

Best Value through sport

the value
of sport



foreword

Sport is part of the culture of this country. It touches us all, whether we are participants, spectators or volunteers. Our quality of life is significantly enhanced by it. Sport entertains us; it gives us the opportunity for self-expression; it provides us with a sense of camaraderie and friendship; it enables us to stretch ourselves mentally and physically; it teaches us how to win and how to lose; it helps us appreciate and value our natural environment.

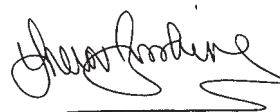
However, sport needs to demonstrate *tangible* benefits to individuals, communities and the nation as a whole, if it is to compete with many other worthy causes for a share of limited public resources.

This document on *The Value of Sport* responds to the challenge: 'Why invest in sport?' It draws on the best scientific evidence available, combined with local examples of good practice, to demonstrate that sport can make a difference to people's lives and to the communities in which they live. It shows that for every pound invested in sport there are multiple returns in terms of, for example, improved health for the individual and less demand on the health service by those of middle and older age, reduced criminal behaviour among young people, and economic regeneration and improved employment opportunities.

There is evidence in this document to show that sport has the ability to overcome social barriers and empower individuals. It can help to reduce social exclusion, promote lifelong learning, and provide opportunities for engagement in community life through voluntary work.

This document is aimed at those who hold the purse-strings in health, and in economic, social and environmental regeneration, at national, regional and local level. In particular we expect sport to feature strongly on the 'Best Value' agenda of local authorities and in the work of the new Regional Development Agencies.

To maximise the benefits sport can bring requires the breaking down of departmental barriers. It requires new ways of thinking and new connections, and developing these will be as much of a challenge to those who work in sport as to those who work in other areas of social policy. We commend all of you to read this document, and to respond positively to the challenge.

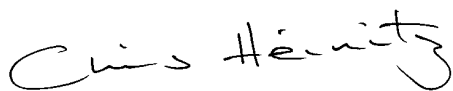


Trevor Brooking
Chair, Sport England

foreword

The LGA is happy to be associated with this document which makes the case for sport. Many local authorities place sport at the centre of their work on healthy living, regeneration, social inclusion and other key objectives.

The changing landscape of cultural activity, with challenges such as Best Value and Regional Cultural Strategies, will present those who value sport with new opportunities. Local government, and the Local Government Association, look forward to working alongside Sport England to grasp those opportunities fully and develop still further sport's place within our cultural life.



Chris Heinitz
Chair, LGA Leisure and Tourism Committee

The Health Education Authority warmly welcomes the publication of *The Value of Sport*. There is a wealth of evidence to show that sport can have a positive impact on health, not only through improving the fitness of participants, but also through offering opportunities for valuable social interaction.

By taking such a broad definition of sport, there is also great potential for all sectors of the population to become involved, to help reduce some of the inequalities we see in society. The HEA looks forward to a continued partnership with Sport England to turn this vision into reality.



Yve Buckland
Chair, Health Education Authority

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'We believe that enhancing the cultural, sporting and creative life of the nation is a vital part of government. The activities that we sponsor and support as a Department have a fundamental impact on the quality of life of all citizens. They provide enjoyment and inspiration. They help to foster individual fulfilment and well-being. They help to bind us together as a community. They are important for the quality of education. They assist with the work of social regeneration.'

(Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport)'

introduction

Sport is part of the social fabric of this country. Millions of people in the United Kingdom enjoy the many benefits associated with a lifelong involvement in sport, as participants, spectators or volunteers. Hundreds of thousands more bring sporting opportunities to their communities through their work, whether as the chief leisure officer in a local authority, a local sports development officer, a manager of a health and fitness facility, a PE teacher in a primary school or as a coach in a local sports club.

To these people the value of sport is self-evident. They see at first hand the joy on the face of the seven-year-old who has swum her first length of the swimming pool; the young offender who has found a new sense of purpose in life and self-esteem through achievement in sport; the example set by a disabled person whose ability to achieve in sport really does add value and quality to their life; the new lease of life that regular physical activity can give to those recovering from major heart surgery.

The benefits sport brings to individuals and communities may be obvious to many. In the competition for scarce resources, however, sport must face up to the challenge of justifying in more tangible ways why public money should be invested in it. The purpose of this document is to face the challenge head-on by setting out the case for sport, based on the best available scientific evidence backed up



by practical examples of what works on the ground.

The evidence contained in this document is impressive and convincing. It shows that sport can really make a difference in enhancing people's lives and regenerating their communities. It demonstrates that sport should

be a key player in social policy and not an afterthought or optional extra.

'Unless there is an effective sports lobby, the fact is that sport will not get either the recognition in terms of the political priorities or, indeed, the economic resources that I believe it deserves and must receive. We are not saying, of course, that sport alone can solve all the problems of regeneration, butit has suffered in the past from a lack of recognition from community developers who, perhaps, have seen it more as an optional extra than as a viable tool for regeneration. It is our job to get the message across just how sport can contribute to the community.'

(Tony Banks, Minister for Sport)²



Who should read this document?

This document is targeted at decision-makers in the public and private sectors at national, regional and local level. Although useful to those currently working in sport and leisure, it is particularly aimed at those who would not normally think of sport as a potential key player in regeneration. These include:

- leaders and chief executives in local authorities carrying out performance reviews and setting strategic priorities as part of the requirement to achieve 'Best Value'
- health authorities, health trusts, general practitioners and others working in primary health care
- representatives and officers in the new Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies and Regional Cultural Consortia
- politicians and civil servants in Government Departments concerned with, for example, regional development, the environment, education, health and social services, who may not make the connection between sport and their respective policy objectives
- school governors and head teachers



- business leaders and company directors involved in, for example, making decisions on priorities for investment such as housing, leisure or retail developments, considering sponsorship opportunities, and reviewing employees' services and conditions of work.

Sport and the new social policy agenda

Since its election in May 1997 the Labour Government has introduced a new social policy agenda that has significant implications for those concerned with the promotion and development of sporting opportunities in this country. Some aspects of the policy agenda impact directly on sport while many create changes in the broader philosophy of government that require an innovative response from sport. Sport must strengthen its position within a broader cultural, social, economic and environmental policy framework.

Major public policy themes affecting sport are:

- an emphasis on policy objectives aimed at improving quality of life that incorporate environmental, social and economic concerns within a broader philosophy of sustainable development
- breaking down departmental and organisational barriers in order to take a more holistic 'joined-up' approach to complex social problems



- a commitment to tackle social exclusion by overcoming the vicious circle of deprivation and poverty experienced in some of our poorest communities
- within the broad definition of culture, a focus on widening access, the pursuit of excellence and innovation, and the nurturing of educational opportunity
- the modernisation of local government including the duty of Best Value, which will be a duty to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- the promotion of community-based regeneration that seeks to involve and empower local people and organisations
- greater recognition and support for the voluntary sector and promotion of active citizenship
- more strategic targeting of Lottery investment and increased opportunity for Lottery distributors to work on innovative programmes with local partners and on cross-distributor projects

- the strengthening of regional decision-making and accountability through the establishment of Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies and Regional Cultural Consortia.

The new social agenda offers an *opportunity* for sport rather than a threat. The themes running through the Government's social policy are consistent with those that have underpinned sports development philosophy for many years. For example:

- implicit within 'Sport for All' are the principles of equity and social inclusion
- the benefits that sport brings are multi-dimensional
- sport has for many years been the 'public face' of local authorities, bringing them into direct contact with their communities – as a consequence, sport has often been at the forefront of initiatives to empower and consult local people
- sport has always had the advantage of being in touch with youth culture and provides the opportunity to make the important link between school and community life



- voluntary work and active citizenship are central to sport. Volunteers are the backbone of British sport and, through voluntary work, sport provides people with the opportunity to enhance their skills and put something back into their communities
- sport provides the opportunity for lifelong learning, both through developing skills and competence as a participant, and more widely through lifelong involvement and obtaining qualifications in coaching, sports leadership and administration. Many of the skills acquired through involvement in sport have the added benefit of being transferable into other areas of employment
- participation in many sports takes place in the countryside. Sport has often led the way in protecting open space and access to water and in developing sound management practices to ensure that conflict between different users is minimised and projects are sustainable.

Sport cannot afford, however, to be complacent. It must continue to challenge old ways of working. It must seek new partnerships and alliances. In particular it must look for innovative ways of reaching the disenchanted and socially excluded to ensure that real progress is made towards the ideal of Sport for All.



How is sport defined?

Before documenting the value of sport we should define what we mean by 'sport'. For public policy purposes a broad definition of sport is advocated which is consistent with that recommended by the Council of Europe in its charter for sport:

'Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.'

(Council of Europe, *European Sports Charter*, 1993)³

This is a wide definition of sport that extends far beyond traditional team games to incorporate individual sports and fitness-related activities such as aerobics and certain dance activities, as well as recreational activities such as long walks and cycling. It extends from casual and informal participation to more serious organised club sport, and for the minority involves complete commitment in pursuit of the highest levels of excellence at Olympic and World level. This wide and inclusive definition of sport extends its relevance to the whole population and its value as a significant player in the broader social agenda.



The value of sport – the evidence

The evidence demonstrates the relevance of sport to wider social, economic and environmental objectives; its contribution to the well-being of people and the communities in which they live; and its importance to overall quality of life.

For ease of presentation the evidence for the value of sport is identified separately in terms of its:

- global and international importance
- social value (including the positive impacts on health, juvenile crime, young people and education, voluntary work and community regeneration)
- economic value
- environmental value.

In reality these distinctions are artificial. One of the strongest arguments that can be made for investment in sport is that the benefits are multi-dimensional, cutting across traditional sectoral boundaries. The benefits of sport also impact at all levels, from the individual to the community, the city to the region, and the country as a whole.

A survey of public opinion carried out in February 1998⁴ showed that almost three-quarters (71%) of the adult population in England think it important that the country achieves international sporting success, with a third (32%) viewing success as very important.

The growth of sport as a worldwide cultural phenomenon is one of the defining characteristics of the 20th century. On the back of developments in telecommunications, sport has become a shared experience for billions of people around the globe. The cumulative television audience for the football World Cup finals in France was 37 billion people and the equivalent figure for the Olympic Games in Atlanta was 20 billion. In the UK alone 26.6 million people watched England play Argentina in the 1998 World Cup.

Given its level of exposure worldwide, sport has the ability to project a positive image of a nation and this can provide significant diplomatic and economic spin-offs when success is associated with a sound ethical framework. By the same token, evidence of cheating, corruption and violence associated with sport can do untold damage to a country's reputation.

The United Kingdom's position and reputation in world sport has always been strong with many sports having originated and been codified here. Over recent years the UK has taken a strong ethical stance on such global issues as doping control and equal opportunities for women in sport. However, as more countries have become significant players in world sport there is evidence that we are losing ground, not just in terms of international sporting success, but also in our influence

the international value of sport

over the important international institutions that shape world sport. Nevertheless, the public attaches considerable value to international sporting success. Successful sports people are part of our country's history and folklore. The sense of pride and the positive 'boost' that people feel when our teams and individuals achieve international success cannot be quantified but they are real.

Furthermore, seven in 10 adults (68%) think it important for Lottery money to be spent helping the country to achieve sporting success.

Recent initiatives backed by Lottery money have demonstrated a significant commitment to establishing a sporting infrastructure that will provide every opportunity for Britain to re-assert itself on the world sporting stage. The creation of a United Kingdom Sports Institute and an associated network of regional and local services, combined with direct financial support for World Class performers and those with potential to achieve World Class, will transform the sporting landscape in Britain. In addition, the commitment to hold major international sporting events in the United Kingdom is demonstrated by the staging of the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester and the redevelopment of Wembley Stadium with the aim of attracting events such as the 2006 football World Cup finals.



The United Kingdom continues to invest in a number of projects in Africa, the Caribbean and throughout Central and Eastern Europe, working in conjunction with the British Council, the Voluntary Service Overseas and the Council of Europe as well as a number of national sports agencies to achieve ambitious developmental goals. Politically, sport clearly has a role to play through promoting the UK in a positive way internationally and building on good relations overseas.



'... the hidden face of sport is also the tens of thousands of enthusiasts who find, in their football, rowing, athletics and rock climbing clubs, a place for meeting and exchange, but, above all, the training ground for community life. In this microcosm, people learn to take responsibility, to follow rules, to accept one another, to look for consensus, to take on democracy. Seen from this angle, sport is, par excellence, the ideal school for democracy.'

(Daniel Tarschys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, 1995)

the social value of sport

Participation in sport

Britain has some of the highest levels of sports participation in the world with a wide diversity of sporting opportunity, a long tradition of publicly provided facilities, a growing and increasingly significant commercial sector and a strong community-based network of voluntary clubs. Some facts and figures serve to illustrate this:

- In 1996 it was assessed that over 20 million adults in Britain had participated in sport on at least one occasion in the previous four weeks and, when walking over two miles was included, nearly 30 million people had participated.⁵
- Between 1987 and 1996 participation in sport by older age groups increased significantly. In 1987 35% of those aged between 45 and 59 years had participated in sport (excluding walking) at least once in the previous four weeks and this increased to 40% in 1996. The growth in participation for the 60-69 years age group was even more marked with an increase from 23% to 30% over the same time period.⁶
- When surveyed in 1994 virtually all children in England aged 6-16 years had taken part in at least some sport in the previous year, and 98%

had done so in their free time out of school lessons. In addition 96% of children said they enjoyed sport in at least one context whether it was in or out of school lessons.⁷

- In 1994 young people aged between 6 and 16 years in England took part in 14 different sports on average during the year, with on average nine different sports taken part in during their leisure time out of school lessons.⁷
- The majority (78%) of young people had taken part in sport in a 'formal' context, whether it was during extra-curricular time or as a member of a sports or youth club.⁷
- In 1994 in England 49% of boys and 35% of girls aged 6 - 16 years participated in sport as a member of an out-of-school sports club during the year.⁷
- It is estimated from a national survey carried out in 1997 that, in an average four-week period, nearly one million people in England made in total 2.4 million visits to local authority sports halls. Similarly, it is estimated that, during the same period, 1.5 million people made 4.3 million visits to local authority swimming pools.⁸

Such statistics demonstrate the significance of sport in the daily lives of many people in this country. The high rates of participation are a tangible expression of the value people attach to participation in sport. They also bear testimony to the extensive network of school and community facilities, playing fields, parks and accessible open countryside that provide the opportunity for physical expression and sheer enjoyment through sport.

Although the figures are impressive, there is still much to be done if the benefits of sport are to reach all sections of society and inequities associated with gender, ethnicity, disability and social class are to be overcome. Drawing from the research evidence currently available, the following statistics demonstrate the inequities that continue to exist:

Gender

- Participation in sport is higher by men than by women although the gap is narrowing. In 1996 statistics for Great Britain showed that seven out of 10 men compared with six out of 10 women had participated in at least one activity in the previous four weeks.⁵

Age

- In the early primary school years, girls' and boys' levels of participation in sport are similar. In 1994 89.9% of boys in England regularly took part in at least one sport during the year 'out of lessons' compared with 87.3% of girls. However, as children progress through their school years the gap between boys' and girls' participation widens until, in the last two years of secondary school, the equivalent percentage for boys is 91.3% compared with 80.6% for girls.⁷
- Participation in sport declines significantly as people get older. In 1996 78% of 16-19 year olds in Britain participated in at least one sporting activity in the previous four weeks.



This declined to 57% for 30-44 year olds and to 30% between the ages of 60 and 69 years, yet regular participation in sport can increase longevity and quality of life in older age.⁵

Social class

- Levels of participation in sport are related to social class. In Britain, in 1996, those in the professional socio-economic group were almost three times as likely to participate in sport (excluding walking) as those in the unskilled manual socio-economic group (63% compared with 24% having participated at least once in the previous four weeks).⁵
- Social class differences extend to membership of sports clubs. In 1996, 16% of those in the professional socio-economic group were members of a sports club compared with less than 5% of those in the semi-skilled manual group and less than 3% of those in the unskilled manual group.⁵
- A survey carried out in 1997 of the use of local authority sports halls and pools in England showed that 10% of visitors came from the professional socio-economic group (which



represents 6% of the population of England as a whole), while only 8% of visitors were from the semi-skilled and unskilled manual groups (19% of the population as a whole).⁸

- The 1997 survey showed that visitors to local authority swimming pools were more socially unrepresentative than those to halls. The proportion of pool visitors who were professionals was more than twice their proportion in the population while the proportion of those from the semi-skilled and unskilled groups was around a third of their proportion in the population.⁸

Ethnicity

- Levels of participation in sport are not equal for all ethnic groups. In Britain, in 1996, 46% of white adults had participated in at least one activity (excluding walking) during the previous four weeks compared with 41% of black adults (Caribbean, African and 'other'), 37% of Indians and 25% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.⁵
- Ethnic minority groups are also under-represented in their use of local authority sports halls and swimming pools. The national survey carried out in 1997 showed that the proportion of visitors to

swimming pools in England who categorised themselves as Black Caribbeans was a third of what would be expected from the numbers in the population, while representation by Black Africans was one fifth, Indians one third, Pakistanis half, and Bangladeshis half of what would be expected.⁸

Disability

- Inequities also exist in relation to the use of local authority halls and pools by people with a long-standing illness or disability. Focusing on the younger age group of 16-44 year olds (to exclude age-related disability), the 1997 survey in England showed that only 6% of visitors to swimming pools had a disability compared with 15% of the population, while for halls the proportion with a disability was even lower at 4%.⁸

Many of these social inequities are long-standing but they are not insurmountable. Local authorities have a key role to play. Many positive examples exist where local authorities, working with others, have used sport to tackle inequity and social exclusion at the local community level, and a small selection of these are documented later.

One important way in which local authorities extend opportunities for low income groups to participate is through concessionary schemes linked to community facilities. A recent survey of all local authorities in Britain⁹ established that 54% operated some kind of concessionary leisure card scheme, with 89% of schemes targeted at people on Income Support, 73% at Family Credit claimants, 79% at the unemployed, 64% at full-time students and 59% at pensioners. Research carried out by the English Sports Council in 1997⁸ showed that, in one week in November, 117,000 visits to local authority sports halls and pools in England were made by senior citizens using discount cards. Similarly 21,000 discounted visits were by people with disabilities, 13,000 by people who were unemployed and 4,000 by single parents.

At a national level our strategy document, *England, the Sporting Nation: A Strategy*¹⁰ has set targets to increase participation in sport and to reduce the inequities associated with gender, age and social class. Further research is being carried out by Sport England to enable targets to be set for participation in sport by ethnic minority groups and people with a disability.

At an operational level Sport England is implementing programmes that will address social exclusion directly by, for example:

- establishing in some of our most socially and recreationally deprived neighbourhoods 'Sport Action Zones' which will receive enhanced Lottery funding and combined capital and revenue support
- co-funding with local authorities and others a number of 'Pathfinder' projects supported by Single Regeneration Budgets to promote sport in deprived areas through innovative partnerships
- establishing a 'Small Projects' Lottery fund targeted at small organisations that have traditionally found it difficult to obtain financial support. Priority will be given to organisations that benefit young people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and women and girls.

Lottery funding can make a significant contribution to reducing the social inequities in sports participation and involvement. To be successful, however, it must not be seen as a substitute for funding from other sources. In particular, investment by local authorities will continue to play a crucial role if we are to make real progress towards Sport for All. Any reduction in funding from this source would have serious implications for sport in England.

The value of volunteers in sport

'...voluntary and community activity is fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society. Voluntary and community groups, as independent, not-for-profit organisations, bring



distinctive value to society and fulfil a role that is quite distinct from both the state and the market. They enable individuals to contribute to public life and the development of their communities... In so doing they engage the skills, interests, beliefs and values of individuals and groups.'

(Draft Compact Between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector, August 1998)¹¹

The value of volunteers in sport should not be underestimated. Volunteers provide the backbone of British sport, making a massive 'in kind' contribution as coaches, administrators, managers and officials. The estimated number of volunteers in sport is three times that of those working in paid employment in sports-related activity. Volunteers are not just important to sport; they also make a significant contribution to the overall voluntary sector. Volunteering benefits not only those in receipt of the service, but also the volunteer through their engagement in society and the sense of purpose and fulfilment that voluntary work can bring.

- In 1995 it was estimated that the total annual value of the UK sports volunteer market was over £1.5 billion¹².
- In 1995 it was estimated that there were just under 1.5 million volunteers in UK sport¹².



- Volunteers invested on average 125 hours of their time each year¹².
- The vast majority of voluntary work in sport (accounting for approximately 80% of the total number of voluntary hours and value) takes place in sports clubs¹².
- Volunteering in sport is the largest area of voluntary activity in the United Kingdom. In 1997 it accounted for 26% of all volunteers¹³.

Volunteering and its contribution to active citizenship are high on the social policy agenda and there is a growing consensus across all political parties about the value of volunteering. Sport is a key player in the voluntary sector. Sport England has made a significant and continuing commitment to increasing the recognition given to voluntary workers in sport, and improving their skills, through its 'Volunteer Investment Programme' (VIP) and 'Running Sport'. Further support is being given to volunteers through the New Opportunities Fund 'Millennium Volunteers' programme.

Sport and community safety

'Young people can easily drift into anti-social behaviour and petty offending through boredom and limited access to more constructive activities.'

(National Association for Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO), *Growing Upon Housing Estates*, 1988)¹⁴

Levels of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity among young people are a major problem for society as a whole, and particularly so for people living in poorer neighbourhoods. The scale of youth crime is considerable. In 1996, in England and Wales, the peak age for offending was 18 years for males and 15 years for females¹⁵. In 1996 it was estimated that seven million crimes per year were committed by 10-17 year olds¹⁵. Crime among young males is a particular problem. In 1994 young men between the ages of 17 and 25 accounted for 70% of all adults convicted of or cautioned for a criminal offence¹⁵.

The risk of being a victim of crime is significantly higher for people living on council estates and in low income areas than it is for residents of affluent suburban and rural areas, and worse in inner cities than in non-inner city areas¹⁵.

The causes of crime and disaffection among young people are complex and multi-dimensional. It would be naive to think, and unrealistic to claim, that sport alone can reduce the levels of youth crime in society. However, over the last 15 years or so, *'sports, outdoor pursuits and constructive leisure activities have become a well-established feature of initiatives whose aim is to divert offenders and young people at risk away from crime'*.¹⁶

Research evidence to support the effectiveness of sport in reducing criminality among young people is limited by a lack of high-quality systematic evaluation. However, strong experiential evidence exists to show that sport has a part to play in preventing crime. A number of schemes have contributed towards this view, some of which are described overleaf.

- **The sports counselling schemes in Hampshire and West Yorkshire** were aimed at reducing crime and criminality by encouraging young people on probation to make constructive use of their leisure time through sport. Both projects were evaluated although not for long enough to prove conclusively their effectiveness in reducing crime. However, the researchers evaluating the Hampshire project felt able to conclude that *'the project had enjoyed significant success in helping to halt long-term recidivism among participants, including some with histories of serious crime'*.¹⁷ In the West Yorkshire programme, evaluation over two years showed that those young offenders who completed 8 to 12 weeks of sports counselling experienced improvements in their self-esteem and perceptions of their own fitness.¹⁸

- **Millwall Football Club** has hosted one of the longest-established **'Football in the Community'** initiatives in the country. In addition to programmes that encourage sporting activity in local schools and estates, it is closely involved in education and training schemes for persistent school truants and excluded pupils, young offenders and unemployed young people. Monitoring of the truancy project for 1994/95 found that at least 10 out of 15 pupils (all boys) returned to school full time at the start of 1996.¹⁶

- A more recent and very promising and progressive initiative is the establishment in 1998 of the **'Reczones' project in the '3Ds' area of Bolton**. The impetus for the Reczones project came from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme which involves a partnership made up of local authority, statutory agencies, and private and voluntary sector groups. Located in areas of significant multiple deprivation, the project aims, through a combination of investment in improved



facilities linked to outreach work and direct community involvement in decision-making, to *'improve the quality of life of people in the 3Ds area, through positively addressing some of the problems associated with young people and crime'*.¹⁹

A programme of systematic action research has been implemented to evaluate the impact of the programme, examining key crime statistics and residents' perceptions of crime and safety.

- Lord Hunt, reviewing the contribution of **Outdoor Adventure** programmes to reducing anti-social behaviour among young offenders, concluded that *'there is encouraging evidence of the value of Outdoor Adventure in community-based initiatives to prevent crime and as part of Court Orders imposed on juvenile and young offenders. Such activities are considered to play a useful part in intermediate treatment programmes'*.²⁰
- Bristol City Council has been leading the way in using sport as a central policy vehicle in its programmes to overcome exclusion and to regenerate the poorest areas of the city. One of these initiatives, the **'Voice of Southmead'**²¹, has shown impressive results in addressing problems of drug-taking and associated levels



of criminal activity. The project, which is supported by SRB funding, is focused on a local sports development action plan. This has been agreed jointly by the health authority, the Avon and Somerset Police and the city council's departments, primarily Social Services, Housing, and Sport and Youth, working closely with the local residents' association. Set up at a youth centre in November 1997, with a local worker running the project and offering a range of different sporting opportunities, the early indications are that the project has already had significant benefits. The figures show a 15% drop in crime in the local beat area in the period October 1997 to January 1998 compared with the same period 12 months earlier. The figures are even more dramatic for juvenile crime which saw a 43% reduction in juvenile offenders in the same period.

Although there is no hard scientific evidence of a direct causal relationship between involvement in sport and reductions in criminal activity and improvements in community safety, there is growing experiential evidence that sport can play an influential role. Indirectly sport can have an impact by providing challenge and adventure, and by giving meaning and a sense of purpose to young

people's lives where previously there was a vacuum. Sport delivered in a sound ethical framework can engender self-respect, self-esteem, confidence and leadership abilities.

Sport and health

'How people live has an important impact on health. Whether people smoke; whether they are physically active; what and how much they eat and drink; their sexual behaviour and whether they take illicit drugs – all of these factors can have dramatic and cumulative influences on how healthy people are and on how long they will live.'

(*Our Healthier Nation, A Contract for Health*, consultation paper, February 1998)²²

Improving the health of individuals and communities is a priority for the Government. Considerable emphasis is being put on health promotion and disease prevention in addition to modernising and increasing the capacity of health care provision.

Participation in sport and an active lifestyle have long been associated with benefits to health. This relationship seems obvious and is now backed by a strong body of research evidence. Recent evidence suggests that it is not only vigorous physical activity that leads to significant health gains. These may also be achieved by frequent, moderate levels of physical activity, such as cycling and brisk walking.²³ The Health Education Authority, as part of its 'Active for Life' campaign, now recommends 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on at least five days a week as sufficient to confer significant health benefits and considers this an appropriate message to encourage the majority of the population to be active.

With a significant decline in manual occupations, increasing use of the car and almost universal access to a wide range of labour-saving devices in the home, the contribution that sport can make to people's activity levels has become increasingly important. The extent of

inactivity in England was clearly demonstrated in the *1990 Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey*²⁴ which found that over seven out of 10 men and eight out of 10 women fell below the age-appropriate activity level necessary to achieve a health benefit.

The wide diversity of activities offered by sport enables individuals of all ages to participate at the level and intensity that suits them, from the vigorous demands of aerobics, squash and football to the more moderate demands of golf, bowls and recreational swimming.

The benefits of a physically active lifestyle include:

- **Reducing the risk of coronary heart disease.**

Heart disease and stroke are major causes of premature deaths, accounting for about 18,000 deaths (a third of all deaths) in men and 7,000 deaths (one fifth of all deaths) in women under 65 years of age.¹⁵ The incidence of coronary heart disease in middle-aged men is approximately halved in the most active compared with the most sedentary groups.^{25,26,27} More specifically, research in Britain has shown that men who engage in vigorous (sporting) activity of any frequency have significantly lower rates of heart attack than men who report no sporting activity.²⁸

- **Reducing obesity.** In the UK the prevalence of obesity has increased steadily during the last 50 years and during the 1980s the proportion of obese people doubled. In England, in 1993, 13% of men and 16% of women were obese and 57% of men and 48% of women were overweight.²⁹ Obesity is a major health problem, being associated with a greater likelihood of developing heart disease, hypertension, late-onset diabetes, arthritis and bronchitis. In overweight men and women, aerobic exercise causes a modest loss in weight, even without dieting. Research shows that dieting combined with regular physical activity is one of the most



effective means of managing mild to moderate obesity and of maintaining an ideal body weight. This applies equally to children and adults.^{30,31}

- **Reducing the incidence of osteoporosis.**

Osteoporosis (brittle bone disease) results in about 6,000 hip fractures a year in the UK, 90% of which occur to people over 50, 80% of whom are women. Almost half of all women will have experienced a fracture by the time they are 70 years of age.³² Between 5% and 20% of people who experience a hip fracture die within one year and many more experience long-term disability that seriously reduces the quality of life.³³ There is clear evidence that weight-bearing exercise helps to maintain bone mass and many cross-sectional studies have shown that active men and women, particularly athletes, have a higher bone mass density than those who are sedentary. Research shows that being physically active reduces the risk of later hip fracture by 50%.³⁴

- **Psychological benefits.** Regular participation in an exercise programme has been found to be associated with measurable increases in self-esteem in children and adults in 60% of the



studies carried out.³⁵ Regular exercise may also reduce memory loss in older people.³⁶ In addition a positive association has been found between exercise and a decreased level of mild to moderate depression. Exercise may be a useful adjunct to professional treatment for severe depression.

- **Other health benefits of sport and physical activity.** These include: a strong association with reducing the risk of stroke (by up to three times for physically active middle-aged people compared with their sedentary counterparts)³⁷; the possible prevention of cancer at specific sites in the body and in particular the prevention of colon cancer; the management of non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus and a possible protective effect from developing the disease; an association with lower levels of blood pressure.³⁸

GP referral schemes provide good examples of direct ways in which sport can work with health providers to achieve mutual objectives. One scheme that has been operating successfully since 1994 is the **Lewisham Sports Development GP Referral Scheme**. It combines funding from the regional health authority and a local regeneration fund. The Leisure Department of the

local authority works in partnership with local GPs. People with a range of illnesses, including stress, obesity, depression and diabetes, are referred to local leisure centres where they complete a series of supervised activity sessions within protocols agreed by GPs. The scheme started with 100 referrals each year and it now makes 800. The programme now attracts SRB funding and is a key scheme for Health Action Zone funding.

The **Health Education Authority community demonstration project in Burngreave**³⁹, a deprived inner city area of Sheffield, has shown that a community-based, multi-disciplinary approach to promoting physical activity can be successful in increasing levels of participation in sport. The evaluation of the initiative's impact has shown that residents of Burngreave had significantly higher levels of sports participation and physical activity than residents of another similarly deprived area of Sheffield which served as a control group. A significantly greater proportion of individuals living in Burngreave (34%) claimed to be more physically active after the intervention than residents of the control area (25%). Among those able to do some form of sporting activity, 50% did none in the control area compared with 39% in Burngreave. Health perceptions were significantly more positive in Burngreave with 23% rating their health as 'much' or 'somewhat better' than one year ago, compared with 16% of residents of the control area.

Sport, young people and education

(Why do you like PE and sport?) 'Because you get fit, you can run around. It involves team effort, you're with friends, the teachers join in, and it's fun.' (Why is it fun?) 'Because you're learning different skills...basically it's team spirit and it's fun. It's not just playing against other people – it's the whole team that's won. People help you if you're in trouble and you help them, and the teachers help you.'

(Young People and Sport in England: The Views of Teachers and Children, 1994)⁴⁰

Few would deny that sport, delivered within a broader physical education curriculum, is crucial to the 'rounded' development of young people. There is a growing body of research that shows that early experience of sport has a significant effect on lifelong participation. Young people's early learning experiences will influence the benefits they gain from sport in later life.

Although the family has a crucial role to play in the early socialisation process, it is through the delivery of high-quality sporting experiences at school that public policy can bring the most influence to bear. Other providers, such as sports clubs in the voluntary sector, outdoor education centres, community sports facilities and commercial providers, also have an important role to play in ensuring that sporting opportunities for young people 'bridge the gap' between school and community.

Given the importance of sport in schools, any policies that result in reductions to the amount of time and/or priority that PE receives in the curriculum must be viewed with concern. The *1990 Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey*²⁴ showed that people who exercise regularly in their youth are more likely to resume exercise in later years. Twenty-five per cent of those active when aged 14-19 years were very active 'now' compared with 2% 'active now' who were inactive at an earlier age.



performance level achieved, but rather the number of different sports to which individuals were introduced.⁴¹

- In 1994 nearly three in 10 children in England spent less than 1 hour 30 minutes in PE lessons in an average week while 54% of children spent less than two hours.⁷
- Nine in 10 children in England in 1994 said that they enjoyed sport in school lessons while six in 10 agreed strongly with the statement, 'I enjoy PE and games lessons in school'.⁷
- In a survey of London schools in 1988, 34% of children said that PE was their favourite subject, more than any other school subject.⁴²
- In a survey carried out by MORI in 1998 on 'after school clubs', it was found that sport is the most popular choice of activity, more popular with parents than reading, writing or maths.⁴³
- A recent OFSTED survey of good practice in school PE and sport emphasised the need for better cooperation between schools and the local community, including clubs.⁴⁴

- A study on inner city sport carried out by the University of Liverpool concluded that *'participation in later life is most likely when young people acquire a broad set of sporting skills and interests, then continue to play regularly while they leave full-time education, commence employment, change addresses and embark upon family formation'*.⁴¹
- Evidence suggests that the best predictor of whether individuals will remain regular sports participants throughout adulthood is not the volume of sport played at school, nor the



- A survey carried out by the Sports Council in 1994⁴⁵ showed that nearly all secondary schools (95%) and the majority of independent schools (81%) had let out their sports facilities for community use during the year.
- Researchers have indicated that leisure activities such as sports may be significant in creating opportunities for identity development, social meaning, levels of competence and intrinsic satisfaction in adolescence.⁴⁶
- The *Training of Young Athletes Study* which looked at a sample of elite young competitors in four sports – tennis, football, gymnastics and swimming – showed that these children were less likely to play truant than their peers and that their academic achievement in terms of GCSEs obtained at Grade C and above was higher than that of other children with the same IQ levels.⁴⁷
- Research carried out by the English Sports Council in 1995 showed that 'enjoyment' and 'personal achievement' were the two most important values that young people attached to their sporting involvement. Evidence also suggests that socially desirable values such as

'sportsmanship', 'being fair' and 'tolerance' are rated very highly by children when they take part in sport. The vast majority of children do not endorse values related to 'winning at all costs'.⁴⁸

The educational benefits of participation in sport and PE are well recognised. The research evidence is strong that participation in sport at a young age helps shape the values and attitudes that influence participation in later life. Sport often plays an important part in parents' assessment of the schools they want their children to attend. However, sport in schools is under increasing pressure from the renewed government emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The number of primary school teachers with sufficient training to deliver a high-quality PE curriculum remains inadequate.

The DfEE is making a significant contribution to the development of sport in schools through the designation of specialist 'Sports Colleges'.⁴⁹ There are currently 34 Sports Colleges in place, nearly all of which are comprehensive schools that accept pupils from a wide range of ability. Schools achieve Sports College status by meeting a number of criteria based on their current track record, existing facilities and access to facilities for physical education and community sport. Priority is given to those schools that demonstrate that they can build on an effective foundation of attainment and achieve excellence in physical education and community sport. Schools applying for Sports College status must be prepared to look beyond their own school to work with a family of schools and the wider community. From October 1998 schools were invited to apply for specialist school designation.

Sport England, through its 'Active Schools' programme and supported by Lottery money, is working in partnership with a wide range of national and local agencies, as well as the schools themselves, to put into place a sound framework of sports provision and physical education in schools. However, success will

depend on the priority given to young people's physical education within the school curriculum. Responsibility resides with Government and schools themselves to ensure that sport is not marginalised in the pursuit of other educational objectives.

Sport and community regeneration

Community regeneration is about improving the social, economic and environmental aspects of an area. The problems faced by people and their communities are multi-dimensional. The solutions to these problems are not, therefore, to be found in fragmented and bureaucratically defined approaches. A holistic approach is required which challenges old ways of working and cuts across departmental and organisational boundaries.

Sport has often led the way in promoting 'joined-up' ways of working. Local authorities in particular have been at the vanguard of many of these developments and have a pivotal role to play. The following five examples provide a brief selection of projects where sport has been able to make a difference:

- The **Sportslinx** project in Liverpool is a ground-breaking project which contributes towards lifelong learning, developing safer cities, empowering local communities and promoting health and social regeneration. The project offers all 9-10 year olds in the city (7,000 in all) the opportunity to participate in a number of sporting activities, the intention being to increase participation in physical activity both within and outside the National Curriculum. The project revolves around obtaining objective assessments of each child's fitness and sporting aptitude. The main partners in the scheme are the Leisure Services Directorate of Liverpool City Council, Liverpool John Moores University, the University of Liverpool, Liverpool Hope University College, Merseyside Youth Association, the Education Directorate, and the Liverpool Area Health Authority.



- **The Aneurin Bevan Lodge Children's Home**, run by Kingston upon Hull Social Services Department, was established to return to the local community children in care who were originally from Hull but who were placed out of the area. In 1997 a pilot project was established to forge stronger links between the Social Services and Leisure Services Departments. The aim of the project was to promote the involvement of young people in care in activities in the community, outside the environment of the children's home. A wide range of supervised sporting activities was provided for the children, including rock climbing, ice skating, canoeing and horse riding. In his evaluation of the project, the children's home manager concluded, *'It is clear to those involved that this project has had positive outcomes in helping to develop [the young people's] confidence, awareness, self-esteem, trust, ability to value negotiation between people, and reliance on self and others in a positive way... The recommendation from AB Lodge would be to extend the project with a long-term view to ... expanding it to encompass other children's homes'*.



- **Active8** is an innovative new project initiated by the Kingston upon Hull Sports Development Unit. It has been successful in attracting £395,000 from the European Social Fund. The project, which started in April 1998, will work with 70 disadvantaged young people aged between 16 and 25 years who live in the city. The majority of the young people are either ex-offenders, people who have recently left the care system, long-term unemployed, homeless, or face problems with literacy or numeracy. The project uses sport and leisure to motivate, develop personal skills, encourage qualifications and increase employment potential. It is a joint initiative between Kingston upon Hull City Council, Raleigh International, Humberside Careers Service and the Sail Training Association.

- Since its inception in 1993 the **Youth Charter for Sport** (YCS) has pioneered the development of innovative partnership between sport and other local providers, to tackle social exclusion and anti-social behaviour among young people.⁵⁰ In 1994 the YCS helped Hulme Regeneration create a project raising over £100,000 from both the public and private

sectors to fund improvements to a run-down kickabout area and to purchase sports equipment. In addition the project invested in people by providing opportunities for 100 local residents to become qualified 'Community Sports Leaders'. In Moss Side the YSC involved local youngsters in developing a new facility linked to the Moss Side Youth Centre. By the time of its completion in the year 2000 the centre will have attracted £3.5 million of investment through public/private partnerships.

- The **Somerset Rural Youth Project** is a partnership project which resulted from a successful bid to the 1996 Rural Challenge competition. The project, which was successful in obtaining £1 million funding from the Rural Development Commission and £0.5 million of local funding, involves a wide range of partners including Somerset County Council, Somerset Youth Partnership, the Community Council for Somerset, the five district councils, the six further education colleges and the Somerset Training and Education Council. Managed by a charitable limited company, the project aims to reduce the deprivation experienced by young people in the Rural Development Area of Somerset. This is done through a wide range of initiatives including sports and arts projects, access to training and employment opportunities, and involving young people actively in their local communities. Successful sports projects have included young people in the planning and development of tracks for mountain biking; organising a 'network of contacts' for young people interested in playing football; and training young people to be effective volunteers in delivering children's play and sporting opportunities leading to 'Junior Sports Leaders Awards'.



'It is clear that bids to stage major sporting events...can operate as a catalyst to stimulate economic regeneration, even if they do not ultimately prove successful...Once the initial redevelopment has taken place [referring to Sheffield and Manchester] the existence of high-quality facilities means that the cities concerned are able to attract other sports events. The impact does not stop there. Many of the facilities are suitable for other uses such as conferences and concerts. In addition, the favourable publicity which can follow from a successful event may increase the attractiveness of a city, raise its profile overseas, and enable it to attract an increasing number of tourists.'

(National Heritage Committee, 1995) ⁵¹

the economic value of sport

Sport is big business. The economic impact of sport on the nation has been assessed and recognised since the 1980s. More recently, however, there has been an increasing interest in the contribution sport can make towards inward investment and economic regeneration in regions and cities. Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Glasgow are four prime examples of cities that have made a long-term strategic commitment to sport and recreation. Each views sport as a powerful tool to enhance the physical fabric of communities, to stimulate the local economy, and to improve its image with outside investors and tourists.

In addition to the economic regeneration benefits that flow from investment in sport, substantial savings can be made in the economy from the health gains associated with increased levels of physical activity in the population. Research evidence suggests that promoting physical activity for employees in the workplace makes good business sense.

There is a growing body of research evidence to support the economic benefits that derive from sport nationally, regionally and locally.

National

- Consumer expenditure on sport in 1995 was estimated at £10.4 billion, or 2.33% of total consumer expenditure.⁵²

- The value-added to the UK economy in 1995 by sport-related economic activity was estimated at £9.8 billion, or 1.6% of Gross Domestic Product.⁵²
- Employment in sport in the UK was 415,000 in 1995 compared with 324,500 in 1985, accounting for 1.61% of total employment in 1995 compared with 1.52% of total employment in 1985.⁵²
- Overall growth in consumer expenditure on sport in the UK was greater than growth in consumer expenditure in total, which grew strongly over the 1985-1990 period, so that sport in 1995 accounted for a higher share of consumer expenditure than it did in 1985 (2.33% compared with 2.01%).⁵²
- Real consumer expenditure on sport in the UK grew by 30% between 1985 and 1995.⁵²

Regional and local

- Sport has a significant impact on the economies of regions. For example, in 1992 it was estimated that in the Northern Region alone expenditure on sport and sport-related activities amounted



to £613 million and total employment in sport was in the range of 19,540 to 22,400.⁵³

- A study carried out by the Henley Centre for Forecasting in 1989 on behalf of the Sports Council showed that sport made a significant localised economic impact. Focusing on two contrasting areas in England, Bracknell and the Wirral, the study showed that some £3 million of value-added was created in Bracknell by sport-related activity and £14.8 million in the Wirral. Sport-related employment totalled 323 in Bracknell and 1,619 in the Wirral.⁵⁴
- Over its first 47 months of operation the Lottery Sports Fund supported 2,789 capital projects with £887 million of Lottery investment within a total project investment of £1,571.2 million.⁵⁵
- Over the next 10 years it is anticipated that a total of £1,102 million of Lottery funding will be spent on sport, with at least two-thirds being invested in the Community Projects Capital Fund for facilities and activities that everyone can use.⁵⁶
- Spending by commercial companies on sports sponsorship reached £265 million in 1994 and

was estimated to be worth £285 million in 1995, £301 million in 1996 and £311 million in 1997.⁵⁷

- In 1994/95 projected rate relief given by local authorities to voluntary sports clubs was £16 million.⁵⁸
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) estimated that local authorities in England and Wales would spend £970.2 million on sport and recreation in 1998/99 excluding capital charges. This amounted to 63% of all their expenditure on leisure.⁵⁹
- A study carried out by the Sports Council in 1995 estimated that the capital cost (ie cost to build new) of the stock of 1,492 public indoor sports centres covered by the study was some £2.5-£2.6 billion. It was estimated that the capital expenditure required annually to maintain the stock to a safe and acceptable standard over the following 10 years would be £61.2-£64.1 million per annum. In addition to the cost of ongoing work, it was estimated that a further £40.8-£42.7 million per annum would be required over the following five years to upgrade the existing stock of buildings to a safe and acceptable standard.⁶⁰




- The staging of first round matches of Euro '96 in Sheffield generated an additional £5.8 million of expenditure in the city over a 10-day period. Across the country as a whole, Euro '96 attracted 280,000 visiting overseas supporters and the total economic impact generated in the host cities was estimated at £195 million. Another event in Sheffield, the World Masters Swimming Championships held in June/July 1996, generated £3.9 million of additional expenditure.⁶¹

- The 1st Cornhill Test Match (June 1997) between England and Australia on its own generated £4.6 million of additional visitor expenditure which generated £1 million of additional local income or the equivalent of 82 additional full-time job years.⁶¹
- A review of exercise initiatives in North America put the total financial benefit to a company from a fitness programme at \$513 per worker per year. In Australia corporate fitness programmes have been associated with a reduction in absenteeism of between 23% and 50%. On the basis of a 20% reduction in absenteeism, it was estimated that there would be a saving of

1.5 days per worker per year which would approximate to a net benefit of \$848 to the Australian economy.⁶²

- Cyanamand, a large UK pharmaceutical company, reported that those employees who participated in its fitness programme experienced 1.8 days less sickness absence per year than their sedentary peers. The company estimated savings on just 50 of those participating to be £44,500 per annum.⁶³

These statistics demonstrate that sport makes a significant contribution to national, regional and local economies. Experience shows that sport can be a leading player in attracting inward investment, both through the direct benefits it brings and, perhaps even more importantly, through the changing culture and image that it can generate in cities and regions. To this extent sport is an important component of regional development and should feature strongly on the agendas of the Regional Cultural Consortia and new Regional Development Agencies.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest with many thin, bare tree trunks and branches. The image is split into two main color zones: the left side is a warm orange-brown, and the right side is a deep blue. The text is positioned on the right side, within the blue zone.

‘We note that, according to the balance of evidence we received, compared to other activities, leisure and tourism do not cause widespread ecological damage to the countryside...We feel that it is important that the positive economic impacts of leisure and tourism on rural areas are recognised.’

(Environment Committee, *The Environmental Impact of Leisure Activities*, 1995)

the environmental value of sport

Open spaces are a valuable sporting and recreational resource in our towns and cities, whether as formal areas, such as playing fields or playgrounds, or more informal, multi-functional areas, such as parks. They also play an important role in 'breaking up' the urban environment. However, commercial pressures on land for development and continued rationalisation of state property have increased the pressures on our open spaces. As a result of growing concern about the loss of playing fields, the Government, in 1996, made the English Sports Council a statutory consultee on any developments that affect playing fields.

Sport also plays an important role in the urban fringe area around our towns and cities. These areas provide a recreational outlet for city dwellers, particularly for informal activities such as cycling, walking and riding. Often sport has been used to improve the quality of the landscape in these areas, particularly on under-used sites and those reclaimed from mineral workings.

Beyond our cities sport plays a vital role in the countryside. Sport often takes place in areas of intrinsic value such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks as well as important bio-diversity areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Sports facility design in these areas must be of a high quality that is appropriate to the local environment and

the activities must be carefully managed, not only to minimise environmental effects, but also to reduce conflicts with other users. In rural areas sport may also be important, together with tourism, in contributing towards rural economies, particularly through farm diversification. The opportunity for sport to play a role in rural economies is likely to grow with proposed reforms in the Common Agricultural Policy.

Increasing demand for land for housing, to accommodate some 4.4 million new households by 2016, has led to a re-examination of the way we live. Government has made a priority the need to create more sustainable communities that encourage mixed land uses and reduce the need to travel. Sport has a central role and must be seen as an integral part of new developments, not an afterthought. Experience shows that the use of planning obligations is a good way to help secure sports facilities for new communities.

Sport is also leading the way in developing new building techniques that reduce the impact on the environment.



- Sport England currently comments on nearly 600 planning applications each year that affect playing fields. After the first year of becoming a statutory consultee, there were 13 instances where local authorities had approved planning applications against English Sports Council advice. In the first six months of 1998 there were no such cases.
- In 1994 there were 16 planning appeals allowed for redevelopment on open spaces. This had fallen to four in 1997.⁶⁴
- The development of the United Kingdom Sports Institute site in Sheffield and the Commonwealth Games facilities in Manchester will bring back into use significant areas of derelict land.
- There are many examples where funding from the Lottery Sports Fund has contributed to sustainable environmental improvements.⁶⁶ Support for a community sailing centre at the Stoke Newington reservoir in Hackney has brought into use redundant waterworks linked to a sound management regime that protects and enhances the environment. The Mountbatten Sailing and Watersports Centre in Plymouth is

converting a redundant RAF seabase and derelict industrial land to recreational use. The London Borough of Newham has received funding to convert outdated Victorian baths to modern swimming and indoor dry leisure facilities whilst retaining the fabric of the locally distinctive building.

- A report published by the Nature Conservancy Council in 1989 identified the importance of golf courses to nature conservation and gave examples of good practice across the whole of the UK where golf contributes in positive ways to environmental management and sustainability.⁶⁷

In 1998, to help resolve management conflicts and promote joint working and environmental sustainability, the English Sports Council signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the Countryside Commission and the Environment Agency.⁶⁸ The Memorandum identifies the three agencies' common objectives to:

- increase enjoyment and success in outdoor sport and recreation
- promote access for everyone, particularly beside and on water



- use recreational and sporting activities as a way to increase awareness of, and appreciation for, the environment and to increase support for its protection
- provide and design facilities and activities that follow the principles of 'sustainable development', for example good links to public transport, and encourage responsible use of motor vehicles
- improve the environment in ways that benefit recreation.

Sport England is also working closely with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions to update *Planning Policy Guidance Note 17* to provide a sound local planning framework for sport that incorporates as a fundamental principle concerns about environmental conservation and sustainability.

delivering the benefits

This document provides a comprehensive profile of the value of sport. The case has been made on the back of a considerable body of scientific evidence and local examples of good practice. The outcomes demonstrate that sport can make a difference, both to the quality of life of individuals and to the communities in which they live.

To deliver the social, economic and environmental benefits that sport can bring to local communities requires joint working and commitment between agencies nationally, locally and across departments, particularly within local authorities.

At a national level Sport England is putting into place a comprehensive framework of sports development which will encourage such partnerships and effective working. Its Active Schools, Active Communities and Active Sports programmes, underpinned by significant levels of investment, will seek over the next 10 years to change the landscape of sports provision and opportunity in this country.

However, to maximise sport's impact and contribution to the social agenda requires that all those involved in sports development push back the boundaries of partnership working. Sport must respond positively to emerging public policy initiatives. In particular sport must:

- respond positively and convincingly to the 'challenge' element of Best Value in local authorities in order to safeguard its interests and justify continued investment

- through the 'consultation' element of Best Value, seek to establish the extent of public support for local authority investment in sport
- make an impact locally within health improvement programmes, Health Action Zones, Healthy Living Centres, Healthy Schools and after school clubs
- ensure that it is part of the Government's 'Pathfinder Area' initiatives related to social exclusion, and included within programmes in the 'New Deal for Communities'
- continue to make the case for funding for sport-related projects from the Single Regeneration Budget and from the European Social Fund
- ensure that it is included on the agendas of Regional Cultural Consortia and Regional Development Agencies.

Perhaps because sport is associated with fun, enjoyment and leisure, it is too often forgotten, or not taken seriously, by those outside sport who influence social policy and investment. The evidence presented here shows, however, that sport has an important part to play in regenerating our most 'run-down' neighbourhoods and improving people's quality of life. For many people sport is fun, but it must also be taken seriously and valued as an important contributor to social policy and action.

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- more people involved in sport
- more places to play sport
- more medals through higher standards of performance in sport.

The Value of Sport is part of a Tool Kit of information, guidance and services that Sport England is developing to assist local authorities to deliver Best Value through sport. The Tool Kit is being developed in consultation with key national organisations and individual local authorities. More information on the Tool Kit can be obtained by contacting Sport England headquarters or any of the Sport England regional offices.

Sport England's work on Best Value through sport underpins and is in support of its Active Communities programme.

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