

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006**

#### **NEW SPORTING FUTURES - YOUTH DIVERSION THROUGH SPORT**

##### **Report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of progress associated with the New Sporting Futures Project with a specific focus upon current innovative youth diversion initiatives.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Over the last five years the Leisure Development Section has been leading the way in providing innovative approaches to health improvement, community regeneration and engaging young people through a dynamic range of externally funded projects and initiatives. The initiatives range from community health development and children's health improvement programmes through the Recreation Partnership Project, CHIP, the Activity Motivation Initiative and Play Development to inclusive and diversionary initiatives through the CATCH Walking Initiative and New Sporting Futures.
- 2.2 New Sporting Futures primarily focuses on the inclusive development of sport and active leisure, and the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices among the population of young people living in East Ayrshire. More specifically, the project is interested in the 10 – 18 year old age group living within East Ayrshire's Regeneration Outcome Agreement target communities (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Top 20%) and the role which sport and leisure can play in the lives of these young people.
- 2.3 The project, which commenced in July 2003, is underpinned by key national and local strategies, and although it is primarily focused on Sports Development, these strategies also reflect the project's crosscutting role in the wider social agenda. The work of New Sporting Futures intersects with National Strategy for Sport – Sport 21 delivering on 7 of the 11 targets set within this document. Further the project demonstrates clear links with the National Physical Activity Strategy – Let's Make Scotland More Active – placing an emphasis on increasing the physical activity levels of teenage girl's. However, it is the inclusion of New Sporting Futures in "non-sport or leisure" related policy, such as East Ayrshire's Youth Justice and Anti-Social Behaviour Strategies that truly sets the project apart. Recognising the potential of sport as a means to engage even the most challenging of young people, New Sporting Futures has found its unique selling point as a powerful diversionary tool.

### **3. PROGRESS**

- 3.1 New Sporting Futures has developed a range of services that are designed to act as powerful alternatives to anti-social behaviour, crime and substance misuse for young people. The majority of these services are delivered in the community, however there is also delivery within schools and other "structured" environments.

- 3.2 The most established of these services is the Premier Night League and StreetFootball Programmes both of which have been in operation since October 2003. These programmes deliver football in an informal yet structured environment very much focusing on the spirit of fairplay and friendly competition. Operating on 42 weeks of the year, Premier Night Leagues take place in Auchinleck Academy; Stewarton Academy, Cumnock Academy; Doon Academy; James Hamilton Academy and Loudon Academy on Friday evenings between the hours of 8 and 10pm. StreetFootball sessions currently take place at Multi-Use Games Areas in Shortlees, North West Kilmarnock and Bellsbank. The sessions run twice weekly during the period from 8pm – 10pm. Both of these activities have become permanent fixtures in the lives of young people and in the past year they recorded almost 7,000 attendances among the target group.
- 3.3 The StreetSport Express Initiative is an outreach sports project which takes sport to the doorsteps of young people. The initiative was developed and is operated in partnership with the Anti-Social Behaviour team and visits various outdoor venues between the hours of 6pm and 10pm Monday to Friday of each week delivering positive activities which are strong alternatives to anti-social behaviour. Last year, the Streetsport Express was piloted in East Ayrshire during the school summer holidays and clocked up 1,700 attendances by young people during the 6 week period. The programme is now being rolled out as a result of this success. Delivery commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> of April and will run throughout the summer months until the end of September. As at 11<sup>th</sup> May, 800 young people have participated in Streetsport sessions which have also included visits to hot-spot areas at the request of Community Police Officers.
- 3.4 In partnership with Strathclyde Police and three East Ayrshire Learning Partnerships, New Sporting Futures delivered a Pilot Initiative aimed at reducing truancy among secondary school pupils during January to March 2006. This 12 week pilot which took place every Friday between 10.30am and 12.30pm at the Galleon and involved identified young people from Grange, St Joseph's and Kilmarnock Academies in positive activities in return for their improved attendance / behaviour at school. The activities were delivered by Leisure Development Staff, specialists from the Galleon Centre, Kilmarnock College and Community Police Officers who attended every week. In terms of evaluation of the initiative 23 of a possible 33 attended the programme almost every session, including one school holiday, demonstrating exceptional commitment. However, it is the qualitative data which is most interesting with each of the Children's Services Co-ordinators at the three Learning Partnerships indicating positive outcomes from the initiative and particularly Community police who have stated that the programme was excellent in terms of building relationships with difficult to engage young people.
- 3.5 New Sporting Futures is continually exploring new and innovative ways of engaging young people in positive activities. In recent months the project has accessed external funding to pilot a range of school and community based programmes. These have included Night Time Judo in partnership with Cluarankwai Judo Club, Police and Community Wardens offering young people within the New Farm Loch area the opportunity to try Martial Arts in a less formal environment than a club setting.

Three of the young people involved in this pilot went on to participate at the Cluarankwai Judo Club as a direct result. "Tackling Crime with Rugby" is currently being delivered in 7 of East Ayrshire's Secondary Schools and seeks to involve young people in positive activities whilst also creating opportunities for them to become leaders and coaches. The first stage of this programme was the qualification of 18 new rugby coaches for East Ayrshire (11 Police Officers and 7 school pupils) who then go on to deliver Rugby Participation sessions with another qualified coach within the School setting. New Sporting Futures is seeking to involve more local sports clubs and voluntary organisations in delivery of these diversionary activities and plans are already in place to deliver programmes in partnership with Kilmarnock Weightlifting Club and Galston Residents' Groups during and beyond the summer holiday period.

- 3.6 Since its inception in 2003, New Sporting Futures has been committed to working with excluded young people and in doing this the project has worked in partnership with other agencies or Council departments to ensure that those who would not normally have the opportunity to participate in Sport are encouraged to do so. The project delivers weekly sport and physical activity sessions to groups such as Youth Strategy and Rathbone Training Agency as well as providing as and when required activities to Princess Trust XL groups at Learning Partnerships and young people accommodated within one of East Ayrshire's residential units. These programmes are informal in that they do not place high expectations on young people in terms of their sporting abilities but instead focus on small successes and enjoyment.
- 3.7 Sport and Leisure can be an excellent career option for many young people and this is an area which is being promoted by New Sporting Futures and the wider Leisure Development Section to a diverse range of young people. Upwards of thirty students from secondary schools, colleges and universities have requested work experience placements with the project in the past 2 to 3 years which has involved them in the delivery of a variety of sports related services. A significant number of these young people have indicated their intention to pursue a career in this area and as a result of their placements many have subsequently volunteered, undergone training or found sessional employment via the project. However, in addition to this New Sporting Futures is also providing less formal work placements to excluded young people from agencies such as Youth Justice, Criminal Justice and the Community Service Volunteers. The project also produces an annual Coach Education and Training Programme and notably the most recent successes in this area have involved the qualification of 8 new Community Sports Leaders – 4 young people and 4 Community Wardens; and 18 new Rugby Coaches – 7 senior pupils and 11 Community Police Officers.
- 3.8 Over the coming year the project has submitted bids to extend the network of multi use games facilities across East Ayrshire in order to provide increased community based opportunities. In addition New Sporting Futures will further enhance and develop work with colleagues in Social Work in order to provide tailor made services for looked after and accommodated young people and support their participation in mainstream sports development services. Finally the project will investigate funding opportunities to roll out the pilot diversion from truancy initiative across East Ayrshire's Learning Partnerships.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The project is funded by a range of organisations including East Ayrshire Council's Leisure Development Section, the Community Regeneration Fund, the Big Lottery Fund, Sportscotland and the Changing Children's Services Fund.
- 4.2 In terms of the recent Best Value Review of Leisure Services the New Sporting Futures Project is actively seeking mainstream funding to ensure the continued long term success of project services and retain the highly motivated and dynamic staff.

#### **5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Nil

#### **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The work of New Sporting Futures is completely embedded within East Ayrshire's Community Plan delivering across four of the six themes but with a specific focus on Improving Community Safety. In addition the project delivers directly upon East Ayrshire's Anti-Social Behaviour, Youth Justice and emerging Leisure and Cultural Strategies.

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 New Sporting Futures has proved extremely successful in delivering a wide range of dynamic and innovative services to East Ayrshire's young people. Working with Community Planning Partners, other Council departments and a wide range of organisations the project is making a major lasting impact upon community safety, antisocial behaviour, physical activity levels and increased opportunities for participants and the wider community of East Ayrshire.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (i) Note the progress associated with the New Sporting Futures project to date.

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WS/JAG/KK

11<sup>th</sup> May 2006

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

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