as RUSH Hockey and partnership with Peterborough United.
- Improved operational and health and safety standards supported through the introduction of an integrated management system
- A trained workforce that are provided with regular updates and industry specific support
- Strategic complimentary programming and pricing that allows access arrangements to other leisure facilities close by.
- Improved community engagement not only with local residents but also local sports clubs.

This partnership has seen the facility develop and both parties are keen to continue the current arrangement by extending the dual use agreement period.

Abbeycroft Leisure's engagement in this project has also enabled further discussions to take place with neighbouring schools regarding the increased utilisation of schools assets such as swimming pools on primary/middle school sites and other sports halls.

5.0 Challenges & Learning

School Engagement

The schools within the SWISS Partnership all agreed to engage in the Community Use Support Framework and it is clear that some schools made more use of this support than others. The CUSF provider found school engagement difficult, however it was easier if schools were influenced by one of the following factors:

1. An engaged Head Teacher
2. An engaged Business Manager/Bursar
3. Specific Problem Area
4. An understanding of the Value of Community Use
5. Investment Opportunity
6. External Influence
7. Positive Governing Body

It was easier to engage with schools who had a key member of their senior management team who really “owned” the community use provision and understood its role within the wider community. Without this key individual in place it was difficult to engage with the schools and develop the offer available.

The scenarios where schools engaged better also included those who had a specific problem area that they wished to address. This ranged from historical staffing arrangements to stale programming and pricing. It should be noted that the CUSF provider did pick up a view that once the problem area was addressed there was less engagement in the project as a whole. Whilst this is the schools decision the schools could have taken this opportunity to utilise the expertise further.

External influences also determined the level of engagement in the project as whole. For example in schools whereby external funding was being withdrawn their engagement was necessary to ensure that future community use continued in the most effective manner. Another example of external pressure was the views of parents and the local community in relation to provision of sports and leisure facilities. There is a view that without these influences there was unlikely to be a change in the approach to provision or even a review of provision to examine if it is effective.

Customer Insight

A number of areas of work within the CUSF examined customer service. Whilst schools clearly understood education and how this impacted on students there was a lack of knowledge related to the potential users of facilities and this resulted in a number of issues.

- Lack of understanding regarding customer requirements and the local catchment
- School planning did not take account of community use requirements
- Limited opportunities for customers to utilise facilities when they wanted to
- Outdated procedures and approaches that did not improve the image of the school

Influence of Ofsted

The Ofsted inspection regime and changes in school policy clearly affected the approach to community use of schools within the partnership.

The Ofsted inspection framework understandably influenced schools priorities and the fact that community use/community impact is not considered as part of the inspection process is definitely a disadvantage to the aspiration of utilising public assets (School Premises) for community sporting provision. This framework places all those engaged with education under severe pressure given that this is the only measure of success. This did influence a number of schools in the project with some schools actually reducing resources to support community use.

Selective Community Use

A number of schools appear to have a selective approach to community use. This is generally based upon a want to maintain facilities for the future, prioritise the schools use, a risk adverse approach or to protect/maintain a particular reputation for elite sport. Whilst these reasons are understandable it is clear that this effects the potential to further develop community use provision in certain localities as well as the student population.

Every School is Different

Whilst some of the issues that the schools face when providing community use are very similar there are a number of factors that influence the schools approach to community use. These include:

- School Ethos
- Facility Mix
- Local Catchment Population Demographic
- Human/Financial Resources
- Approach to Risk
- Competition

This issue means that a one size fits all approach does not meet the needs of schools and any future resource to assist develop community use needs to account for this issue and provide some bespoke support.

The operation and management of community use arrangements in schools should not always be compared with traditional stand-alone leisure facility provision. There are a number of reasons for this but essentially it is due to the focus on education and the fact that schools do not have the knowledge or resources to compete in a market place.

Aspirations for Community Use

All schools have an aspiration to provide community use, however this is not necessarily defined in any way or form and, in the majority of cases, is certainly not connected to the schools overall strategy. There is a need to clearly define what the provision is there to achieve so that the school can measure the success and everyone connected with the school can understand the purpose of community use.

The Aspirations also need to be turned into effective plans and take account of key fundamental questions such as:

- What facilities should be included in community use arrangements
- Who will manage and operate these?
- What resources are required?
- Who will use the facilities
- When will the facilities be open?

Benefits of Community Use

Schools need to better understand the benefits to community use. In the majority of cases community use was seen as a way of generating income off of facilities or as something the school had to do but was an inconvenience. The following factors were not considered:

- Improved opportunities for vocational learning and employment
- Improved facilities through investment by partners
- Improved P.E. provision
- Improved curriculum opportunities linked to partner delivery
- Improved standing within the community
- Improved quality of life to the local community
- Increased physical activity levels that impact on health

There needs to be a tangible measure associated with these benefits and schools need to be more aware of case studies where the benefits have been realised so that they better understand how to implement this within their local environment.

Financial Considerations

The issue of finance and the operation of community use facilities is high on the agenda for schools given that a school cannot subsidise community use provision. The CUSF has seen this issue debated by a number of schools and a sensible approach to dealing with this needs to be found. The approach needs to take account of the following:

- Schools generally already have the facilities and equipment to offer community use.
- The school has to replace these when they come to the end of their life regardless of any community use
- If the school includes a financial contribution towards asset replacement due to the requirements of community this should take account of the type of use from both the school and other users.
- When allocating costs the schools need to clearly identify the direct costs of providing community use

It should be noted that the majority of schools do not have a true understanding of the costs and income generated through community use.

Approach to Risk

Schools generally have a risk adverse approach to community use and this is focused around certain areas such as Child Protection, Insurance, Health and Safety and damage to school property. Whilst this is understandable further training is required at all levels within school structures to ensure that these issues do not place a barrier to the potential community use of school facilities.

Local Authority partnership working

There was little evidence of engagement and joint working with local authority sport and leisure officers resulting in missed opportunities and evidence of any strategic planning of programmes and services.

A more developed approach to partnership working could deliver significant benefits to all parties and support schools who are often working in isolation.

6.0 CUSF Outcomes

Influencing/Challenging

One of the key successes linked to the delivery of the CUSF is that it challenged schools in the way they considered community use. Whilst there were differences of opinion with some of the changes that were made the support from the CUSF ensured that schools did at least take some time to examine what and how they delivered their services and in some cases make some significant efficiencies.

Reduction in Deficit Funding

One of the key aims of the CUSF was to remove the reliance upon deficit funding from Suffolk Council. The CUSF supported the schools receiving this funding and it is pleasing to note that SCC & Babergh District Council has now been able to withdraw this funding with schools continuing to operate dual use arrangements. A deficit funding reduction of £40,000 per annum has been achieved.

Confidence in Operations

A number of schools examined their current operation with support from the CUSF provider and after making changes to the operation or management model are now more confident in the delivery model. Examples of this include:

- Auditing provision to ensure that the provision meets best practice enabling the school to move away from a third party support mechanism.
- Outsourcing community use arrangements to third party operators with robust dual use agreements that ensure high operational standards and financial risks are accounted for.
- Financial analysis to ensure that schools understood the true financial position of community use operations.
- Introduction of robust process and procedures linked with booking terms and conditions and health and safety requirements.

Efficient Facilities

The CUSF support enabled schools to undertake a number of reviews that created efficiencies for schools. This included a review of staffing arrangements, the withdrawal of costly support services and income generation. It is estimated that this approach has had a positive financial impact to the value of at least £65,000.

Strategic Approach to Leisure Provision

In two of the case studies new dual use arrangements has seen a more strategic approach to the operation of dual use facilities by linking with local leisure providers. This relationship has created the following benefits:

- Improved marketing of facilities
- Complimentary Programming
- Complimentary pricing policies
- Increased opening hours
- Improved booking arrangements including access to on line technology
- Increased choice and available of facilities for local communities
- Cross selling facilities
- Increased throughput
- Increased utilisation
- Improved financial arrangements for the school
- Improved partnerships within the local community
- Improved partnerships with other key stakeholders
- Improved operational standards

Industry Awareness & Networking

The CUSF has enabled schools to be more aware of the standards required in a community use facility and industry trends. This has been achieved by operating workshops that answer the schools queries and questions utilising the skills of industry experts.

The workshops have also been utilised to inform schools of best practice and opportunities to engage in broader initiatives such as Sportivate and National Governing Body initiatives.

One of the benefits of the workshop approach was the networking opportunity. This allowed business managers and sports centre staff to speak to colleagues and understand that they are dealing with similar issues and how each facility deals with these.

7.0 The Future of the Community Use Support Framework

Abbeycroft Leisure are currently working with Suffolk County Council to develop a future opportunity to support schools in Suffolk who wish to continue to improve their community use offer in the future. A bid has been made to Sport England's Community Sport Activation Fund, which may provide schools with an opportunity to secure these services free of charge, if it is successful.

There were a number of key themes where schools may wish to consider support and these were as follows:

- Networking Opportunities
- Sharing Best Practice
- Industry Specific Health & Safety Support
- Template Processes and Procedures
- Options Appraisals
- Programming
- Bookings & Administration

On that basis the following products and services have been developed for the schools:

Workshop Programme

It is anticipated that Abbeycroft Leisure would run a series of workshops across Suffolk aimed at Governors, Headteachers, Business Managers and Operational Staff. The themes of the workshops are as follows:

- “Options for Delivering Community Use”
- “How to generate a profit from Community Use”
- “How to enrich the school curriculum and improve vocational opportunities through Community Use”
- “Applying for funding to improve school and community use facilities”

These workshops would provide attendees with the opportunity to hear from other schools that have been identified as models of best practice in the areas identified as well as industry experts who can advise schools of national and local initiatives that would enhance community use operations. These workshops are based upon providing practical advice to enable schools to decide why and how they should offer community use.

Given the pressures placed upon senior school representatives the workshops would be split into two sessions with a half day looking at strategic aspects followed by a practical session where operational staff can see specific approaches in certain areas.

Programming Review

For those schools that are interested in reviewing and improving their community leisure offer, Abbeycroft Leisure can provide hands on support to facilitate this.

An 2 day initial programme review with full options appraisal will be carried out, with a further 3 days support for implementing the individual priorities for the school – 5 days of support.

As a follow up to this Abbeycroft would continue to review and improve the schools programme each quarter (every 3 months) providing 2 days support at each review - (6 days support).

Abbeycroft Leisure would work with partners to ensure that community use facilities engage with local, regional and national initiatives and use the resources available. Examples of this include:

- Sportivate
- Fit Villages
- Doorstep Clubs
- Satellite Sports Clubs
- National Governing Body Initiatives
- Coach Education
- Volunteer Development.

Health & Safety Support

Abbeycroft Leisure have been able to work with an leisure industry specialist to create a package and secure set rates for schools to access a health and safety support package. This would be provided by Right Directions and a full proposal will be circulated to all schools and is included as an appendix to this report.

Booking & Administration Support

Bookings and administration support can be provided to schools through Abbeycroft Leisure's current infrastructure. This will include:

- Access to a software system where bookings will be managed from.
- An on line booking option for easy customer access
- A telephone line to take bookings and enquiries
- Invoicing block booking customers
- Income collection
- Management of debtors

Access to Templates & Procedures

This would provide schools with access to operational procedures to ensure that operational standards are maintained in line with best practice for community use facilities. The relevant procedures would be provided to the schools with e-mail and telephone support to enable them to use them effectively.