

**STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SPORTS & LEISURE**  
**STRATEGY**

**DRAFT ONLY**

**OCTOBER 2007**

## Sports and Leisure Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>
1. Members Foreword	2
2. Introduction	3
3. Local context	3-4
4. National Context	5
5. Regional Context	6
6. Policy Framework	7
Policy Aim 1 - Community Needs	8
Policy Aim 2 – Accessibility	9-10
Policy Aim 3 – Participation and Excellence	11
Policy Aim 4 – Economy	12
7. Communications and Monitoring Progress	13

### Appendices

Key policy Aims and Objectives

Sports & Leisure Facilities Map

## **MEMBER'S FOREWORD**

I am delighted to present and endorse a new strategy for Sports & Leisure in Stockton-on-Tees. Sport and Leisure have a significant role to play in enhancing people's lives, particularly at a community level, and we want to inspire change and ambition in all our communities to reach their full potential.

At this exciting time when we see London hosting the 2012 Olympics, we want to encourage Stockton's high performers to compete and also to promote how everyday sport and physical activity contributes to improved health, well-being and quality of life for us all.

With clear priorities for collaborative working with our partners and local communities, Stockton's Sports and Leisure Strategy has been developed in line with 'Game Plan', the Government's strategy for delivering sport & physical activity and it has direct links to both the Community Strategy and Council Plan. It is an umbrella strategy, drawing together existing strategies from across the Council and from partner organisations, identifying common objectives to which we can all work, promoting and enabling healthy lifestyles and the overall well-being of residents across the Borough.

Councillor Mary Womphrey  
Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure and Culture

## **INTRODUCTION**

Stockton Borough Council's Sports and Leisure Strategy describes how the Council, working with its partners, will tackle and drive improvements in "participation and "excellence" in sport throughout the Borough.

In order to bring all of the different aspects of sport and leisure together, and to demonstrate the linkages with related agendas around health, the environment, and the economy, this Sports and Leisure Strategy has been prepared. The document is important strategically, as it provides the framework for future investment, and as such the context for external funding partners. It also raises the profile of sports and leisure across the Borough and, in light of the recent Residents Survey, demonstrates the Council's approach and commitment to meeting the issues raised by the local community.

## **LOCAL CONTEXT**

Stockton Borough Council is clear on its direction towards improving the opportunities for its residents to participate and achieve their potential in sport and physical activity. To be successful the strategy must be cross cutting and clearly link to other issues such as transport, tourism, healthier communities, community safety, economic regeneration, spatial planning which all have their part to play in achieving our vision

***"to raise levels of participation in sport and leisure within the community, by offering a quality sport and leisure environment equally accessible to all, encouraging the achievement of personal goals and by contributing to the Health & Economy of Stockton"***

In Stockton we recognise our uniqueness and diversity and strive to capitalise on it. As well as focussing and investing in our mainstream traditional leisure facilities (sports centres, swimming pools) we also intend to promote and use our many green spaces for more informal recreation activities such as play, walking, cycling.

Through joint working with other agencies and partners we will further develop the use of our exceptional natural resource, the River Tees, through the Northshore Development and Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative, which will improve the river environment and access to recreational activities along the riverside. In addition, new leisure trends including non-traditional sport will also be investigated through consultation with our young people and under represented groups to ensure that community needs are addressed and participation levels are raised. We will work hard to ensure our children and young people have the best possible chance of maximising their potential, through the use and future improvement of our sports colleges, coaching programmes and specialised sporting initiatives.

Expanding choice and variety, and developing the "fun" element of sport, as well as supporting local talent and encouraging people to volunteer and get involved, are all catalysts to increasing and sustaining levels of participation.

The key priorities for the Council can be summarised as:

- To ensure our leisure facilities are accessible and affordable to all sections of the community
- Ensuring quality wet and dry facilities are available within the Borough
- To review and implement the Playing Pitch Strategy
- To implement the Play Strategy and Play Area Strategy, which is currently being developed into one action plan.
- Develop a programme of restoration for the Borough's parks
- Extend the use of community and school facilities
- The River Tees is maximised as both a local resource, but also a potential contributor to international sporting events
- Consider opportunities to raise the quality of physical education, sport and performance through work with local schools and sports clubs
- Ensure that opportunities for leisure and recreation are included as part of the major regeneration schemes in the Borough
- To develop planning policies for inclusion in the Local Development Framework requiring developer contributions for sports and leisure facilities

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

In 1992 the first national fitness survey in England identified that only **‘30% of the population were active enough to benefit their health’**.

Since then the importance of sport, physical activity and physical education is widely acknowledged at national level for the impact on health, quality of life, education performance, social inclusion and building stronger more sustainable communities. It is essential that Stockton’s targets are set in relation to national and regional policies and targets, some of which are highlighted below:

<b>Strategy Document</b>	<b>Objective/Targets</b>
<b>Game Plan, 2002</b> set the future agenda for delivering sport and physical activity.	‘to significantly increase levels of sport and physical activity’ with the target 70% of the population being physically active by 2020.
In <b>2002</b> the <b>PE and School Sport Clubs links Strategy</b> (PESSCL) was launched with over £1 billion investment to 2006 to implement eight programmes	‘all children, whatever their circumstances or abilities, should be able to participate in and enjoy physical education and sport – within and beyond the curriculum’
The Wanless Report (Securing good health for the whole population) in <b>February 2004</b> highlighted the need for Government to develop:	A more coherent strategy to reduce preventable illness caused by unhealthy behaviour including physical inactivity.
In the Chief Medical Officers - <b>At least five a week – report in April 2004</b> it was stated that ‘physical inactivity is a primary contributor to a broad range of chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers.	This report recommended that ‘adults should achieve 30 minutes of moderate intensive physical activity on five or more days of the week’ It also stated that ‘children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensive physical activity each day’
Every Child Matters and the <b>2004 Children’s Bill</b> relates to the Government’s plan for every child.	‘for every child, whatever their background or circumstances to have support they need to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve through learning; make a positive contribution to society; achieve economic well-being’.
The Department of Health’s <b>Choosing Activity Strategy, 2005</b> is a physical activity action plan setting out the Government’s plans to encourage and co-ordinate the action of a range of departments and organisations to promote increased participation in physical activity across England.	It brings together all the commitments relating to physical activity in Choosing Health as well as other action across government, which will contribute to increasing levels of physical activity.
The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), <b>Youth Matters: Next Steps</b> – follow on from the Green Consultation Paper, emphasis on engaging young people in positive activities.	Sets out the vision for empowering young people, giving them somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. Gives young people the opportunity to have more choice and influence over services and facilities that are available to them and encourage them to volunteer and contribute to their local communities.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

<b>Strategy Document</b>	<b>Objective/Targets</b>
<p><b>Turning Ambition to Reality 2004 – The North East Regional plan for Sport and Physical Activity (2004-2008)</b> sets out to change the culture of sport and physical activity, increasing participation and providing the basis for progression to higher levels of performance. It is the strategic framework for achieving the targets outlined in Game Plan (2002).</p>	<p>The regional challenge is to raise participation in sport and physical activity, from the current base of <b>28% to 70% by 2020</b> and to raise standards of performance by providing and enhancing facilities and encouraging high performance athletics to stay in the region and build on the successful sporting Universities in the region.</p>

## **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The 4 key policy aims, which support the strategy, clearly demonstrate the Council's commitment in nurturing a culture of sport and leisure within Stockton, now and for future generations. Focussing on 4 main themes

- **Community Needs** – Meet community needs through Sport and Physical activity provision and programmes to promote healthy lifestyles.
- **Accessibility** – Provide a range of accessible facilities to ensure equality of opportunity and enhance social inclusion.
- **Participation and Excellence** - Encourage and support lifelong participation in Sport and Physical Activity through education, local clubs and developing pathways towards excellence for talented young people.
- **Economy** - Working in partnership, ensure major regeneration plans for Stockton include a focus for improved leisure facilities, attractions and events.

***For the purpose of this strategy, Sports and/or Leisure relates to all physical, recreational and leisure activities, which promote a healthy lifestyle, or helps achieve excellence.***

## **Policy Aim 1 – Community Needs**

Stockton Borough Council is committed to developing a network of publicly accessible leisure facilities for the local community. The 2006 Residents Survey indicated the importance of these facilities to local residents, and highlighted perceived gaps in current provision.

It is a fundamental role of this strategy to determine the approach to meet local needs for sports and leisure facilities. To be successful, future investment needs to be closely linked to regeneration programmes, the Local Transport Plan and to the Council's wider Access to Services Strategy.

In addition to the mainstream leisure facilities, Stockton Borough Council has a good range of parks, open spaces, recreational facilities and countryside sites, all offering residents more choice and opportunity to lead active and healthy lifestyles. We also have access to facilities including, play areas, tennis courts, walking, cycling, horse riding bridle ways, the River Tees and a series of football pitches, which are currently under review

The Borough's parks, woodland and countryside will be maintained and management plans will be developed to ensure that each has a clear and fully costed vision for the future, and that they can pursue Green Flag status with confidence.

Stockton Borough Council also recognises the importance of providing educational and physical activity programmes for specific groups within the community, ensuring that the right support is delivered to improve and promote healthy lifestyles.

## **Policy Aim 2 - Accessibility**

A key aim is to ensure that opportunities to participate in sport are available for all. Whilst it is important to ensure that good quality sports venues and facilities are available, issues such as affordability, equality and transport links will all play a crucial part in achieving true “Accessibility.”

Ensuring affordability for the whole community to participate in sport is an area that Stockton Borough Council will work closely with its partners to deliver. Further development of subsidised packages and flexible payment options and offering a wide range of free and low cost amenities are drivers to increased participation.

Reaching under represented groups will be challenging and targeting this area is seen to be a major contributing factor to increased participation levels (Game Plan 2002: 70% of the population being physically active by 2020). Identifying the barriers for under represented groups will provide the foundation to produce policies to improve pathways into sport for those who have been previously excluded.

In line with the Government’s Getting Serious About Play review, the Council recognises that “Play” is crucial to health and development throughout childhood and contributes to physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional and psychological development. It can provide a significant amount of regular exercise, promoting active young lifestyles, which benefits individuals, communities and the future of the economy as a whole. The priority on appropriate play provision will feature strongly in future plans and strategies.

The Council has recently reviewed its Play Strategy, a key document that aims to develop locally based, easily accessible play facilities across the borough of Stockton-on-Tees both through the extension of existing provision and the development of new facilities. The play strategy is a daughter strategy of this wider Sports & Leisure Strategy and has fundamental links in the delivery of the Council’s strategic direction to increased “participation and excellence” in sport and physical activity

Extended Schools is part of the Government’s Every Child Matters framework, and is an initiative enabling children to access a variety of activities beyond the school day. Included, is the provision of extra sport and physical activities over and above the school curriculum.

Plans are in place to widen sport and physical activities out of normal school hours increasing the number of coaches within the community to support the delivery of extended services.

The Government’s Youth Matters paper indicates that Local Authorities should play a key role in commissioning and providing activities for young people (generally between ages 13 – 19). These activities need to be of a consistent quality and meet the needs of young people in today’s world. Encouraging more young people to get involved in volunteering and building a sense of pride and responsibility for their communities is also seen as a positive step. Sports and physical activity has a role to play, the new Education and Inspections Act places a duty on local authorities to promote the well being of young people by securing access to educational and recreational leisure time activities.

As the number of older people with greater amounts of free time increases, it is important that facilities are accessible in ways that appeal to them. Parks and countryside facilities provide convenient passive recreation facilities. To ensure they are fully accessible to older people they need to be welcoming, secure, well managed and free of any possible sources of intimidation. At leisure centres and community buildings programmes targeting older people will be implemented.

To further support this challenging area of work and to reach disadvantaged groups in deprived neighbourhoods, a range of Health and Leisure interventions have been introduced, using the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund programme. Working in partnership, adult and children weight management services are in place, which include a community-based service for the overweight and obese, a GP-referral weight management service and a ten-week progressive exercise & nutrition programme aimed at "Young Persons".

### **Policy Aim 3 - Participation and Excellence**

Schools, community centres, parks and open spaces are all a valuable resource in the promotion of sport and physical activities for all ages. They play an important role in providing extra facilities for both curriculum use and for use by the wider community. The Extended Schools Programme will provide the strategic framework for greater use of education premises and provides a great opportunity to improve participation levels in sport for children, keeping them fit and healthy in play.

£2.45 million has been secured through the Government's New Opportunity Funding to improve schools sport and leisure facilities, specifically to facilitate increased hours of physical activity (primary and secondary pupils). A key action of this strategy is to ensure that children and young people are given every opportunity to enjoy leisure and sporting pursuits.

Community involvement is also an important factor in the drive to provide more choice and raise participation levels in physical activity. Consulting residents on future plans, encouraging participation and enabling residents to actively be involved in managing projects is high on the agenda and will contribute towards the delivery of public services that meet community needs. We also aim to encourage children and young people to participate in their community through their schools and other community groups.

Access to good, well-structured sport and physical activities can contribute to a reduction in the likelihood of young people participating in crime or anti-social behaviour. Encouraging children to participate in sport from an early age not only keeps them healthy but also helps to develop their social skills, build self-esteem and confidence and can generally divert them away from crime and disorder.

Stockton Borough Council will work hard to ensure our children and young people have the best possible chance of maximising their potential through the use and future improvement of our sports colleges, coaching programmes and specialised sporting initiatives. In addition, we will continue to support local sports clubs through the Sports Development Service. Strengthening links between universities, schools, and clubs is essential, not only to promote and to sustain participation levels, but also to develop and provide the necessary support for talented children and young people to realise their potential. The Council is committed to working with organisations such as Tees Valley Sport and National Governing bodies for sport to improve the capacity of clubs to offer the best possible opportunities for young people.

#### **Policy Aim 4 – Economy**

Stockton is undergoing major regeneration. As a Borough it is changing and with that change comes the opportunity to develop new and improved sports and leisure facilities.

At the centre of the physical regeneration of the Borough and the sub region is the River Tees. The Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative has recognised that it provides the vital ingredient for bringing a step change to the facilities in Tees Valley. The Barrage has produced a world class watersports facility, an attractive environment for gentler leisure activities, as well as setting the context for future high quality development. The Barrage white water canoe course is to be upgraded and included as part of the North East offer for Olympic training in 2012.

The river is also a crucial part of the recreation offer in Thornaby, Eaglescliffe and Yarm, providing part of the setting for these settlements and opportunities for passive recreation.

The regeneration of Thornaby, Billingham and Stockton town centres will lead to improved shopping and leisure facilities and better public realm. It is important that all new developments contribute to new leisure facilities, and the Local Development Framework will set out planning policy for developer contributions to play facilities, open space, improved walkways and, where appropriate, new sports, recreational or leisure facilities.

Tourism and the evening economy are both vital to the economic success of the Borough. The development of North Shore and Stockton Town Centre will continue to improve the range of facilities such as bars and restaurants, leading to enhanced leisure time amenities. Through the new Area Tourism Partnership and the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative, the intention is to capitalise on the development opportunities within the Borough to expand and communicate the tourism offer. Improving evening leisure is an important component of this, and more restaurants, bars, cafes and other pastimes are at the heart of the approach.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND MONITORING PROGRESS**

Stockton Borough Council will continue to consult with its members, staff, partners and customers to ensure that the Sports and Leisure strategy's aims and objectives are consistent with:

- Customers needs and aspirations
- Community Strategy
- Council Plan
- Local Development Framework
- Local Transport Plan
- Local Area Agreements (LAA)
- National & Regional Framework for Sport

Communication and discussion with under-represented groups, in particular, is a top priority for Stockton. Customer responses will have a direct impact on future plans and policies, ensuring the whole of the community can experience the benefits of participation in sport and physical activity. It is expected that viewpoint panels will be used to target specific sections of the community, including BME residents, disabled people and other minority groups.

The overall responsibility for the Sports & Leisure strategy lies with the Council, however the delivery of the vision and supporting key policy aims is cross cutting and requires significant input from various services within the Council and also from partnering organisations.

Communicating the strategy to all parties is essential to ensure that a holistic approach to "participation and excellence" is achieved and maintained. Progress on outcomes of the strategy will be incorporated within the Council's planning and performance management framework, specifically through the Community Strategy, Council Plan and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and also through the developing actions plans for each of the supporting strategies.