

Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 22nd October, 2008.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chairman), Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Mick Womphrey

Officers: N. Russell (DNS), P. Mennear, M. Jones (LD)

Also in attendance: A McDermott (TAL Sports Academy Director Manager), Jean Lordon (Executive Director of Tees Valley Sport)

Apologies: Cllr Hilary Aggio, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Mrs Kath Nelson

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interest declared.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held 10th September 2008**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held 10th September 2008.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 10th September 2008 be agreed as a true record.

3 **Review of Tees Active**

Members received evidence from A. McDermott, TAL Sports Academy Manager, and J. Lordon, Executive Director of Tees Valley Sport, as part of their review of Tees Active.

A McDermott explained that the Sports Academy was set up in 2006 with 27 athletes involved in 16 sports. The Academy currently had over 50 athletes, and there was in theory no limit to the number of athletes that could join the academy, although the number would need to be manageable. The criteria for the academy was outlined, which advised that able bodied athletes had to be under 22 years old, and disabled athletes had to be under 35. Although there were some exceptions to this. All members had to live or train within Stockton-on-Tees Borough. The youngest member of the Academy was 11 and the oldest 29.

The benefits for members of the Academy included access to Active Life Centres and gyms, free sport injury treatment from the Academy's two therapists who were based at Billingham Forum, health screening and subsequent exercise advice, and a range of workshops from nutrition and cookery to relaxation techniques and media training. Some of the workshops were also available to the parents of the athletes to attend.

It was noted that the athletes in the academy were of national and international standard. Many of the athletes had won medals at world and european championships.

Members queried how the development of Billingham Forum would affect the Academy. A. McDermott informed that the activities and services provided by Billingham Forum would be relocated, and the therapist based at the Forum would be moved to Thornaby Pavilion. The main effect would be to the athletes who used the ice-rink, and that plans were in place for these athletes to travel to Whitley Bay while Billingham Forum was closed. However, A. McDermott stated that once the Forum had reopened the Academy would have access to better facilities.

Tees Active fund the Academy, although it has been successful in attracting small grants to support its work. It was stated that Tees Active had a good working relationship with sporting governing bodies

J. Lordon gave a presentation on the role of Tees Valley Sport which included:

- *The Organisational Structure
- *Key areas of work
 - Pathways for young people
 - Club Development
 - Workforce Development
 - Supporting the wider agenda
- *New national strategy
- *New sub-regional strategy
- *Examples of working with Stockton
- *Investing in community sport
- *Workforce Development
- *Strategic work

The process for identifying sites when new facilities were being developed, and ensuring these would be built in areas where there was a lack sporting facilities, was discussed. Members were informed that a report was due to be sent to Cabinet in December regarding Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping, and would feed into the Local Development Framework and inform decisions on location of facilities.

School playing fields were raised, and J. Lordon noted that while Tees Valley Sport would generally be consulted on any development of such fields, they were not statutory consultees. However, J. Lordon explained that as Chair of a group looking at Building Schools for the Future she would ensure that discussion took place regarding the use of school playing fields, when these plans were being developed.

Tees Valley Sport relationship with Tees Active was discussed. J. Lordon explained that their involvement with Tees Active was positive, and Tees Active had developed areas of good practice. Tees Active ran and promoted their facilities well, however J. Lordon believed that an area of improvement could potentially be to have even closer links between Sports Development and Tees Active in order to ensure residents are encouraged to use facilities, especially if residents did not feel that leisure centres were 'for them'. N. Russell, Leisure & Sports Development Manager, noted that this is part of his role and that a good working relationship had been developed between Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Tees Active and that this would be strengthened further through

Operational Liaison Meetings between Leisure & Sports Development officers and Tees Active Officers.

The Street Games initiatives were raised and J. Lordon explained that Tees Valley Sport would work with officers within the youth service to offer sports activities. The sports activities did not need to be traditional sports & games but could be, for example, SHOK dance mats, street dance & cheerleading.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

4 Work Programme

The Committee were informed that the Tees Active staff survey may not be carried out until 2009, and therefore the results would not be available to inform the review as planned. Members were concerned that the review could not be adequately completed until the staff survey results had been considered and it was requested that the completion date for the review be delayed.

The benchmarking survey that will be used to inform the review was distributed and members were requested to forward any comments to N. Russell.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted, and the review timescales be examined again in light of the need to accommodate the Tees Active Staff Survey results.