

Active East Herts

Report to East Herts Council Community Scrutiny Committee

28 June 2016

Introduction

Physical activity and sport and plays an important role in people's wellbeing and provides a good foundation for a healthy lifestyle. Providing a coordinated and effective response to the health related problems caused by inactivity is a key priority for every community. But physical activity is not just a public health issue; it also promotes the well-being of communities and benefits society by increasing social interaction and community engagement.

Active East Herts (AEH) is the Community Sport Network (CSN) for the District. It plays a key role in supporting East Herts Council to develop and deliver a cross sector approach to physical activity, helping to increase participation, reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for its residents. The Health and Wellbeing strategy acknowledges the need for the council to work in partnership to achieve its public health objectives and there is clear alignment between EHC Corporate strategic priority 1 – improving the health and wellbeing of our community - and Active East Herts strategic programme.

The Role of Active East Herts

East Herts has a wide and diverse range of sporting opportunities available to residents and visitors to the area. Providers include the District, Town and Parish Councils, private and educational sectors and community and voluntary organisations.

Active East Herts brings together local deliverers from a range of organisations and agencies committed to working together to increase participation in sport and physical activity. Its purpose is to:

- raise the profile of physical activity opportunities and promote and support events which foster participation in sport and related health education to all sections of the community;
- advise, support and assist local voluntary sports clubs and organisations in their development and provision of community activities
- liaise with and support all stakeholders concerned with the provision of sport and physical activity
- inform and influence the development of interventions to increase physical activity;
- support and promote the delivery of activities that serve as positive diversions to young people.
- maximise the development and use of sports facilities and advise where future investment should be channelled;
- support those agencies which aim to achieve the highest possible standards in sport.
- enable children and young people to migrate seamlessly from the school environment to participation in community sport.

Unlike the CSN's in the rest of Hertfordshire Active East Herts is staffed entirely by volunteers. The network is led by a voluntary representative Executive Committee and reflects the wide range of sport and physical activity available across the district. East Herts Council provides financial support for the Community Sports Network and makes an annual payment of £5000 (subject to the Councils budget setting process) to enable delivery of the action plan. This relationship is managed via a Service Level Agreement.

Our Vision

“To create opportunities for the people of East Herts to participate in sport and physical activity regardless of their age, ability or gender”.

Performance indicators and objectives

For the past 3 years AEH has worked towards delivering a 3 year strategic programme, augmented by detailed delivery plans for each year of the strategy. The overarching objective was to encourage people to see physical activity as a cost effective vehicle for positive change in key areas such as health, social inclusion, community cohesion, educational attainment and crime and disorder reduction.

The success of the strategic programme was judged against the following measures:

- A wider range of opportunities for residents to become physically active;
- More people supporting their community through helping and volunteering in sport and physical activity.
- A greater number of clubs registered with Active East Herts;

The strategic programme for 2013- 2015 was reviewed in December 2015 and a new 3 year strategic programme developed for the period 2016- 2019. A copy of the Strategic Objectives we are currently working towards is attached at Appendix A

Communication

For each key objective there is a clear communications plan which defines what we need to communicate, who we need to communicate with, how this will be done, by whom and when.

For example, regular updates are provided to sports clubs via email and social media. Individual projects have their own publicity campaigns, while activities such as the consultation on the Leisure Service contract required a number of face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations.

The Active East Herts website receives an average of 200 hits per week and the most recent on-line feedback survey had a 72% return rate. The Executive Committee works closely with EHC Communications team to publicise the work of CSN and has had several articles in LINK magazine.

Executive meetings are open to all members of AEH. Minutes are circulated after every meeting and copies placed on the website. To encourage attendance at the AGM stakeholders are invited to suggest topics they would like to include on the agenda and we seek to find relevant keynote speakers.

Monitoring and Review

Active East Herts meets quarterly to review progress against the annual delivery plan and strategic objectives. A written progress report is provided from the meeting, in accordance with the Service Level Agreement with East Herts Council. Each year a detail summary of achievements against the agreed outcomes is prepared and shared with all stakeholders. A copy of the outcomes for the year April 2015 - March 2016 is attached at Appendix B.

Regular meetings hosted by Herts Sports Partnership (HSP) provide the opportunity to for AEH volunteers to benchmark our activities and deliverables with other community sports networks in Hertfordshire. The environment of cooperation, joint learning and sharing of resource has proved particularly valuable for the Forever Active programme. It has enabled the programme to access coaching resource and specialist equipment such as adapted bicycles.

Finance and Sustainability

AEH has minimal overheads; less than 2% of the grant is used for items such as website hosting. The majority of the funding provided by EHC is used as pump-priming to attract additional grants such as the Awards for All and support from sport national governing bodies. In the past 3 years AEH has applied and successfully obtained over £35,000 in additional grants to promote and encourage physical activity in East Herts.

The new strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation, see's Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation. It provides some exciting challenges and opportunities for more local informal physical activity, including non-traditional sports and outdoor recreation.

AEH is determined to ensure that we are at the forefront of applications for funding to enable the residents of East Herts to benefit from the changes. We are currently focussing on improving our data systems to demonstrate that we have an excellent track record in delivery.

Jan Stock

Chair, Active East Herts

May 2016

Active East Herts Strategic Objectives 2016-2019

Active East Herts has identified five key objectives that will form the focus for its work over the next three years. The objectives are based on local need and underpin the aspirations of EHC to increase the level of participation in physical activity and encourage active and health lifestyles.

Objective 1

To liaise and support all stakeholders concerned with the provision of sport and physical activity in East Herts.

Active East Herts has a vital role to play in helping to address the recent decline in the number of people that regularly take part in sport and deliver a long-term sustainable increase in participation within our local community. It brings together key deliverers and aims to role model partnership working by providing a voice for sport and a catalyst for action. Priority issues are:

- Increasing awareness of sports participation opportunities;
- Working in partnership to help ensure sports facilities are fit for purpose;
- Building capacity to enable increased participation and empowering sports clubs to develop and grow;
- Maximising utilisation of open spaces, school and other facilities to encourage sport and physical activity;
- Work closely with Herts Sports Partnership (HSP) to exploit any opportunities presented by changes in Sport England funding policy, including development of methodologies to meet the Sport England's requirement to map local demand, assess the market, measure increased participation and evaluate effectiveness;
- Work in partnership with HCC Public Health and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's). Identify links with key District and County wide strategies, such as the Health and Wellbeing, and Ageing Well.

Deliverables to include:

- Exploiting the expertise provided by Community Voluntary Services (CVS) to improve networking, source funding streams (including core funding to deliver the action plan) and prepare grant applications;
- Capitalise on the investment in the website; use analytics to target key audiences and maximise use of social media;
- Working closely with HSP to ensure the needs of the East Herts sports clubs and organisations are represented and we are able to access any funding streams or opportunities that may arise from policy reviews;
- Working in partnership with HSP, ensure sufficient financial resource is allocated to develop robust monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Recruit a champion from the CCG's to improve partnership working and promote the opportunities offered by AEH.

Objective 2

To promote and support activities which foster participation in sport, physical activity and related health education

The challenge is to create an environment which encourages participation in sport and physical activity to become a lifelong habit, and specifically target the different health outcomes that physical activity can deliver, including how they can contribute to preventing or treating diabetes, obesity, dementia and mental health problems. Priority issues are:

- Promoting the health benefits of an active lifestyle - use the power of sport to achieve broader positive social outcomes;
- Promoting and engaging children and young people on the benefits of participation in sport in order to motivate them to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle into adulthood;
- Increasing the awareness of opportunities for adults and seniors to engage in a variety of sport and physical activity;
- Promoting activities to encourage inclusivity, reducing barriers to participation and ensuring equality in sport.

Deliverables to include:

- Review the activities delivered during MOVE week and refocus on a couple of mass participation events across the district to maximise publicity;
- Work closely with Pro-Action & ChildUK and maximise their ability to reach out to young people. Explore the opportunity to deliver and sustain physical activities in the most deprived wards across the district;
- Deliver the Moving Mums project. Ensure the project achieves the stated outcomes;
- Explore opportunities to develop a project in conjunction with Public Health aimed at encouraging people who are classified as “high risk” to take part in physical activity. Seek to use innovative approaches to tackle hard to reach groups including the BME community and those with disabilities;
- Lobby on behalf of the School Games Organisers to ensure young peoples’ sport receives the support and funding it requires. Actively promote the Herts School Games, primary school sports and other youth related projects. Continue to drive schools/club links and community sports Identify opportunities for joint programmes to encourage participation;
- Work in partnership with EHC Forever Active project to deliver activities for those aged 50+ with a sedentary lifestyle. Ensure the project achieves the stated outcomes.

Objective 3

To support clubs, talented individuals and other agencies with their applications for funding

Accessing funding to enable new and existing sports clubs to develop and thrive is becoming increasingly difficult. Active East Herts has a pivotal role to play in helping clubs understand where funding opportunities exist and how to access them. Priority issues are:

- Assisting clubs and other groups to identify suitable funding opportunities and supporting them through the application process;
- Providing support to athletes with potential and those performing at a higher level to help them obtain funding;
- Celebrating success across the District and helping to raise aspirations within communities.

Deliverables to include:

- Use the lessons learnt from the relationship developed with England Athletics to approach other National Governing Bodies;

- Work in partnership with EHC and HSP to identify, promote and encourage community groups to access funding streams available to them.

Objective 4

To maximise the development and use of sports facilities

Research has shown that “neighbourhood issues” relating to access, quality and safety are key determinants of physical activity levels in communities. The development of quality spaces and places to play sport and be physically active is essential to increasing participation and the creation of healthier lifestyles and safer, more attractive neighbourhoods.

Active East Herts has a key role to play in advising on opportunities presented by New Homes Bonus revenues and planning contributions from developers. The provision of good quality places and spaces in the District is vital to encourage and sustain activity. The priority issues are:

- Ensuring full advantage is taken of all opportunities to increase our stock of sports facilities through Section 106 agreements;
- Working with EHC’s Leisure Services Development Manager to shape the development of a leisure strategy which will determine the future of leisure facility provision and services over the next 10 years;
- Acting as the voice of local sports clubs and ensure that any investment arising from the proposed development at Bishops Stortford North improves sports facilities and addresses the needs of the community

Deliverables to include:

- Play an active role in the Bishop Stortford North sounding board group;
- Maintain a database of the district’s Sports Clubs containing up to date knowledge of facility requirements, as well as development, training and future aspirations;
- Work in partnership with Leisure Services to help inform the future provision of leisure facilities in the District.

Objective 5

To offer promotion and support the training and education of coaches, volunteers and all who assist in sport and physical activity

For sport to be further developed and sustained across East Herts the support and development of coaches and volunteers is critical. A number of key areas require to be addressed in order that clubs can continue to grow. Priority issues are:

- Recruitment, support and nurturing of coaches, officials and volunteers to encourage more volunteers and improve retention;
- Enabling and empowering clubs and groups; support the improvement in skills and knowledge of those running the clubs;
- Raising the awareness of the importance of volunteering in sport.

Deliverables to include:

- Organise and run de-fib training courses;
- Provide volunteers with financial support towards coaching and officiating qualifications through the AEH Sports Club Grant Scheme;
- Link in the HSP's Coach Education Week to provide member clubs with training and continued professional development opportunities at subsidised rates.

Objective 6

To obtain the financial resources necessary to achieve the key objectives and deliver the activities described in the plan

Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation has major implications for community sport and will impact on funding. AEH needs to be very proactive and at the forefront of developments in community sport. Investing in data management and having the financial resources to pump-prime new and innovative projects is essential to attract additional grants

Deliverables to include:

- A signed Service Level Agreement with EHC;
- Support from HSP and other partners to identify new funding streams