

Mid Wales Regional Committee MID 02-02(p)

Date: Friday 8 March 2002

Time: 10.30am to 1.00pm

Venue: Knighton Community Centre, Knighton

The Sports Council for Wales

Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru

SPORTS FACILITIES IN POWYS

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out a submission from the Sports Council for Wales (SCW) for the Assembly’s Mid Wales Regional Committee’s inquiry into ‘Sports Facilities in Powys’. It considers the current position regarding facility provision and sports participation. Issues for debate which affect young people’s involvement in sport are also addressed.

SPORTS FACILITIES IN POWYS

SCW has a comprehensive database of major built facilities in Wales and a database of natural facilities. In order to identify excess demand or excess supply of facilities a Facilities Planning Model has been developed (by **sportscotland** in co-operation with the University of Edinburgh). This identifies priority areas for investment across the whole of Wales.

Built Facilities

A list of facilities is at Appendix 1. Details of the results of the most recent runs of the Facilities Planning Model are shown below.

Facility Type	Ranking for Unmet Demand by Local Authority	Percentage of Demand Unmet by Existing Facilities
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Sports Halls	13	43.6%
Swimming Pools	6	21.3%
Golf Courses	13	9.4%
Squash Courts	7	14.0%
Indoor Bowling Rinks	22	31.1%
Synthetic Athletics Tracks	7	42.6%
Artificial Turf Pitches	2	41.0%

As Powys is a large, rural authority it is likely that a significant proportion of the unmet demand is made up by small pockets in scattered communities where it would be unrealistic to provide major new facilities.

Much of the stock of facilities in Powys is comparatively recent. Since the beginning of 1990 the authority area has seen the opening of five sports/leisure centres (three with indoor bowling rinks), one additional indoor bowls centre, two sports halls, one synthetic athletics track and three golf courses. Powys is likely to face less of a problem in replacing or refurbishing facilities nearing the end of their useful life compared with other authorities.

Natural Facilities

Powys is an important area of Wales in terms of the provision of natural facilities for sport. SCW maintains a database which numbers around 2,400 facilities - over 12% of these are located in Powys. Powys has particularly high numbers of facilities for riding, off-road motorcycling, hill walking, hang gliding/paragliding, fell racing, caving, game angling and coarse angling.

SPORTS PARTICIPATION IN POWYS

Adults

Overall rates of adult participation in sport and physical activity in Powys are well above the Welsh average (63% compared with 55%), although the frequency of participation is lower. Participation rates are significantly boosted by high levels of involvement in outdoor pursuits, although figures for the 15-24 year old age group remain high even when these latter figures are excluded.

The percentage of adults in membership of sports clubs is higher than the Welsh average (19% compared with 16%). Moreover, involvement in volunteering at clubs and schools is significantly greater (6.2% compared with 3.8%) for all groups but particularly so within the 15-24 age group

(8.1% compared with 3.8%).

Children and Young People

The range of PE curricular activities undertaken by pupils contrasts between a below average figure for 7-11 year olds, to the highest figure for any authority for 11- 16 year olds.

Extra-curricular participation is slightly below the Wales average for 7-11s and above it for 11-16s. However, this hides the particularly low levels of extra-curricular participation for girls in the 7-11 age group.

Club based participation trends in Powys show little variation from those across Wales, although in contrast to extra-curricular sport, a significantly greater proportion of girls in the 7-11 age group participate in club based sport. The percentage of children who use their local leisure centre is higher than the Welsh average for both 7-11 year olds (90% compared with 85%) and 11-16 year olds (86% compared with 81%).

CAPACITY BUILDING IN POWYS

Achieving higher rates of participation in Wales, particularly amongst women and girls, is high priority for the Assembly. Over many years SCW has worked in close co-operation and partnership with Powys County Council (and its predecessor authorities) to build capacity within the various communities of the area. Initiatives have included:

- joint funding of sports development officer posts;
- appointment of a Dragon Sport Officer to create increased extra-curricular opportunities

for primary school age children, particularly girls;

- appointment of a part-time disability sport officer;
- 'Girls First' initiative to increase opportunities for girls in secondary schools;
- provision of SPORTLOT and Exchequer capital grants for the development or

refurbishment of facilities;

- provision of SPORTLOT Minor Equipment Grant to purchase new or additional items of sports equipment between £750 and £5,000;

- SPORTLOT Community Chest awards which provide up to £750 revenue support for

voluntary sports clubs. Decisions are made by a local Powys committee with administrative support from the local authority.

CONCLUSION AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Powys has reasonable provision of large district wide facilities which are relatively new and in good condition. However, in a rural community there will always be significant challenges surrounding transport issues. This is particularly an issue as far as increasing children's extra-curricular activity and club membership is concerned.

Additionally, the opportunity to participate closer to home is important. Multi-games areas on primary school sites can make a significant difference to both the school and community.

Ensuring that high levels of club membership and volunteering are translated into trained and skillful coaches, volunteers and administrators is a further challenge.

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