

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 23RD APRIL 2008

DEVELOPMENT OF EAST AYRSHIRE TALENTED ATHLETE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the current situation within East Ayrshire with regard to supporting talented athletes to reach their full potential in sport and outline proposals for strengthening this in light of the forthcoming 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, and 2014 Commonwealth Games and Winter Olympics.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 East Ayrshire as a community has a strong sporting history, the area boasts over 100 local voluntary sports clubs as well as a vibrant Sports Development Section, New Sporting Futures, within the Council itself. These two areas of Sport - Professional and Voluntary - are connected within East Ayrshire by the work of East Ayrshire Sports Council and other sport specific forums including the East Ayrshire Athletics Partnership and the Ayrshire Badminton Satellite Cell
- 2.2 As a result of the above, East Ayrshire already benefits from excellent Sports Development programmes delivered across the authority including: StreetSport; sports-specific coaching; coach education courses; coaching pathways for talented athletes and of course plans are also being developed for a state-of-the-art athletics facility in Kilmarnock.
- 2.3 Indirectly, East Ayrshire Council currently supports talented athletes via the Scottish Institute of Sport Network. The Council has been a partner within the West Area of the Institute since 2001 and this ensures that athletes from East Ayrshire who meet specified selection criteria are able to access specialist Institute services including strength & conditioning, lifestyle management and sports psychology. It should be noted that the West of Scotland Institute of Sport does not offer financial aid to athletes. In addition, all East Ayrshire Athletes selected to the Institute are offered a Gold Membership to the Galleon Centre which allows them free access to the sports equipment required for their vigorous training programmes.
- 2.4 Following the successful bid by Scotland to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the growing popularity of local sports development programmes which has been generated by the work of New Sporting Futures since 2003 it is felt that the time is right to develop an innovative Talented Athlete Programme in East Ayrshire. This would form part of a local Commonwealth Charter which is currently being drafted by the New Sporting Futures Team and would outline the Council's commitment to providing high quality sports development facilities and services for local athletes and assist them in

achieving their full potential in the run up to the Games. The Council would subsequently have the opportunity to capitalise on the real and tangible opportunities that Glasgow 2014 offers by providing support to local athletes who are displaying signs of medal potential.

3. PROPOSED SUPPORT FOR TALENTED ATHLETE PROGRAMME

- 3.1 At this stage a small working group made up of Council Officers, members of East Ayrshire Sports Council and Volunteers has been formed to develop and drive forward the establishment of a Talented Athlete Support Programme. The group is also examining examples of good practice from across Great Britain and receiving expert input from key national sporting bodies.
- 3.2 The proposed Talented Athlete Programme is likely to have two strands focusing upon development for those who are showing early signs of potential and excellence for established athletes who have reached national standard. Whilst this development is at its early stages, there is a consensus among the working group that clear and stringent eligibility criteria will be essential in ensuring equity when operating this programme. The initiative would deliver a range of support packages including financial assistance, expert advice and support, access to facilities and coaching and leadership opportunities.
- 3.3 The eligibility criteria for the programme will be established in line with National recommendations from Governing Bodies of Sport, the Scottish Institute of Sport Network and UK Sport. These bodies would also be required to endorse applications on an annual basis.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report but it is likely that the proposed programme will require funding. This cannot be quantified at this stage.

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The development of a Talented Athlete Support Programme intersects with several themes of the community plan, including Improving Community Health and Improving Community Safety via the obvious links with wider Sports Development Programmes. However, the establishment of this programme will directly deliver on the Improving Opportunities Theme of the plan by enabling athletes to continue and develop in their sport to the highest possible level.

6. LEGAL AUTHORITY / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Nil

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It can be seen from this report that there is already a strong foundation of support for sport development. This potentially will be strengthened when the outcome of the working group is known. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet on these outcomes in due course.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) remit to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to further develop and submit detailed proposal to Cabinet in due course; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/KK
10th April 2008

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 578178 and ask for John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services

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