

Report to: Executive Board – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEW COUNTY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP**

<p><b>Report of:</b> Strategic Director (Physical Environment)</p> <p><b>Report Author:</b> Tony Stephens Leisure &amp; Parks Business Manager Tel no. 01865 467247 Email: tstephens@oxford.gov.uk</p> <p><b>Lead Member Responsible:</b> Councillor Maureen Christian</p> <p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:</b> Environment</p> <p><b>Key Decision:</b> YES</p>	<p><b>WARDS AFFECTED ALL</b></p>
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**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**This report seeks Executive Board Approval for Leisure and Parks to enter into an agreement with Sport England to be the host authority for the emerging County Sports Partnership, the successor organisation to the current Active Sports Partnership presently hosted by the City Council.**

Staffing Implications – Staff employed by the Partnership will be employed under Oxford City Council’s conditions of employment but on a fixed term basis concurrent with the agreed funding period. Any redundancy costs will be costed as part of the budget for the Partnership.

Financial Implications – The Partnership has submitted a budget to Sport England which has been approved and a grant of £719,963 has been awarded over a four year period to March 2009. As with previous sports partnerships hosted by this authority this account will be ‘ring fenced’ and individually audited. Any over or under spends will be carried forward after submission to and approval of Sport England.

**The Executive Board is ASKED to:**

- 1. Approve in principle the hosting arrangements as laid out.**
- 2. Authorise the Strategic Director ( Physical Environment) to conclude the signing of the legal agreements to include the co-ordination and compilation of the relevant legal documentation to issue to the partner authorities as outlined in the report.**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The County Sports Partnership is part of a network of similar county organisations around the country and is the next phase in Sport England's re-organisation to meet the specific challenges of the regional agenda.
- 1.2 It is designed to allow county based partnerships to develop local strategies appropriate to their own specific circumstances. This initiative replaces the current Active Sports programme' which is a far more prescriptive programme of sports development. In Oxfordshire, as in many other counties the new County Sports partnership is emerging from the dissolution of Active Sports.

## **2.0 Historical Arrangements**

- 2.1 The Active Sports Partnership was set up in 1999 and on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999 Oxford City Council's Leisure Services Committee approved the decision to enter into the new partnership and to act as host authority to it.
- 2.2 This approval authorised the following:
- acting as the employer for the Active Sport Manager funded by the consortium (this means the Council being responsible for sick pay, maternity pay, and any payments arising from termination of employment)
  - providing administrative support, office accommodation, and meeting spaces for the postholder and the consortium,
  - providing day to day line management and support,
  - managing the finances of the project e.g. receiving and distributing lottery funds for audit by Sport England
  - being an active member of the consortium and the project management team, with officers attending associated meetings.
- 2.3 Since this approval additional staff have been employed under the Active Sports partnership, all on fixed term contracts concurrent with funding arrangements.
- 2.4 Under the new County Sports Partnership management staff will be recruited by a panel of the Board of the Partnership and development staff employed will be recruited in agreement with the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) for each sport.
- 2.5 Job descriptions and person specifications for the management posts have been drawn up and graded in accordance with City Council grading procedures. These posts are now ready to be recruited to.

### **3.0 Proposed Staffing and Management Arrangements**

- 3.1 The County Partnership will have a full time management staff of three plus an administrator. This will be complemented full time and part time development staff working across the county in their specific sports. All will be employed on a fixed term basis for the duration of the funding stream.
- 1.3 The senior staff member will have a line management reporting responsibility to the Business Manager Leisure and Parks or his delegated representative. This is concurrent with present arrangements for the Active Sports Partnership.
- 1.4 In turn, strategic responsibility will be the role of the Partnership Board set up to oversee the work of the partnership and to ensure compliance with Sport England grant criteria. The Board will be representative of each district authority as well as NGB representatives. The City Council will be represented by the Business Manager for Leisure and Parks or his delegate.
- 1.5 The Partnership will have no legal status at this time and will be a loose incorporation of individual contributor organisations. Legal responsibility will therefore initially fall to the City Council as outlined below.

### **4.0 Financial Arrangements**

- 4.1 As with the Active Sports Partnership each authority will contribute £9,000 per annum to the programme in addition to the Sport England grant. The grant awarded has been set at £719,963. Oxford City Council's contribution will be met from current budget allocations.
- 4.2 Additionally as host authority the Business Manager for Leisure and Parks has negotiated a hosting fee to defray some of the costs of hosting. This has been set presently at £10,000 per annum. Under the previous active sports arrangements no hosting fee was charged and the City Council was a net contributor to the programme as well as host.
- 4.3 All funding for the Partnership will be separately managed under individual cost centres as part of the Leisure and Parks Business Unit. These arrangements have been satisfactory under the Active Sports scheme.
- 4.4 These accounts will be individually audited and returns to Sport England are submitted annually. Upon submission the grant sums awarded are released on a half yearly basis by Sport England.
- 4.5 Contributions by local district authorities will be invoiced on an annual basis at the start of each year.

4.6 Monitoring of the overall County Sports Partnership budget and individual cost centres within it will be managed through the City Council's budget monitoring processes.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 As with all agreements with Sport England, including the current Active Sports agreement, this arrangement will be bound by legal contract. As such the City Council as the authorised body for distribution of funds will carry the legal and financial risk should any penalty under non performance become apparent to the funders.

5.2 Whilst no problems have occurred under the Active sports arrangements in view of the large sum involved in the Sport England grant and to reflect the envisaged management arrangements it is proposed to draw up appropriate legal documentation with each partner authority so that liability becomes joint between the City Council and the partner districts.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 In order to maintain continuity of sports development provision across the County and to ensure that the City Council is able to play a prominent role in the Partnership the Executive Board are recommended to:

- 1. Approve in principle the hosting arrangements as laid out.**
- 2. Authorise the Strategic Director ( Physical Environment) to conclude the signing of the legal agreements to include the co-ordination and compilation of the relevant legal documentation to issue to the partner authorities as outlined in the report.**

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:

Dr. Sharon Cosgrove,  
Councillor Maureen Christian  
Lindsay Cane  
Claire Reed\*

Strategic Director Physical Environment  
Portfolio Holder – Leisure  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Financial Services

\* provisional clearance only, any further comments will be reported orally at the meeting