



# **Local Sport & Recreation Strategy Support**

**Guidance for Implementation**

The following provides a guide to the deliverables required from the service and should be read in conjunction with the *Process of Local Sport and Recreation/Physical Activity Strategy Preparation document* (November 2006).

**It is important that the process is driven by the local authority, and it is not seen as something being forced on them by Sport England. The role of the consultants is that of an enabler, offering advice and not seeking to force them down a particular route or ultimate solution.** This guide seeks to help ensure that there are some control points along that route to help assess progress, so that what is finally produced is usable, measurable and instigates change in the local authority.

For the purposes of this document and to avoid confusion, *the consultant* is defined as the consultants appointed by Sport England whilst *the contractor* is defined as the body appointed by the local authority, through procurement to carry out the bulk of the work on the strategy.

## Project Stages

The project has been divided into four stages, with the elements of the strategy development from the process document being placed into them. They are:

- Project Initiation
- Project Start Up
- Project Direction
- Post Project

The consultants will be involved in the first three of these areas, however most of their work will be under Project Start Up and Project Direction. It is important for Sport England Regions to acknowledge that they will need to commit staff time throughout the process, and in particular around the Gateway Reviews.

In terms of timescales, the project should be capable from going from initiation to possible adoption within 12 months.

## Project Initiation

### Identifying the Local Authority

This stage is about ensuring that there is a mandate to proceed. This includes Sport England receiving a clear indication from the local authority that they are interested and willing to work with Sport England and appointed consultant. Sport England should ensure that the local authority has identified a possible Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) at a high enough level who can authorise and 'own' the work as it progresses. The SRO should be the initial point of contact for the consultant, even if in practice, the consultant will work on a day to day basis with another member of staff (i.e. Project Manager).

For monitoring purposes a clear audit trail is required at this stage.

### *Key Inputs*

- Assessment of local authority against criteria

### *Key Outputs*

- Letter from Sport England Regional Director inviting the identified local authority to take up the service
- Letter from local authority back to Sport England confirming interest
- Confirmation from Sport England to consultant to proceed
- Identified Regional Sport England officer to lead;
- Identified Consultant personnel;
- Identified possible Senior Responsible Owner in local authority who will be point of contact for consultant

## **Project Start Up**

### **Setting the Vision**

This stage is about developing the Vision for the project and ensuring that the controls are in place to ensure successful delivery of the project. An Important part of this process is establishing continued commitment to the project from the local authority. A Clear indication of this includes:

- the time it takes to establish the steering group;
- whether members of the group are engaged and up for the challenge;
- whether financial resources have been confirmed

It is also important to establish how the project will be taken forward at this stage, in terms of procurement. The consultant may be expected to have an input into the brief to ensure that it covers all the deliverables. An important pre-requisite for this will be agreeing the scope of what needs to be done to be put into the brief e.g. will they be required to undertake a playing pitch strategy etc.

### *Key Input*

- Letter from local authority back to Sport England confirming interest (Project Mandate)

### *Key Outputs*

- Vision Statement – This should be an overall vision statement for sport and recreation within the local authority indicating where they want to be. The vision statement should include an overall measurable output e.g. ‘to increase participation by x% in 5 years’. In addition it should have other quantifiable measurements, which will show improvement within the five year period e.g. All council opened facilities to achieve Quest status in three years etc. It is important that the measurements should be able to contribute to the wider KPI's of the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership. **The Vision**

**should be owned by the SRO, and the consultants should ensure it meets the local authority's objectives and not Sport England's.**

- Establishment of a steering group with clear terms of reference
- Communications Plan – This should include some form of assessment as to who needs to be contacted at what stage through the process and by what means. It will also provide an indication as to how wider consultation with the public etc. will be handled at the next stage.
- Risk Analysis – some form of risk analysis around what could stop the project and the overall vision statement being realised and how these can be mitigated against.
- Confirmation of funding
- Brief for Tenders (if chosen way forward);
- Trained local authority staff in key Sport England tools;

### **'Champion for Sport'**

Another important outcome is the establishment of a 'champion' for sport (Business Change Manager) who can help embed change once the consultants have left. This could be the Senior Responsible Owner (likely to be Head of Leisure), however it is probably better if they are a level below this who have the time and ability to embed change, whilst still maintaining a level of seniority to achieve this. It may be that there are a number of 'champions', one in each of the relevant departments, including having one who sits on the Local Strategic Partnership. The 'champions' should be identified at Project Start Up, and may be present on the Steering Group.

## **Project Direction**

### **Scoping & Needs Assessment**

If it is decided to go out to tender, then the first part of this process will be the appointing the contractor. **It is suggested that the Regional Sport England representative, not the consultant is involved in any interviews in connection with the appointment of the contractor to avoid any accusations of bias.**

The aim of this stage is to carry the initial needs analysis which will enable the local authority to come up with a number of options to achieve their vision.

#### *Key Inputs*

- Vision Statement
- Brief for Tenders (if chosen route)

#### *Key Outputs*

- Options analysis – This will involve taking forward initial analysis using various tools and local surveys and creating alternative options for the future, such as rationalisation of stock or an increase in stock to meet household

projections. This is likely to include using Active Places Power Plus to support the analysis, which the consultants will be involved in.

- Document for Consultation, which includes the Options

## Consultation

The aim of this stage is to ensure that the strategy is tested through consultation. Consultation is important because if the local authority decides to adopt the final document as a Supplementary Planning Document, then it must have been out to consultation with the community. The evidence for this is the Statement of Community Consultation.

### *Key Inputs*

- Document for Consultation

### *Key Outputs*

- Statement of Community Consultation – a document that clearly states how consultation on the draft strategy was carried out.
- Results of consultation and preferred option

## Strategy Development

This is the final stage that the consultants will be involved in. A key part of this stage is ensuring that the final document and way forward still conforms to the original vision statement that was produced. **It is important at this stage for Sport England to note the final agreed dates for when benefits will be realised, so that they can monitor progress within the local authority.**

### *Key Inputs*

- Results of consultation and preferred option

### *Key Outputs*

- Final Document capable of being adopted
- Agreed Monitoring Framework

## **Post Project**

### **Monitoring**

Sport England should go back to the local authority at regular intervals (in accordance with the timetable as to when the benefits will be realised) to check on progress.

#### *Key Inputs*

- Monitoring Framework

## Gateway Review Process

The Gateways are designed as a stop, check and challenge throughout the process. The Gateway review should be undertaken by the consultant working with the local authority and the Regional Sport England representative. The key task of the Gateway is to make sure that the project is ready to go through to the next stage, thus protecting Sport England's investment but also making sure that the project has the capability to deliver. Gateway Reviews do not necessarily require formal meetings to achieve sign off. **No project should proceed to the next stage without going through a Gateway. Conducting the Review should not stop the project from proceeding (except Gateways 0 and 1), however it is expected that any issues that need to be rectified should be done so within a specified time period, and if that is not met, then Sport England will consider withdrawing its support for the project.**

If the local authority has a strong record in project management or the project manager has PRINCE2 then much of the review process should be a formality, and could be superseded by their own internal processes. Notwithstanding, Gateway's 1 and 0 are critical as they are confirmation of Sport England's commitment.

Gateways 0-1: Are very much concerned with ensuring that the project is set up correctly in terms of process, organisation and final outcomes

Gateways 2-4: Are concerned with the outputs as they are produced ensuring that they are 'fit for purpose'

### Gateway 0

Gateway 0 is designed to ensure that everything is in place for the Project to be initiated. Gateway 0 requires the following to be checked:

- Has a Senior Responsible Owner been identified in the local authority to drive the project forward (this should usually be the Head of Leisure or equivalent level)?
- Is the local authority aware of what will be involved in taking the project forward and the services that are being offered?
- Has Sport England identified a member of staff to work alongside the consultant?
- Has the consultant named their staff member to work alongside the local authority?

It is the responsibility of Sport England to carry out Gateway 0, and confirmation to proceed should be made in writing (e-mail) to the consultant.

## Gateway 1

Gateway 1 is designed to ensure that all the pre-requisites are in place to ensure successful delivery of the project and that it will deliver the necessary outputs and outcomes. The following should be checked at Gateway 1:

- Is there clear commitment from the local authority for the project?
- Have roles and responsibilities been established, including appointing a Project Manager and formation of a Steering Group?
- Has a vision Statement been produced?
- Have risks been identified?
- Is there a communications plan in place, or have key stakeholders been identified indicating when and how (e.g. e-mail, workshops) they will be engaged throughout the project process?
- Has the delivery mechanism been identified e.g. in-house or procurement?
- Has the necessary funding been secured to enable the project to proceed?

**Sport England should consider pulling out of the project at this stage if it is clear that there is a lack of commitment from the local authority**

## Gateway 2

Gateway 2 is designed to ensure that the 'status quo' has been challenged and what is being proposed is not necessarily more of the same. The following should be checked:

- Is there evidence that they have considered the role of the private and third sectors?
- Has the needs assessment been rigorous and covered all the relevant groups?
- Have they considered providing for non-traditional sports and those that are focussed on providing for young people?
- Have they ensured that what is being proposed is linked into the Delivery System?
- Have options for facility provision been tested, and is there a clear justification for these options been established backed up by facts?
- Is what is being proposed to go out to consultation clearly linked back to the vision statement?
- Are they clear on who they need to consult and how they will achieve this (linked back to communications plan)?
- Have any new risks emerged?



### Gateway 3

Gateway 3 is designed to review the impacts of any consultation prior to the final preparation of the strategy/preparation. The following should be checked at this stage:

- Has a clear statement of community involvement been produced which could be used if the strategy/document needed to become a Supplementary Planning Document?
- Has consultation produced a clear way forward in terms of the options?
- Have any new risks emerged?

### Gateway 4

Gateway 4 is designed to check prior to the final document moving to adoption by the Council that it will make a clear difference as to how the Council strategically plans for sport and provides a baseline for proceeding to the next phase of facilities improvement. The following should be checked at this stage:

- Is there still commitment from the local authority for the final document?
- Does the final document still clearly link back to the vision statement?
- Is the final document capable of being adopted by the Council, both in form and in its content (i.e. is it politically acceptable)?
- Are the final recommendations capable of being included in the Sustainable Community Strategy and taken up by the Local Strategic Partnership?
- Is the document clear and usable in terms of being used by officers within the council?
- Have the indicators for monitoring been finalised?
- Is the SRO clear as to what needs to be done post adoption?
- Is there a key communications plan in place for launch etc. for stakeholders?

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Appendix – Project Stages and Gateways





