

Better Health, Successful Sport

A Draft Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity
in Bridgend County Borough 2009 – 2019 (for consultation)



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirod





Foreword

Welcome to the draft strategy for sport and physical activity within the County Borough. Getting more people, more active more often, is a key challenge to us all. The benefits to an individual's health of leading a more active lifestyle are now well documented. Becoming or being active at recommended levels has a clear and positive effect on a person's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The strategy outlines how it is intended to support opportunities for more people to participate in sport and physical activity and develop pathways from grassroots involvement through to performance sport.

I would welcome your views on the draft strategy for the County Borough and the ways in which we plan to make the vision a reality.

To let us know your thoughts you can log onto www.bridgend.gov.uk and complete a short feedback survey, or you can fill in and post back one of the paper questionnaires that accompany this document. For more information on the consultation, or if you require any of the documents in different a format please email: spact@bridgend.gov.uk

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Cabinet Member

Wellbeing

Bridgend County Borough Council

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Executive summary

The Welsh Assembly Government in its sport and physical activity strategy – “Climbing Higher” has challenged all organisations involved in providing sport and physical activity opportunities, to increase participation levels by 1% year on year, for the next 20 years.

This 1% annual increase is a significant challenge. Participation rates in sport and physical activity in Bridgend have remained static over the last 20 years, and for adults are amongst the lowest in Wales. Clearly to address this situation the nature of the Council’s sport and physical activity service provision needs to change. Traditionally the Council, in common with most local authorities, has invested heavily in facility provision. However, many of its leisure centres and swimming pools are now of an age where they require substantial investment to remain safe and attractive to local residents and visitors.

The Council recognises that it must invest in other ways of encouraging more people to become more active, more often, as well as, where appropriate, improving its stock of facilities. It also recognises that it cannot deliver everything to everyone and therefore careful targeting of resources as well as stopping some of the things we do currently will be necessary.

This strategy sets out how Bridgend will increase participation rates in sport and physical activity by changing the way we deliver services to reflect the changing needs and aspirations of the 21st century.

Services will increasingly be provided in collaboration with other agencies. The Council will take the lead role in co-ordinating, enabling and facilitating improvements to the infra-structure of community facilities and enhancing local activity provision. This coupled with a network of local development workers (activity brokers) within communities, tasked with increasing participation levels and supporting the wide range of providers to enhance existing provision, will build new opportunities for all residents to be active. The strategy also sets out a model of different types of provision that each community in the County Borough can expect; ranging from key, regional facilities for the County Borough as a whole, better use of school facilities, to small local doorstep provision of activities, determined following local consultation.

In order to implement the proposed service reconfiguration, a number of feasibility studies are required to determine whether the way in which the Council currently spends its budget on sport and physical activity is the most effective way of achieving the strategy aim of increasing overall levels of participation. A number of specific projects have been highlighted which, when completed, will inform a detailed action plan for the sport and physical activity service for the next 10 years.

1. The vision.

“Better Health, Successful Sport”

The Council's vision for sport and physical activity services for the period 2009 – 2019 is:

“Better Health, Successful Sport”

Regular participation in sport and physical activity significantly impacts upon both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people in our communities.

It is proposed that a remodelled and rebranded sport and physical activity service will focus its resources on supporting more people, to be more active, more often.

The strategy covers all aspects of the sport and physical activity spectrum and thereby involves all providers, both within the County Borough and those national organisations who are involved with key providers. The County Borough invests significant resources in this area of work; e.g. the Council has a net budget in excess of £3million to deliver sport and physical activity in the following areas

- Indoor leisure centres and swimming pools
- Dual use sports facilities on school sites
- Sports development / Active Young People department
- Play development
- Sports club development and support

Other providers include the voluntary and private sector. It is estimated that there are over 1000 trained volunteers, sports leaders and coaches engaged with over 200 sports clubs in the County Borough. The Council's sport and physical activity service works in partnership with a range of key partner organisations, to improve physical activity opportunities, these include;



“The best thing about cycling is you can do it almost anywhere, on your own or in a group”.

Nicole Cooke.
Olympic Gold medallist
Beijing Olympics 2008



“As a former sports development officer in Bridgend, I fully recognise the importance of links between school activities and community sports opportunities”.

Rob Howley
National coaching team.
Welsh Rugby Union

2. The challenge.

Why we need to change

The Welsh Assembly's strategy for sport and physical activity, "Climbing Higher", sets challenging targets relating to improved levels of participation in sport and physical activity. The overall aim is that participation in sport and physical activity, at a level that will benefit health, will increase by 1% per annum for each of the next 20 years (www.climbinghigher.gov.uk).

Many of Bridgend County Borough Council's strategic aims are directly applicable to this strategy.

- To achieve a healthier County Borough by tackling health inequalities and promoting healthy lifestyles;
- To improve the quality of life for all;
- To have a more inclusive County Borough.

"Every week thousands of volunteers give their valuable time to the local sporting economy, making Bridgend richer in opportunities to be active".

Heidi Bennett
Director of BAVO

For the sport and physical activity service to take a lead role to impact upon these aims requires us to re-evaluate how we currently provide services. Evidence shows that in Bridgend, participation rates in sport and physical activity have remained static over the last 20 years. Bridgend is ranked 19th in Wales for participation rates amongst adults, even though levels of participation amongst children is relatively good. To do 'nothing', therefore, is not an option. To increase overall participation rates and impact upon high level strategies requires the current provision to be remodelled.

The proposed strategy recognises the current challenges of:

- An increasing overall subsidy for the service based on significant cost increases and stable or declining income share;
- The condition of our facility portfolio requiring high levels of reinvestment to remain safe and attractive to customers;
- The relatively ineffective targeting of resource/support in terms of increasing the overall levels of participation in sport and physical activity and ensuring the service is inclusive;
- The high levels of physical in-activity (particularly amongst adults) in the County Borough and the overall poor levels of health;
- The opportunity to link more effectively to other high level strategies including;

- > Health, social care and wellbeing
- > Children and young people's plan
- > Regeneration strategy
- > School modernisation proposals
- > Social care review
- > Health service remodelling

The draft strategy document sets out the proposed key steps to reshape the service over the next 10 years based on these factors.

“Sport has given me opportunities that have allowed me to compete on the world stage. Everybody has opportunities.... More people should take them”.

Nathan Stephens
Paralympian.



3. How will we remodel service provision

Background

The current sport and recreation service is regarded as one of the best in Wales with many examples of leading practice – for example, the general practitioner exercise referral scheme.

However, the service currently spends well over 90% of its budget on buildings and staff. A recent Sports Council for Wales survey reported that, only 10% of adults in Bridgend use indoor leisure facilities, i.e. swimming pools and leisure centres, on a basis regular enough to improve their health. Therefore, while the provision of appropriate facilities will continue to be extremely important it is also clear that the service needs to be reconfigured to invest in other opportunities to achieve greater participation rates from a wider section of the community.

The proposal

The proposed strategy is based upon establishing a holistic whole authority approach with a model of tiered provision across the whole County Borough.

The tiered model consists of four levels, ranging from Level 1 whereby the County Borough will host a network of strategic facilities, to Level 4, which acknowledges the opportunity every community in Bridgend has to utilise the outdoor environment to be active.

The reconfigured service seeks to:

- Address evolving issues such as ongoing budget constraints;
- Challenge the unique role of the local authority in the context of other providers and inform where we should focus future service delivery and intervention;
- Service the future needs and expectations of all our communities.

The strategy proposes that the Council reaffirms its strategic community leadership role but acknowledges that a mixed economy of provision is likely to best meet the needs of local people, based on recognising 'who does what best'.

This will therefore require the Council to:

- Know and understand users
- Collaborate, partner, commission and facilitate as appropriate
- De-commission services where necessary, recognising we can not deliver everything for everyone
- Be innovative in service delivery approach

Carefully thought out interventions across various tiers of provision will ensure that:

- Grassroots to excellence pathways in key sports are established
- Physical activity interventions are targeted at those most sedentary in their lifestyles

- Formal and informal activities and programmes are provided within facilities
- Other organisations are facilitated and enabled to contribute to the aim of increasing physical activity levels
- Initiatives that tackle current barriers to participation and that prevent people from being active are established.

The proposed model

Level 1 Strategically located facilities of County Borough or Regional significance

Level 2 Community sports facilities, strategically located where appropriate, focussing on the comprehensive school site, located to attract the widest range of community use and physical activities

Level 3 Local door-step physical activity venues and activities e.g. schools, parks, pavilions, community centres (could be health centres, libraries, village halls etc)

Level 4 Attractive and accessible outdoor spaces for walking, jogging, cycling etc



The range and scope of provision for each level is detailed below:

Level 1

Strategically located specialist facilities

The characteristics of this type of provision in the County Borough will be based on our size and location.

- Only likely to be one of each type of facility
- Generally high quality, mostly serving competitive sport
- Often likely to be developed and managed by other partners/sectors
- Sometimes strongly linked to National Governing Bodies (NGB's)

Current provision that would fit into this category would include:

- Ynysawdre Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre (in terms of its role serving competitive swimming)

- Bridgend Recreation Centre (in terms of its role serving the wider sports community in the County Borough e.g. Indoor Bowls)
- Athletics track in Newbridge Fields

During the course of the strategy period the following strategic provision is also aspired to, although not necessarily to be funded or managed by the local authority.

- 5-a-side football centre
- Indoor tennis centre
- Specialist gymnastics/trampoline centre
- Athletics track (400 metre)
- Enhanced stadium facilities for our leading professional and semi-professional rugby and football teams
- Strategic events that encourage and promote participation in sport and physical activity.

With regard to Level 1, strategic facilities it is proposed that:

- Existing provision is assessed and analysed to determine its fit with the proposed model.
- Proactive support is given to develop appropriate new facilities where a viable and sustainable case can be made based on need in the County Borough.

Level 2

Community facilities and services

The features of this type of provision within the County Borough will be:

- Provision, where appropriate, to be increasingly focused upon secondary school sites, comprising a standard mix of facilities including, sports hall, dance/aerobics studio and artificial turf pitch, available to the public and supporting the development of community focused schools.
- Existing community leisure centres and swimming pools will work more closely with other providers in their area to ensure cohesive service delivery based on collaboration and partnership.
- Enhanced support for identified key clubs operating in the area.
- Targeted programmes to increase sport and physical activity levels, including schools.
- Pricing of activities set to ensure services are as inclusive as possible.

Current provision that would fit into this category would include:

- The swimming pools at Maesteg, Pyle and Pencoed
- The leisure centres at Maesteg, Ogmores Vale and Pontycymmer
- Dual use sites at Pencoed, Ogmores and Porthcawl Comprehensive Schools
- School managed facilities at Cynffig, Brynirion and Ynysawdre Comprehensive schools

During the course of the strategy period the following community facility and service provision is aspired to:

- Enhanced provision and community use of comprehensive school sites based on strategic assessment of need.
- Selected new developments in areas of identified need based on regeneration initiatives e.g. Porthcawl.
- Partnering with private sector providers to develop improved community access to facilities and

services e.g. Trecco Bay Porthcawl.

- Joint working with voluntary sports clubs to improve provision, particularly for young people, women and disabled people.

With regard to Level 2 community facilities and services it is proposed that:

- Existing provision is assessed and analysed to determine its fit with the proposed model.
- A programme of investment is approved to improve those community facilities that fit the model and will be retained.
- Enhanced provision is considered at selected comprehensive school sites.
- Existing private sector provision is assessed to determine whether there are more opportunities for increased community access.
- Key sports clubs are identified (based on agreed criteria) and supported to develop increased opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity, including self management and/or asset transfer of facilities where appropriate.
- Targeted programmes are developed on a collaborative basis with other partners and funded where appropriate from the annual Local Authority Partnership Agreement Fund supported by the Sports Council for Wales.

Level 3

Local (doorstep) facilities and services

The features of this type of provision within the County Borough will be:

- Shaped and developed based on local consultation e.g. with community council, local forum, voluntary organisations.
- Close linkage to regeneration initiatives/projects targeting 'hard to reach' communities.
- Greater utilisation of local facilities and resources.
- Enhanced links to local businesses in terms of developing sport and physical activity opportunities.
- Development of more local sports leaders and coaches.
- Creation of local community 'lifestyle coaches/sport and physical activity brokers' to develop and facilitate local provision, particularly to other types of provision in due course.

Current provision that would fit into this category would include:

- Local sports development projects in partnership with Communities First development workers, schools, clubs etc
- Small scale facility provision such as local skate-parks or multi-use games areas e.g. Llangeinor scancis pitch
- Most play provision
- Local activities delivered in community centres, village halls, libraries, parks and playing fields
- Community use of primary school facilities e.g. Bettws Primary School

During the course of the strategy period the following local (doorstep) facility and service provision is aspired to;

- Enhanced programmes of targeted provision aimed at tackling current barriers to participation in sport and physical activity

- Local and trained development workers (supported by volunteers) to ‘broker’ opportunities based on locally expressed needs
- With regard to Level 3, local facilities and services it is proposed that;
 - > Mechanisms are established to consult with local people to shape and develop ‘doorstep’ provision
 - > Current spend on the sport and recreation service is reconfigured to develop the kind of opportunities that will emerge from local consultation
 - > A comprehensive review of current play provision is completed (including children with disabilities) to assess the fitness for purpose of current provision in line with the proposed model a separate play strategy is being developed.

Level 4

Outdoor natural environment

The characteristics of this type of provision in the County Borough based on our unique mix of mountains and valleys, rolling countryside and coast, will be:

- Attractive and accessible outdoor spaces available to all people in the County Borough
- Formal and informal opportunities developed
- Usually free of charge

Current provision that would fit into this category would include:

- Cycle tracks e.g. Garw Valley and Ogmere Valley routes
- Fitness trails
- Walking and jogging routes
- Water sports including surfing
- Gardening and allotments

During the course of the strategy period the development of the following opportunities linked to the outdoor natural environment are aspired to:

- Facilitated and supported opportunities to join walking, jogging and cycling groups
- Enhanced entry points and way-marking of routes
- Development of new cycle / walking / jogging routes e.g. marked jogging routes on industrial estates linked to the counties walking and cycling strategy
- Development of opportunities to participate in water sports, particularly in Porthcawl, in partnership with other providers

With regard to Level 4, outdoor natural environment, it is proposed that:

- A campaign to promote and support greater participation in sport and physical activity in the outdoors is developed with partner organisations
- Stronger links are made with the existing Council walking and cycling strategy to ensure opportunities are developed in a cohesive way.

4. How we propose to deliver the strategy

The breadth of the remodelling proposed and the scope of the projects identified, dictates that the strategy is delivered in phases.

Initially, several priority feasibility projects have been identified and proposed for Phase 1. The rationale and background to each of the projects are identified in the following pages.

In Phase 2 it is proposed that alternative management arrangements are explored for the facilities within the Council's control. It is logical that this work follows once we are clear on the nature of the provision we will continue to support.

In addition, further feasibility studies and options appraisals will be completed to identify future projects that will help deliver the strategy objectives for the remainder of the ten year strategy period.

Proposed Phase 1 – Feasibility Projects

1. Bridgend Recreation Centre - redevelopment options.
2. Valley Leisure Centres – redevelopment opportunities linked to regeneration.
3. Commercial opportunities and partnerships.
4. Local and community development – sports and physical activity brokers.
5. Greater utilisation of the outdoor environment.
6. Community focused schools developments.

Phase 2 Projects

1. Alternative management arrangements.
2. Identify future projects for feasibility studies and options appraisals.

Proposed Phase 1 - Feasibility projects

Project 1:

Bridgend Recreation Centre re-development

Bridgend Recreation Centre is the largest but also the oldest indoor multi-sport leisure facility in the County Borough. It attracts the most users of all our leisure facilities (est. 500,000 visits per annum) but also runs at the highest subsidy (2007/08 est. £900,000). It is therefore, extremely important that the future of the centre is properly defined to meet the strategy objectives and its size and importance merits a distinct project on its own.

The centre is split into three main component parts.

i. The dry-side facilities

These facilities including the main 8 badminton court sports hall, squash courts, fitness gym, concert hall, kitchens, indoor play and changing facilities date from the early 1970s. Although some modernisation and improvement has been made over the years, the facilities are now over 35 years old and require significant investment. A detailed condition survey carried out as part of the review of the sport and recreation service has estimated that a sum of £8 million based on current prices would need to be spent to upgrade and modernise facilities of which £2.5 – 3 million needs to be spent within the next two-three years to ensure the facilities remain safe and attractive to discerning customers. However, even investment on this scale would still mean that the facilities would be of outdated design and unlikely to be fit for purpose for a modern 21st Century leisure facility. A large percentage of current use of the dry-side facilities is for club and organised group activities with users travelling from throughout the County Borough.

ii. The wet-side facilities

These facilities include the leisure pool, health suite and poolside café/vending area, together with associated changing facilities. The Facilities date from the late 1980s and have had limited investment subsequently to upgrade them. There are currently proposals to upgrade the changing area into a modern 'changing village' and the health suite facilities have recently been improved. The pool attracts people from throughout the County Borough in particular for its comprehensive junior swimming lesson programme and also its hydrotherapy sessions linked to the GP referral scheme.

iii. The indoor bowls hall

The main facilities in this annex built in the mid 1980s linked by a glass corridor to the main building, consists of an eight rink indoor bowls hall, a bar/lounge run by the bowling club, meeting rooms and changing facilities. This is used for indoor bowls between October and April but also occasionally for events during the summer (when it is boarded over) and as an indoor skate-park. The subsidy to support in the main, use predominantly by a single bowls club (albeit of approximately 400 people) is significant. There is a strong case to explore either self management or relocation to another site.

Summary

The leisure market has changed significantly since Bridgend Recreation Centre was built. Customer's needs are different and the competition in the County Borough area has changed considerably. Many of the current facilities at Bridgend Recreation Centre are 'tired' and in need of significant investment. The nature of the design of the building and its age means it is expensive to run and difficult to maintain.

The proposed project to redevelop Bridgend Recreation Centre will look at the following:

- The viability of investing in and retaining current facilities;
- The alternative options to relocate current activities to other sites, for example, on school sites in the Bridgend area;
- The feasibility of self-management and/or relocation of the bowls hall;
- The feasibility of attracting and building new activities to the Bridgend Recreation Centre site e.g. 10-pin bowling, cinema, commercial 5-a-side, small hotel and library facility.

Project 2

Valley leisure centres : Redevelopment opportunities linked to regeneration

The service operates three valley leisure centres; one in the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore Vale valleys. Each centre, is in reasonably good condition, although requiring ongoing investment and renewal.

However, usage, especially during the daytime in all centres is relatively low. The centres are potentially a community resource that could be utilised for a wide range of activities. Work over recent years has demonstrated the potential of the sites to deliver on other organisations objectives. In particular the centres can contribute to the regeneration of each valley community and potentially widen the variety and scope of provision that is currently provided.

The proposed project will explore:

- Working with regeneration partners to widen the opportunities for service delivery at each site;
- In particular, at the Garw Valley Leisure Centre, explore opportunities to create an ‘outdoor experience/adventure’ type centre, utilising the natural environment, with activities such as mountain biking, hill-walking, using the local lakes and linking via the cycle paths, to the heritage coast;
- Explore partnership working that further engages the centres with their local communities.



Project 3

Commercial opportunities and Partnerships

Within the County Borough, there are limited numbers of commercial leisure providers. Esporta Health Club in Bridgend and Parkdean Leisure in Trecco Bay, Porthcawl are the most prominent. There are however, smaller companies, predominantly managing fitness gyms in the area.

Not for profit providers such as Bethlehem Life Centre in Cefn Cribwr also offer extensive non Council provision.

Opportunities exist for further private development within the County Borough, in particular within areas such as;

- Stadium facilities for our leading professional and semi-professional rugby and football teams
- Commercial 5-A-side football complex
- Indoor tennis centre
- Ten-pin bowling

In addition, it is possible that existing provision may be made more accessible to the general public in a cost effective way. For example, by negotiating Bridge Card access to private facilities.

The proposed project will investigate:

- Opportunities to negotiate greater public access to existing 'private' facilities within the County Borough
- Opportunities to proactively attract and support appropriate private sector development to enhance and compliment existing Council provision



Project 4

Local and community development – sport and physical activity brokers

Overall participation rates in sport and physical activity within the County Borough, particularly for adults is relatively poor. Bridgend is ranked 19th out of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales (Sports Council: Adult Participation Survey 2006). Regular usage of leisure centres by adults accounts for only 10% of the local population (Welsh average – 17%). Clearly, if we are to meet and exceed the main Climbing Higher target of a 1% increase in overall participation levels each year for the next 20 years, a different approach needs to be taken, particularly with regard to targeting ‘hard to reach’ individuals and communities.

The proposed project will:

- Seek to invest savings from other service remodelling projects into the employment of local community sport and physical activity development workers (brokers) with a remit to;
 - > Engage with and support local providers of sport and physical activity, to enhance existing provision – to all sectors of the community; linking closely with regeneration proposals aimed at tackling poor health.
 - > To identify gaps in provision within communities and devise local action plans to increase participation rates;
 - > To attract new funding that further enhances local provision.

The intended outcome of these interventions will be increased participation rates within sport and physical activity opportunities, particularly in our most deprived communities.



Project 5

Greater use of the outdoor environment

The County Borough is blessed with some of the most spectacular, and accessible, outdoor environment in South Wales. Nine miles of heritage coastline, spectacular mountains surrounding our valleys, nearly all linked by 31 miles of cycle paths and the 'Celtic Trail'.

In addition, the area boasts a number of parks, inland waterways/lakes and large expanses of forest.

This proposed project will explore, with partners;

- Ensuring that all public rights of way are accessible
- That infrastructure projects are supported and developed in a way that enhances access
- Developing activities and initiatives to further enhance and promote usage (linked to Project 4)

These types of projects will allow communities the opportunity to exercise in an informal way whilst enjoying the countryside, this will benefit not only the individual's physical health, but their mental health as well.



Project 6

Community focused schools development

Significant additional sports facilities are located on primary and most obviously on secondary school sites in the County Borough. Developing community focused schools is an opportunity to extend access to community sports activities linked to the School Modernisation Programme.

This proposed project will seek to:

- Broker mutually beneficial arrangements with schools in those areas of most strategic need
- Attract additional investment to improve the quality of facilities and access to them by the public
- Work with local sports and community organisations to deliver high quality, and relevant activities on a local basis
- Multi-skill leisure staff to work on school sites, to deliver and manage sport and physical activity programmes
- Work with other potential school site users, (e.g. Youth Service, Adult Learning) to create vibrant community 'hubs' on those school sites



5. Next steps

The remodelling of the Council's sport and recreation service has been identified as a priority Bridgend County Borough Council corporate programme.

The next steps are: (subject to confirmation of dates)

1. Approval of draft strategy (approved by Cabinet): February 2009.
2. Consultation with key partners, stakeholders and the public: 15th April – 29th May 2009.
3. Feasibility studies and financial modelling relating to Phase I projects.
4. Final approval of the strategy and action plan by Cabinet: Autumn 2009.



“The natural environment in Bridgend provides some of the best training venues to be found anywhere in the world”.

Marc Jenkins
Olympic triathlete.

To let us know your thoughts you can log onto www.bridgend.gov.uk and complete a short feedback survey, or you can fill in and post back one of the paper questionnaires that accompany this document. For more information on the consultation, or if you require any of the documents in a different format please email: spact@bridgend.gov.uk or telephone 01656 642423.

Please return questionnaires or complete online by the 29th May.

