

# **Managing School Facilities for Community Use**

## **Practical Guidelines**

Based on research by  
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for

**sportscotland**  
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## Further Information

These guidelines are based on a comprehensive study prepared on behalf of **sportscotland**, the Scottish Arts Council and the (then) Scottish Executive. Most of the work was carried out in 2004 but the bulk of the guidelines remain of value. The study was undertaken by Genesis Strategic Management Consultants and Professor Fred Coalter with additional contributions by Penny Lochhead of PMR Leisure.

The complete research study is summarised in the following document:

- *The use of school sports and cultural facilities: a review of the impact of policies and management regimes. Summary.* (**sportscotland** Research Digest no. 100) Edinburgh: **sportscotland**, 2006 (minor updates, 2008).

More detailed information about the case studies and the surveys can be found in the main report:

- *The use of school sports and cultural facilities: a review of the impact of policies and management regimes.* (**sportscotland** Research Report no. 107) Edinburgh: **sportscotland**, 2007 (minor updates, 2008).

A detailed guide to planning for community use of school facilities for sport is available from **sportscotland**:

- *Guide to community use of school sports facilities.* Edinburgh: **sportscotland**, 2004. [www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/Guide+to+Community+Use+of+School+Sports+Facilities.htm](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/Guide+to+Community+Use+of+School+Sports+Facilities.htm)
- *Community use of school sports facilities: workbook.* Edinburgh: **sportscotland**, 2004. (A second edition incorporating the results of the study has been drafted.) [www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/Workbook+for+Community+Use+of+School+Sports+Facilities.htm](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/Workbook+for+Community+Use+of+School+Sports+Facilities.htm)

These can be viewed on the sportscotland website: [www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)

For further information on research commissioned by sportscotland, please contact the Research Unit: [research@sportscotland.org.uk](mailto:research@sportscotland.org.uk).

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## Introduction

With the current record levels of government and local authority investment in the school estate in Scotland, it is important to consider how best to optimise the opportunities presented by these developments and to ensure that all schools make the most effective contribution to cultural and sporting life throughout Scotland. Most schools make their sports and cultural facilities available to their communities. But are communities and schools getting all the possible benefits from these arrangements?

Within this context, **sportscotland**, the (then) Scottish Executive and the Scottish Arts Council combined to fund an investigation into the impact of different management regimes on the extracurricular and community use of schools for sport and cultural activities. The research was carried out between December 2003 and December 2004<sup>1</sup> using a range of data collection methods, including surveys of local authorities, schools and community users, and case studies of selected local authorities and schools, chosen to reflect a range of geographical locations and management approaches<sup>2</sup>. The intention was to use the data to identify common elements of 'best practice' approaches that maximise community use of school facilities for sport and cultural activities.

## Lessons from the Research

The study revealed that almost all secondary schools and many primary schools in Scotland are open to community users. However, the study also uncovered some challenges in managing these facilities for community use, including:

- Limited availability of facilities on weekends and out of the school term
- High costs for community users outwith core hours
- Difficulties with providing cost-effective staffing outside the school day
- Complications resulting from lack of clear definitions in PPP contracts
- Overly complicated booking systems
- Variations in pricing within local areas
- Lack of clarity in development priorities

The research identified a series of factors that significantly increase the chances for successful community use:

- The presence of an effective policy and strategy driving community use
- Schools receiving designated community school status, with dedicated staff and budget for the management of community use

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<sup>1</sup> The bulk of the research for this investigation was undertaken in 2004. The reports were circulated in the interim and are now being published for wider availability in the context of the review of the School Estates Strategy being undertaken by the Scottish Government. This report reflects the circumstances at the time of the research; while a number of recommendations have been acted on, the findings and advice do remain of value in the current environment.

<sup>2</sup> The main research was conducted by Genesis Strategic Management Consultants and Professor Fred Coalter of the Stirling University, with additional case studies contributed by Penny Lochhead, PMR Leisure.

- Positive attitude and support of the head teacher
- Appropriate facilities, available at the right price and open at the right times
- Simple letting procedures, easily understood by users and operated well by providers
- Good communication with stakeholders, through both formal meetings and informal personal contacts
- Partnership working with local sports organisations, including leisure centres and clubs
- Proactive promotion of community use of schools

Although schools and local authorities have made considerable strides in increasing the availability of school facilities for community users, and in improving the range and quality of those facilities, there is still room for further improvement and development. These guidelines and best practice case studies offer guidance and ideas to stimulate this development.

## Roles in Managing Community Use

Community use is managed in a variety of ways, largely reflecting different local government structures. Several different management models may be present within a single local authority. The most prevalent forms of management are management devolved to the school (36% of secondary schools, 40% of primaries); management by local authority culture and leisure departments (20% secondary; 38% primaries) or management under PPP contract (20% secondary; 1.4% primaries). A small percentage of schools are managed through other arrangements including local authority trust, community trust, community education or some type of shared management scheme.

## Practical Guidelines

### First Principles

#### *It all starts with a clear policy*

The key to success is a clear, integrated policy and strategy for community use of school facilities, sport development and facilities development.

#### *One size does not fit all*

There are many approaches to the management of school facilities for community use. It is not necessary for all schools and local authorities to take the same approach. One size does not fit all. Management strategies should fit local circumstances and a variety of approaches can be effective as long as they are developed within a clear local policy and strategy for community use and development.

## General Advice

Community use works best when it is a proactive policy. This means that local authorities and schools need to consider what they wish to achieve through the community use policy and what the demand for the facilities by the community might be. There are several basic questions that must be answered by the school in consultation with the local authority and other partners before a programme of community use is undertaken.

- When do you want the facilities to be available to the community? During school hours, after school, in the evenings, on the weekends, during school holidays?
- How will people use the facility? Will they attend classes organised by the local council?
- Who will use the facility? Will clubs want to use the school for meetings? What about individuals – will they want to use a school's pool, gym, library? Will local organisations book rooms for meetings or receptions? Will teachers, Active Schools coordinators and cultural coordinators arrange extracurricular clubs and activity sessions for school pupils?
- How will people in the community know that these facilities are available to them?

## Strategic Advice for Local Authorities

*What role does the school play in the local facilities and development strategies for sport, culture and art?*

Having a clearly integrated strategic policy across the local authority is key to successful management of school facilities for community use. Different models of management may be used in different schools to fit with local circumstances as long as they are articulated into a strategic plan.

- This plan should encompass schools and other council leisure and cultural facilities.
- Ensure that facilities do not compete with each other to offer the same services and that there is a rational pricing scheme.
- Identify which facilities should cater for various target populations and coordinate facilities opening hours accordingly so that the facilities will support a wider proportion of the community.

A unified strategy will help to rationalise provision, avoid duplication and develop a pricing structure that provides opportunity for all.

*What facilities are needed in your community?*

The process of building or refurbishing school facilities with community use in mind works best when there is significant consultation with those who will use the facilities **before** the facilities are designed and built.

- Consult with teachers – particularly the specialist teachers like heads of PE, drama and music – about their needs.

- Discuss needs with local sports clubs, dramatic societies, arts and music groups. What sort of facilities do they need, when would they want to access these facilities and how much could they afford to pay? Do they have particular technical requirements must be considered at the design stage?
- Do not forget to think about the needs of individuals. Does your local area have a convenient and affordable swimming pool or gym? What other needs might your local community have?
- Consider under-served or socially excluded groups. Are there populations within the community who might not have easy access to facilities and services who could be served by this school?

We strongly advise the formation of a community users' group to offer input on local needs and demand. This can be an ongoing group that can offer continuous advice on how the facilities might better meet local needs.

### *Is the facility being managed by a PPP contract?*

PPP contracts raise particular issues with implications for both facility design and management arrangements.

- It is crucial that the construction brief is clear on the requirements for sports halls, pitches, changing facilities, stage and lighting design and other related issues that will result in facilities that are appropriate for community use (this is one key reason why consultation prior to design is so important). Detailed specifications for sports facilities that are appropriate for community use have been published by **sportscotland**. See *Secondary school sports facilities: designing for school and community use* (2003), *Primary school sports facilities* (2004) and *School playing fields: planning and design guidance* (2006)<sup>3</sup>.
- Carefully consider the definition of core hours and extended hours in the PPP contract. This is why it is necessary to think about who will be likely to use the facility and when they will need access **before** the PPP arrangements are finalised. Using facilities outside core hours can be expensive. One way to deal with this is to ensure that the core hours are defined broadly. Another might be to arrange for subsidies.
- Ensure that the booking arrangements defined by the PPP contract are not too complex. In many cases, one booking system has been used for 'core hours' and another for 'extended hours'. This is confusing and time consuming – one simple, central booking system is preferable.
- PPP management seems to work more smoothly when the contractor has personnel on site to monitor performance, liaise with the school and respond to problems.
- Finally, consider the PPP school within the local integrated facilities strategy. The PPP management contract must allow sufficient flexibility in the definition of core hours, pricing and determining priority in bookings to enable the school to operate as a part of that integrated structure.

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<sup>3</sup>[www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/School+Playing+Fields+Planning+and+Design+Guidance.htm](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/School+Playing+Fields+Planning+and+Design+Guidance.htm)



### *What funding is available to support community use?*

- Community use of schools, like wider leisure provision, requires appropriate levels of subsidy.
- Fees for lets of the facilities do provide some income, but typically not enough to offset the additional janitorial, staffing and maintenance costs.
- The question of subsidy must be considered in relation to the pricing strategy and the local facilities strategy. If the local authority wishes to provide facilities for voluntary groups at low cost – particularly during evenings and weekends, or outwith the school term – some form of subsidy should be available so that full cost-recovery fees will not be required.
- The management arrangements must assign responsibility for maintenance, repair and upkeep costs associated with community use. If these are borne by the school they may provide a disincentive to opening the facilities.
- The cost of staffing – particularly janitorial cover and staffing that meets health and safety requirements – is a major component of the cost of community use. Contractual arrangements that lower staff costs will reduce the level of subsidy required.
- Subsidy arrangements must also take account of the costs associated with development and marketing of the facilities.

### *How will the facilities be staffed to deliver community use?*

Staffing costs often present a barrier to organisations and individuals wishing to use the facilities outside of 'core hours'. There are several possible solutions to this problem:

- Ensure that 'core hours' are defined contractually so that they include the days and times when local groups will want to use the facilities. This may involve extending core hours late into the evening and including the weekend within core hours.
- Use of cultural and leisure services, leisure trusts or PPP leisure staff may help to provide more cost-effective and flexible solutions if the terms of employment contracts are defined so that overtime costs do not place burdens on evening and weekend use of the facilities.
- Regardless of the management regime used, the contractual arrangements should permit the local authority sufficient flexibility to open the facilities outwith the school term at an affordable rate, with appropriate staffing levels. This has particularly been an issue with PPP management contracts.

Research has demonstrated the value of dedicated community use staff within schools for increasing the effectiveness of management, development and provision.

### *What development and marketing will be required to increase community use for a school?*

- Provision of school facilities for community use should take place within a clear local sport or cultural development strategy. This means that truly effective community use

requires that facilities move beyond the traditional block lettings and take a more proactive approach that incorporates development and marketing.

- The particular goals of community use will be shaped by local strategy and they will vary from one local authority to another.
- Effective development requires the appointment of specialist staff, like sport or cultural coordinators.
- Consultation with community groups, such as local clubs, is essential.
- Research has indicated that school arts and cultural facilities are particularly underutilised and that development work may be needed to rectify this.
- Once programmes are developed and facilities made available, they must be advertised to the community. It is hard for even the most innovative programmes to sell themselves.
- Local authorities should produce a community use manual that documents all aspects of policies and practice and clarifies the strategic framework guiding the provision of school facilities for community use within the local authority. This manual would provide the framework for local community management and/or agreements with leisure trusts or cultural and leisure departments.

## Advice for School Boards or School Senior Management

The community use of many school facilities is managed by the local school or by a partnership between the school and the culture or leisure departments of the local authority. Within these arrangements, different people manage community use. Some schools employ a community use manager, while others ask the head teacher to fill this role. Despite the local variety, there are general points that are broadly relevant to school boards and school senior management teams:

- Whether they manage community use directly or not, the support and buy-in of head teachers is critical. Head teachers may need training or additional support, depending upon how actively involved they will be in managing community use or developing community use policies.
- Many schools have found hiring a business manager on site to be effective.
- Hiring developmental staff, like sports or arts coordinators, is valuable. Dedicated community use developmental staff can work proactively with the local community and with pupils to create effective extracurricular and community programmes that respond to local demand and local needs. The result will be more effective definition of target populations, improved communication with these populations, more innovative programming and better uptake.
- Arts and cultural facilities are generally underutilised and may particularly benefit from the employment of development officers.
- Community use raises budget issues, especially for schools which use a devolved management mode. In these cases, the school board needs to review budget provisions to be sure that expanding community use does not have negative impact on funds available to the school.

- The school board should consider the most effective ways of managing community staff and implementing contractual arrangements that can help to defray costs. The high cost of overtime can be a barrier to use of the facilities by voluntary groups. Contractual arrangements that cover extended opening hours and weekends within the standard work week will help to alleviate this problem.
- How to deal with health and safety, child protection concerns.
- Consider implementing a reward structure for teachers leading extracurricular activities.

## Advice for Head Teachers or Community Use Managers within Schools

Depending upon local circumstances, the exact remit for head teachers or community use managers in providing for community use may vary. Some will be more actively involved in setting policy, others will focus on delivery.

Head teachers will need to champion the community use policy to staff. Research has shown that the support of the head teacher is one of the most crucial success factors for community use. This support may include:

- Supporting incentive schemes for teachers who deliver community or extracurricular activities.
- Communicating support of the policy to teachers.
- Encouraging teachers to contribute ideas, liaise with community organisations, etc.
- Active liaison and consultation with local clubs and community groups.

School staff will benefit from advice about how to deal with the challenges of dual use of facilities. Staff should receive notification when their areas are going to be used so that confidential materials can be kept securely and disruption to the teaching areas minimised. Be sure roles and responsibilities are defined and that community users are held to the same standards, for example in the use of equipment, that teaching staff are.

In some locations, partnerships with clubs may be valuable to the school as well as the community. Some schools have offered discounts on facilities to clubs who provide coaching or instruction for pupils in extracurricular activities.

## **Case Studies Demonstrating Good Practice**

The following case studies offer examples of good practice. They demonstrate a variety of approaches to community use and a variety of management modes. The case studies offer a range of ideas and approaches that could be adapted by others as well as providing examples of the basis principles underlying our advice in action.

### **Bathgate Academy, West Lothian**

Using a local sports trust to manage a regional facility.

#### **Policy Context and Background**

West Lothian Council has a variety of school facilities that use a range of strategies for managing community access. There is a strong Council policy for establishing access to schools for the community and for local sports clubs.

In 2001 West Lothian Council began a process of improving the infrastructure of five schools under a PPP building programme. Bathgate Academy was targeted for major sporting improvements because the Council realised that it would be an ideal site for the placement of a regional sports hall. West Lothian applied for supplementary funding from the sports lottery for the additional space for the facility.

#### **What They Did**

The building programme at Bathgate Academy resulted in a six-court sports hall, a club room and a full-size synthetic pitch. All were facilities previously lacking from both the school and the community. The West Lothian PPP team worked with the preferred bidder on the design and specified a requirement that the new facilities be open to the community daily for a total of at least 40 hours per week.

The school board developed the Bathgate Academy Sports Trust as a vehicle for managing the operation of the new sports facilities out of school hours. The Trust, which is chaired by a member of the school board, brings together representatives from the school board, the school, key community users and the Council. A group of local sports clubs were identified as the priority users of the Regional Sports Hall as the project was developed. Each key club (badminton, table tennis, basketball, hockey and cricket) was given a place on the Trust, as were the head teacher and head of PE.

A Council employee from the community services department liaises with the Trust on a regular basis and provides guidance. The department played a key role in overseeing the initial organisation of the Trust and played a crucial outreach development role to help the Trust develop policies, recruit staff and programme facility use. This support was instrumental in the early stages as the Trust was finding its feet and developing its role.

#### **How It Works**

The Trust is responsible for staff and facility management and for setting the programme and lettings policy for the facilities. The establishment and operation of the Trust provide an example of an effective, sustainable management model that operates efficiently within

a PPP context and implements a regional sports development policy in consultation with local clubs.

The Trust manages the facility and supervises the staff, who are employed by the Council. The Trust pays the Council the staff wage bill on invoice from the Council. In effect, the Council is an agent for staff employment. This means that the Trust is able to manage the staff directly without the administrative burden of becoming an employer.

The Trust employs three part-time staff to operate the sports facilities during the community use hours. Although their primary duties are supervisory (welcoming participants, verifying bookings, ensuring that equipment is prepared for the session, liaising with the Trust), they are all qualified leisure attendants with first aid and child protection certification. The staff members also have coaching qualifications and may be able to play a more proactive role in sport development. The staff also work closely with the school PE staff and Active Schools coordinator. As the Trust does not have a sport development post, the Trust must either make use of the supervisory staff or the Council sport development team.

The Trust takes in all monies connected with the facility management from lettings. The financial accounting and income from lettings and expenditure go through the Trust bank account and they are accountable under charitable law.

The positive PPP contract made by West Lothian allows the Trust to gain all income from lets out of school hours without incurring the facility maintenance costs, which are included in the PPP contract. The Council ensured that the PPP contract reflected their plans to increase the use of the facilities by expanding the definition of core hours. This contractual arrangement permits the Trust or community management to use the facilities without incurring the additional facilities maintenance costs that would otherwise apply outwith core hours.

Bookings are made direct to the Trust telephone number. The lettings are controlled through a booking pro forma request and agreed by the Trustees.

The programme of community use is set by the Trustees and is based on a system for prioritising bookings that fulfil the key aims set out in the Deed of Trust. The Deed states that the Trust will undertake the following:

- Manage the sports hall and synthetic pitch to provide sports facilities for:
  - core users of the facilities;
  - other sports clubs and community organisations;
  - training and competition by national and regional bodies of sport;
  - sports development activity; and
  - general sports and physical recreation by the local community.
- Encourage maximum use of the facilities and participation in sport and other physical activity by the local and wider community, core users and other sports clubs.
- Priority in the letting of the sports hall is ranked as follows:
  1. Core sports – basketball, table tennis, badminton, hockey and cricket

2. Other indoor activities
3. Outdoor activities

Groups with open memberships, those providing structured coaching and those who have support from West Lothian Sports Council receive priority over those who do not. Also, the policy is to prioritise youth clubs/groups over adult, and amateur over professional clubs.

The Trust grades clubs by their geography, with priority going to Bathgate, followed by West Lothian clubs and lastly those outwith West Lothian.

Those governing bodies working with youngsters to improve their sporting opportunities within West Lothian also receive high priority.

Thus, the facility is managed in accordance with a clear regional sports development strategy. The lettings priorities are defined by specific goals, focusing on the development of the identified core sports and youth sport development.

In the first year of the programme demand for the facility was very high. The Trust has had to monitor the prioritisation of various groups very carefully so that it does not overlook key development needs of the local community.

Letting charges for the facility were set by the Trust and are currently low to meet the needs of the local market. Although the level of income for the facilities is low, the fact that the Trust does not need to generate income for maintenance costs means the Trust has operated at a comfortable surplus which can be reinvested in the operation and promotion of the facilities.

It is clear from the accounts from the first year that the school and the Trust have a very positive and financially stable future. Financial stability is clearly influenced by the fact that they will not have to pay for any facility maintenance or energy costs and they are in a building tied to a PPP guaranteeing continued quality facilities for a 30-year period. This model is one that could easily be replicated by all local authorities if they worked to ensure that this model is part of the Invitation to Tender document in the PPP bid and the hours for community use were properly defined.

### **Lessons for Others**

1. It was difficult to begin the planning process for the funding bids because there was not any one person appointed to support the project. It is essential that if a local authority was interested in replicating this model that key staff be assigned to work with the school board for a period of time in the initial stages of the planning process.
2. A school wishing to undertake such a process will require good legal and planning advice to guide the establishment of the key partnerships that will form the Trust. In addition, this school will require advice on setting the operational objectives for the Trust. The appointment of a full- or part-time sports development officer to support the project for its first year of operation will be necessary to help promote and market the facility in the community.
3. Although the authority has provided a very good model to replicate within PPP arrangements, it is essential that the requirements of the model be introduced into the PPP negotiation process very early so that the PPP management contract contains

an appropriate definition of core hours and grants the Trust sufficient flexibility to implement the programme. In West Lothian's case, the local authority had to undertake additional negotiations in order to ensure that the localised management system they preferred would be accepted by the preferred bidder. In addition, there were issues with management of out-of-term access. These issues should be settled at the PPP bidding stage.

4. There can be challenges associated with marrying the regional demands of the funding from **sportscotland** with local needs. If regional facilities are to be placed on school sites these conflicting demands must be reconciled. Programming must allow for the necessary level of access by regional development squads and governing bodies of sport as required in the conditions of Lottery funding. That aside, not all facilities will attract Lottery funding, and fewer still for 'regional' level facilities such as Bathgate.
5. By having a local community trust operate the school after school hours the school really does become part of its community and gains respect from those who live and work around it.
6. The Trust feel that Bathgate has good mix of facilities but would recommend that any newly-planned project has the capacity for a small café, food/drinks facility or vending to support the users' needs.
7. This model shows clearly that community use of schools in its purest form, with quality staff responding to community demands and engaging with a community management system, is possible and within a good PPP contract. A true partnership – and an affordable one – can exist within PPP.
8. Whilst having access to external funding greatly enhanced the school facilities and ensured community use hours, local authorities should not need to rely on this option as the only way to achieve good community use. Good policy married with good specifications within a PPP contract should ensure facilities are built and fully available for community use.

## Inveralmond Community High School, West Lothian

An Integrated Community School approach with close community consultation.

### **Policy Context and Background**

West Lothian Council took an active approach to implementing the Scottish Executive's policy on integrated community schools. This initiative, launched as New Community Schools in 1998, aimed to improve social inclusion and to provide integrated services for children through the school and focus support on the family unit. All secondary schools were targeted for inclusion in this initiative. In 2005 the Scottish Executive launched a new policy stating that by 2007 every school in Scotland will participate in delivering Integrated Children's Services.

Inveralmond Community High School has already been working within an Integrated Community School approach over the last 20 years and therefore has practical delivery expertise and experience that can be shared across many of the other schools in the area.

## **What They Did**

Working within the context of West Lothian Council policies and strategies for the development of community schools, and in consultation with staff and other stakeholders, Inveralmond has developed a consultative approach that emphasises a diversified profile and supports social inclusion.

Following a community profiling exercise designed to identify needs that could be addressed via school and community resources, the school set up a community liaison forum in 2003. This forum, in turn, established sustainable mechanisms for ongoing dialogue between the school and community representatives. The school became a leading player in the Ladywell Action Plan, a community-led partnership aiming to improve the quality of life for all sections of the local community.

## **How It Works**

Involvement in the Ladywell Action Plan has facilitated ongoing contact with the larger community. A recently-drafted Sports Development Plan committed the school to establishing a forum of community representatives and out-of-school-hours uses of its sports facilities.

The school offers facilities for a variety of different types of user. For example, during the period of this study, each week the school was used by 93 regular clubs and groups, 200 adult students and approximately 900 pay-and-use participants. This balanced profile of club use, classes and casual use provides a range of options appropriate to the local community and is an example of what can be achieved through the maintenance of close community relations.

The community and leisure manager reports to the head teacher and is a member of the school's senior management team. The community and leisure manager leads the delivery of sport and leisure, and also has responsibility for promoting community activities, maximising the use of the school and its community and leisure facilities and supporting social inclusion. Other functions are supporting adult learning, working with young people and community capacity building.

The school employs a significant number of staff members in order to deliver community use. Essentially, all staff posts on the community side are directly funded by the Council. Staff work shifts covering opening hours of 7.30am-10pm Monday-Friday and 9am-5pm Saturday and Sunday. Each shift is led by a supervisor or the team leader. The team leader is responsible for managing the team, developing the sport and leisure programme and ensuring quality and safety. Supervisors oversee and support colleagues and are responsible for the smooth operation of the service and the health and safety of users. The sport and leisure assistants' duties include life-guarding, supporting users, cleaning and routine maintenance.

The programming of community activities at the school is set annually in the context of the community and leisure development plan (which reflects key policies and priorities), the community side budget, the Council's letting scheme and the demands of the school for extracurricular activities and events. Programming is managed by the community and leisure manager.



## **Lessons for Others**

1. Dedicated management and staffing to concentrate on service provision and use of school by the community improves results.
2. Close working and strategic links with the local community – local nursery and primary schools, other Council departments, facility user groups, sports clubs, community council, local police, voluntary groups and agencies – results in programming that is tailored to the community's needs.
3. Strategic working relationships between PE staff and Community Leisure staff facilitates effective community use.
4. The case exemplifies best use of community space as school and community share facilities during curriculum time.
5. Sensitive pricing and programme delivery enables the school to increase use by groups/individuals traditionally excluded through minimal disposable income.
6. Flexibility in programming between casual use and lets/block bookings enables a diversified profile of community use.
7. There is a need to take forward community forums and feedback from users in order to tailor programmes further.
8. More links with clubs are needed.
9. Because of the devolved management and high level of staffing required, this model offers a very costly option that was developed within the context of the Integrated Community Schools initiative. Inveralmond requires significant financial input from the local council. Such funding may not be available to all schools.

## **Eastbank Academy, Glasgow**

A Community Club approach that integrates youth and club development.

### **Policy Context and Background**

Glasgow City Council policy is to have all schools open for community access where required. For many years this has been achieved through use of a centralised letting system. Clubs have often used school facilities because they have typically been less expensive than the community-based sports facilities.

Recently, some schools have been collaborating with the culture and leisure department in exploring ways to enhance club opportunities. Due to their previous commitment to community use of the school and direct commitment from the head teacher, Eastbank was chosen to become the pilot school for the Community Club concept funded by Better Neighbourhood Services. The pilot initially ran from 2001 to 2003 under this funding and has continued under further funding that is due to end in 2006. The schools targeted are those serving areas of deprivation: Eastbank Academy's catchment includes G (police) division, one of the more deprived areas of Glasgow.

The key aim of the Community Club concept is: through partnership working, including working with the voluntary sector, to provide a network of clubs that offer access to affordable and sustainable activities within the local community.

The Community Club programme now has a full-time development officer managing the programme and community club officers across the city.

### **What They Did**

Eastbank Academy received improved facilities under Glasgow's PPP programme and a part-time paid development officer under the Community Club programme. The key role of the officer is to undertake the following:

- Match existing clubs with a school, offering free lets to clubs in an effort to encourage them to work with young people.
- Offer clubs an audit and health check to ensure all clubs working with young people have appropriate child protection and youth policies in place. If not, the officer will help them become accredited.
- Help clubs access coach education and directly link into the school to promote their clubs.
- Promote club forums for user clubs to discuss facility issues, like condition or access, with the school or local authority.
- Survey the school pupils of both primary and secondary schools in their catchment to identify the most appropriate programme for the school to run, and at what times, to maximise attendance.
- Create a local management committee with clubs and key workers in the area to help everyone understand their roles and access shared information.
- Promote programmes for after-school and weekend activity for primary and secondary pupils.

Work closely with outreach workers to identify key target groups and ascertain what activities the young people want.

### **How It Works**

Although the Community Club programme is the core of Eastbank's community use provision, the overall facility management remains the responsibility of the Council and is managed via the PPP contractor. The project developed under a PPP contract which includes all the janitorial and life-cycle costs within the unity charge. This allows the school letting prices to be kept to a minimum as the facility costs are covered elsewhere.

Eastbank continues to use the traditional centralised booking system with the janitorial staff overseeing access to the facility. The particular difference under the Community Club programme is the employment of a key link officer for all groups who let the premises. This provides opportunities for local clubs to grow by engaging young people and by taking advantage of the free lets that make such expansion affordable and sustainable. It appears to be a good partnership for community, school and club.

The other key role of the Community Club programme is promoting the use of instructors and coaches for the local primary school after-school programme. At Eastbank, teachers are paid to provide after-school activities. Other coaches are also brought in to supplement this work of providing a full programme through the weekend where possible.

The local management committee at Eastbank offers a forum for users to identify issues with the Council or school through the community club officer. The committee includes community sports club representatives, the school head teacher, recreation officers, the local police, outreach workers for the area and the service development officer in the school. This group agrees on local policy and monitors the programme quarterly from reports given by the community club officer.

Programming is characterised by a proactive stance towards development. The school works directly with local clubs and encourages them to extend their club by engaging in youth development (while offering facilities in which to do so) and also develops programmes based on pupil research and outreach team work involving liaison with community youth organisations. The community club officer collates the use requests and research data to plan the term programme and the allocation of the budget. Their research clearly indicates that the schools will have to promote after-school activity and classes for the primary school age group in activities such as dance, cheerleading, street dance or team combat and that these activities must be instructor/session led. However, at the secondary level they hope to establish evening classes that can be developed and run by partner clubs. The school recognises that it still has some way to go to get the sustained levels of activity and feels that some support will be required over the long term to ensure activity remains at target levels.

There are still some traditional community lets for groups who want to just book and play rather than taking on the full commitment of engaging with the programme.

Clubs pay the community charge levels at the schools. These charge levels, which are determined by the Council, have been set across the city at all schools and are lower than those at community sports facilities. These prices are not payable by the club when they undertake youth development sessions.

The hope is that clubs will use the schools as part of a development pathway and that they will move on to local sports centres in time when they grow. Concern is expressed as to the effect that the sudden increase in price will have on the clubs when they make this jump. No club is asked to move to a sports centre; they tend to do so only when they recognise the need for better facilities or managed facilities for matches or competition.

The Council hopes that through the Community Club programme many clubs can grow in an affordable way with support and guidance. In targeting the deprived communities within the city they realise that the programme will take time to establish and that good quality staff and outreach workers are essential to this process.

### **Lessons for Others**

1. The programme provides an alternative way to look at the traditional janitorial system. Although Eastbank relies on janitorial supervision of the premises rather than specialised staff, they have developed an innovative means of expanding community use by using a school-based sports development lead programme and focusing on the development of club links.
2. The programme does not demand high levels of community management. While it is preferable to have the community involved and to have a sense of community ownership of the programme, this can not always be the case.

3. The programme needs long-term commitment from the city to enable it to continue as it is currently funded from grants.
4. The structure of the Community Club programme fits into the Learning Community network to allow all programme staff in the community to work together.
5. The programme has clear targets set by the Council and this focuses the officers' work.
6. There are not any directly planned school PE curriculum links in the Community Club programme.
7. The school is concerned by the short-term nature of the programme and the impact of staff turnover (not only experienced at Eastbank) which has brought its difficulties to the programme in establishing relationships locally.
8. A programme such as this has clear benefits in targeting clubs to work with young people and can help change the way community lets are operated within a school.
9. The programme is unlikely to become fully sustainable in the long term. However, it should provide demonstrable benefits in the areas of club growth, increasing participation in areas of social exclusion and providing opportunities for youth sport development. In order to recognise these benefits, the programme is likely to need long-term financial support.

## St Maurice's, North Lanarkshire Sports Comprehensives National Pilot

An integrated strategy for PE curriculum development, extended curriculum activity and community use.

### **Policy Context and Background**

North Lanarkshire Council has a history of significant community use of their schools, managed in a very traditional way. That is, at the end of the school day the schools are managed by the janitor (employed by Community Services) and he/she lets the pre-booked groups into the premises and locks up after they leave. The schools are rarely used in the school holiday periods except for specialist courses. The process is controlled by an area-based booking system. It has resulted in many groups having consistent lets for many years but not does allow much room for sports development or change in approach to out-of-hours use. However, the costs are affordable to the groups and to the Council.

Seven years ago, the education department and several principal teachers of PE began to look at how they could improve the current PE curriculum. As part of this process they also began to explore ways to work with clubs and governing bodies' development officers to improve community access and use of the school facilities. After examining models from England under the Sports Colleges programme, North Lanarkshire created their own model of the Sports Comprehensive, which was envisioned not as a specialist school for sport but as one where the ethos of improving PE had an effect across the school, its local cluster primaries and other local secondaries, and would demonstrate a new way to deliver community use of schools.

St Maurice's High School was chosen as one of the pilot schools because it had an existing school ethos of school improvement and community involvement, as well as a PE department that was very committed to an ambitious vision of what PE and sport could bring to the broader educational environment for all pupils.

### **What They Did**

A pilot was launched in 2002 with three schools: St Maurice's High School in Cumbernauld, St Margaret's High School in Airdrie and Braidhurst High School in Motherwell. Each chosen school was given a sum per year for three years to use directly on delivery of the three strands of the programme. This money was allocated for revenue spends for additional PE staff and small equipment, training and transport costs. However, the Council faced the challenge of promoting this exciting programme with a poor stock of school sports facilities that were neither inviting to pupils and the community nor designed to accommodate them. The result was an extensive refurbishment and new build requirement at each school.

### **How It Works**

At the time of the study, St Maurice's was in the midst of a significant building project that will result in the construction of a brand-new stand-alone sports hall on site. The hall will have a fitness room, a community club room and extensive changing areas. The site will also incorporate external pitches, adding to the current facilities, which include a small sports hall and swimming pool and small gym.

The pilot and the associated building programme offered an opportunity to rethink the booking and management system. St Maurice's has developed very good links between the school and local clubs through their PE curriculum. Coaches from local clubs have been involved in providing sport within and outside the curriculum. Club contacts expressed a need for facilities to support further community development. After consulting with clubs and local sport centre managers, the school board determined that the major local demand was for club facilities rather than facilities for casual bookings and developed the management group to pursue this goal. The management group, which is considered to be a subgroup of the school board, was formed with the following representatives:

- School board chair
- Head teacher
- Principal teacher of PE
- Five local sports clubs representatives
- Active Schools manager
- Local voluntary sector representative
- Local sports centre manager

The management committee will be financially responsible for the budget. The facility budget will be ring fenced and managed by the school board as a cost centre for the school. They will set all policy on usage. Local management and identity is crucial to this project and the involvement of the clubs is crucial to ensure the facility delivers on its objectives.

The management committee will manage the appointment of the appropriate staff although staff will be employed by the Council. The key staff member to be employed will be a club links officer who will be responsible for club and community liaison and the creation of a youth sports development programme in a variety of sports that links to the school's extracurricular activity programme. This position will be managed by the principal of PE to encourage a clear pathway from curricular to club activity. Sports attendants will be appointed to oversee the operation of the facility's fitness room and to ensure adherence to health and safety requirements. Many of the clubs will take responsibility for the times they use the facilities to lower staffing costs.

The programme reflects the local need for club opportunity and for youth development. It is based on the continued development of a pathway leading from the curriculum through extracurricular activity to club-based participation for young people. At the same time, it provides facilities that will enable clubs to expand their development in other ways and encourages clubs to contribute to the development of sporting opportunities, coaching, etc for young people. The programme focuses on key sports so that provision may complement that of other sports providers, rather than competing with them.

### **Lessons for Others**

1. The philosophy of the whole school in regards to community use is key. St Maurice's has traditionally focused on integration with the community and began this project with a strong legacy of school-club links. A genuine partnership with the community exists and the school was able to draw on this to move their community use strategy forward.
2. When embarking on a programme that will be based on club development through community use, it is vital that local clubs commit to the project at an early planning stage. This will provide support for the school staff and the school board in developing and implementing the community use strategy. It also provides motivation for partnership working, and ensures that the programming and facilities are developed in a way that will enable the school and the clubs to reach their goals.
3. Local clubs and volunteers have many skills to bring to the table and these should be utilised at all times. Working in partnership with clubs can help schools to improve the level of participation and skills among their pupils while providing knowledge and personnel to reduce staff demands at the facility.
4. Not all schools will have the ability to bring such a process together. Many will require a lot of support from the Council to achieve this. It is not advisable to push a school board down this route unless they are fully committed to community use of their school.
5. Funding has assisted these pilots greatly. Capital investment has ensured that each school will have appropriately designed facilities for encouraging community use. Many schools do not. When embarking on a community use project, the authority needs to be aware of facility changes that will be needed to ensure the buildings are community friendly.
6. Community use schools need to be strategically placed within communities. Each school in North Lanarkshire was selected either because they had the opportunity to work with neighbouring facilities (St Margaret's is next door to Airdrie Sports Centre and they are sharing a new synthetic pitch) or because they were located in a part of

town where demand is greatest and no facilities exist. Consultation with the local community identified a niche that the community schools could effectively service. The inclusion of local sport centre managers on the management committee team has helped to ensure that the programming at the schools complements that of local sport centres rather than competing with them.

7. The Sports Comprehensive ethos is different from that of the other case studies because the focus is on continuity between curriculum, extracurricular sports provision and community use in the form of a player development pathway. There is a much higher involvement by the PE staff in the Sports Comprehensive projects than the other schools.
8. The programme needs to be carefully planned to ensure that club self-interest does not dominate the programming. The management committee at all times needs to be balanced and set with a few very clear goals from the start. Regular monitoring is crucial.

## Balfron High School, Stirling

A centralised approach to providing community facilities for sports and cultural activities through PPP.

### **Policy Context and Background**

Stirling Council has established the principle of linking community use of PPP schools to the Council's letting policy, with lets administered by the PPP operator. They are pursuing a strategic approach, bringing all the Council's community facilities into one location. Balfron High School's policy follows that of the Council, with the principle aim of maximising the community use of the facility. As a result, a flexible approach is taken to encourage as many groups as possible to use the school for their activities and to ensure that the school contributes to the local community.

### **What They Did**

Prior to the building of this PPP school there was a comprehensive programme of consultation comprising:

- public meetings;
- community representatives on the local steering group;
- meetings with the village community planning group; and
- a survey of the local community about the location of the school and the facilities it should have.

But consultation was not limited to the building phase. A community user group (with members from the community, contractor, school and Stirling Council) meets every two months and has the remit to maximise community use of the school.

Through the use of a priority system in lettings and concessionary rates, the school is administered for both school and community use in accordance with the Council's aims.

## How It Works

Community use at Balfroon is managed by the PPP operator. The school board is not involved in the operation of the facility although they do act in an advisory capacity. The school has appointed a PPP adviser who meets regularly with the contractor. Stirling Council sends representatives to the monthly and quarterly meetings.

The facilities operator (Jarvis) employs 42 staff – management, leisure attendants (including swimming pool lifeguards), janitors, technicians, catering staff and cleaners. Most are employed on a seven-day shift rotation and so overtime charges apply only outwith normal working hours (typically after 10pm). In this way, prohibitive charges are avoided at weekends and during the holidays.

The contractor operates a help desk on site, receiving and recording all reports of repairs/maintenance required. Most repairs are carried out by their own staff within agreed target times.

Bookings for both school and community use are taken through a 'one-stop' approach run by the contractor, with a priority system in operation for lettings. The school and Stirling Council receive first priority and can use the facilities free of charge. The second priority group which consists of community support, sports development and the local community also uses the facilities free of charge. Concessions (eg, the Girl Guide Association) have third priority and are largely based on the lets that operated in the old school. Standard rates are paid by most remaining lessees, with relatively few commercial rates being levied – mostly for private functions such as weddings.

The department of community learning and development has an office on campus. Their remit is to plan all programmes of classes and courses and arrange for tutors to take them. They then apply to the facilities management for access to the appropriate accommodation.

The charging policy is based on a consistent set of charges for similar sized rooms/halls across the Stirling Council area, with prices based on the group using the facility – standard, concession (50% of standard), and commercial. Concessionary rates apply to all children's/youth groups under 16, mother and toddler groups, uniformed organisations, voluntary and non-profit charitable organisations, churches and groups where the amount earned by the leader does not exceed £15 per hour. Commercial rates apply where the leader accrues more than £15 per hour through charges to members. Within this, rates can be negotiated to ensure that classes actually run and to encourage the use of the campus facilities.

Full cost-recovery charges apply at weekends and during school holidays, although when the school would otherwise be open at weekends for normal school activities, groups can apply for a let and will be charged the relevant letting rate rather than full cost recovery. Where full cost recovery applies, the lessee is charged the higher of either the relevant letting charge or full recovery but not both.

Balfroon is new and still evolving as a community facility. Part of this evolution involves a cultural change as people come to regard it truly as a community facility rather than a school that happens to open for community use. It faces some challenges that could have



been avoided in the planning stages of construction, such as shared use of swimming pool changing rooms.

### **Lessons for Others**

1. Balforn benefits from good communication between facility management, the department of community learning and the school, with regular meetings and much informal contact. The facilities management office is beside the main school office and reception and the community learning and development office is just opposite.
2. There are excellent personal relationships between the contractor, the Council and the school.
3. A flexible approach is taken to all facility use, with the central tenet being to maximise the community use of the buildings and other facilities. This includes the negotiation of affordable rates to allow courses, classes and other events to take place.
4. The presence of a help desk on site means that most problems can be dealt with speedily and effectively. In addition, health and safety and other risk assessments take place before a facility is used for a new activity or by new users so that damage and misuse are minimised.
5. Maintenance and technical staff show a willingness to contribute in ways outwith their job remit, such as making a stable to house Nativity figures at Christmas and providing and maintaining plants and flowers.
6. The school has a community user group which meets every two months.
7. Enthusiastic support and leadership from the head teacher and the senior management team help to foster the ethos that this is a community facility that operates as a school by day, rather than a school that is occasionally open to the community.

## **Madras College, Fife**

Enthusiasm and effective management can overcome limitations of facilities.

### **Policy Context and Background**

There is a long-standing commitment to the community use of schools in Fife, within a wide definition of community learning and development. All policies respond to the key drivers of Fife Council:

- Active citizenship
- Lifelong learning
- Social inclusion

The Fife Community Learning and Development Strategy, 2004-2007, identifies four key priorities:

- Improving community engagement and learner involvement, and promoting community learning and development as an empowering process.

- Improving needs identification and targeting of resources towards disadvantaged communities.
- Improving the focus on community and learner as the drivers for service development.
- Improving target setting and adopting a more rigorous focus on community and individual outcomes.

Central to the policy of the school is the philosophy – shared by the head teacher and the head of community use – that since Fife Council owns the buildings and the equipment, the school and the community have equal rights to use them. The aim is to make the best use of the facilities for the benefit of both the school and the community populations.

### **What They Did**

Madras College is a school with a dedicated community use staff who have developed a robust programme of community use despite ageing facilities that are not as good as others in the area. The school fits within a longstanding local policy context emphasising the community use of schools. In Fife most community schools, including Madras, have dedicated heads of community use who are fully integrated into the school's management structure. They are supported by the head of service and services managers from the community services department. This leadership and support from the Council is a vital element in setting the context in which individual schools operate.

The combination of a clear policy context with on-site management that is well integrated into the school and consults closely with community groups allows for the development of a tailored, proactive programme for community use despite the limitations of the facilities themselves. The support of the head teacher has been critical in this process.

### **How It Works**

In accordance with the local authority's policy, the community programme is run by the head of community use, who is a member of the school's senior management team (SMT). As an ex-teacher, the head of community use understands and is sensitive to the needs and priorities of the teaching staff and pupils. His status as a member of the SMT shows the value put on community use of the school facilities by the school as well as the local authority.

Committees are formed to run programmes and ensure funding. The emphasis is on providing an excellent service that people will want to use. The costs of new equipment are often shared between school, community use and the community user group, to the mutual benefit of all. Support is offered to clubs and other organisations to apply for the funding (like Awards for All) required to extend their operations.

Flexibility and good communication are the basis for day-to-day management and planning of both the school and community use calendar. This has been effective at Madras for several reasons:

- The head of community use combines an understanding of education with leisure/recreation and adult education management skills.
- There is committed support from the head teacher.

- There is a general feeling of acceptance that facilities are the property of the region, and not of the school or individual departments.
- Because the school is on a split site, staff are already used to sharing rooms and equipment. Few of their initial fears about damage have been realised.

There is ongoing liaison with colleges and other organisations to ensure a coordinated programme and eliminate duplication, such as the Community Learning Plan for Young People and Community Learning Plan for Adults. As a result, the various education providers collaborate rather than compete and have the opportunity to identify needs and adopt a targeted approach to supplying programming.

Charges are kept to a minimum to ensure inclusivity and are usually paid weekly with attendance. Charges for all classes follow the guidelines agreed by Fife Council, including use of the Fifestyle card scheme which offers discounts on the standard charges. The pricing scheme and discount models are thus consistent with other facilities throughout Fife. Charges for other uses of the facilities are set by community use and vary according to the quality and nature of the facilities on offer. Revenue from well-supported programmes is used to subsidise minority or new programmes in order to ensure extensive choice and provide support for development.

### **Lessons for Others**

1. Too often, poor facilities are cited as a reason why community use of a school is limited. The facilities at Madras are aging and, in many cases, are not as good as others in the area. Changing facilities in particular are old-fashioned and inadequate. Yet Madras demonstrates that enthusiasm and effective management can overcome deficiencies in facilities and offer a programme and a service that fits the needs of the community.
2. The positive support of the head teacher and his/her staff is vital. The head teacher at Madras is committed to maximising the use of the school facilities, both by the pupil population through the provision of an extensive extracurricular programme and by the community at large.
3. Dedicated personnel driving a community programme and liaising with the school, outside partners, potential competitors and the community at large are vital to the success of any community programme.
4. Flexibility and good communication can resolve potential difficulties and conflicts before they become a problem. This is aided by the fact that the head of community use sits on the school's senior management team and is on site with the staff, all of whom appear to be proactive in ensuring that all runs smoothly.

## **Wester Hailes Education Centre, Edinburgh**

An integrated community centre and school with shared staffing.

### **Policy Context and Background**

Although Edinburgh City Council seeks to maximise the use of school facilities by making them available to community or other use, the implementation of this policy has been less

straightforward. The net cost of community use outside core hours has to be met from devolved budgets at secondary level. Without dedicated staffing to promote and manage community use, the costs of lets frequently outweigh the income and there is little incentive (or capacity) for head teachers to expand their community programmes.

Wester Hailes Education Centre provides an example of an integrated approach to the provision of education and community use that overcomes this contradiction.

WHEC was established in 1978 as Lothian Regional Council's first community high school, combining an excellent range of secondary school accommodation with a large public swimming pool. It offers three main service elements – secondary schooling; community education; and leisure and recreation.

### **What They Did**

Wester Hailes has adopted a unitary management model rather than dual management of the school and community centre. The management of the community element is thus fully integrated with that of the school with the aim of serving the whole community and adopting an open and democratic approach. The school and community centre share some staff and infrastructure which allows for a more cost-effective approach. The facility is open to the community for 85 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year.

WHEC had the considerable advantage of starting from first principles in 1978 and enjoyed enlightened political support to ensure that sufficient staffing and other resources were allocated to allow the approach to be successful. Teaching staff employed then and since have fully bought into the concept of the integrated approach and are involved in the community programme. It is now considered the norm for community and school populations to coexist in their shared facility.

WHEC operates in a purpose-built facility which is built around elements, like a swimming pool, that serve as a draw for the community. The purpose-built facility offers clear advantages for the development of an integrated education and community centre.

### **How It Works**

The centre manager is also a deputy principal and a member of the senior management team of the school although not a teacher. The centre manager is responsible for health and safety and the maintenance of all the buildings throughout the whole facility and also line manages the centre's support staff and leads the recreation team's meetings. The centre manager has ultimate responsibility for programming of recreation and community education.

Teaching departments have responsibility for statutory education and are actively involved in the integration of adult course and evening classes so the problems experienced elsewhere of sharing teaching space and equipment are largely avoided. Teaching staff, particularly in the PE Department, contract to cover evening sessions in the centre in return for time off in lieu (TOIL) during the school day. Members of the senior management team operate a duty head rota which ensures that one senior manager is either on site or on call at all times. Principal teachers are involved in recruitment to ensure that all tutors are suitably qualified.

Since the centre is open for community use throughout the school day and school pupils and the general public often use the facilities simultaneously, a high level of qualified staffing is required. The recreation staff consists of three shifts of 11 people who rotate to cover the centre's opening hours. The recreation centre's reception desk is permanently manned so all emergency procedures for the whole centre are routed through it. The WHEC also provides a creche and a cafeteria for community users.

In all, some 99 support staff are employed (79.5 FTE) in the centre. These include the centre manager, administration staff, dining room supervisors, recreation, leisure and fitness suite staff, technicians, learning assistants, childcare staff, librarian, community education staff, engineering and service support staff. Support staff salaries are included as part of the centre's devolved budget and amount to approximately £1m of a total budget of nearly £4.5m. However, since all staff support both the school and the community centre, it is arguably more cost effective than running two separate facilities.

A sophisticated software package enables all lettings and casual usage to be recorded on a single database which can be used to monitor throughput and maintain seamless communication between the staffing shifts. The Council's lettings and pricing scheme is extremely complex. Although WHEC operates generally within the scheme, their software and on-site booking capability simplifies this complexity to a point.

The community education department and the recreation department are mainly responsible for determining the programme and meet regularly to ensure that what they offer matches community needs and demands. Feedback is sought whenever a new course is planned to test whether demand exists and the course can be commercially viable. The programme is reviewed regularly and can thus respond to changing activity trends. Coaching is offered in a number of sports and links forged with local clubs to encourage participation.

### **Lessons for Others**

1. The unitary model of management means that the community programme is an integral part of the centre/school, not an additional/optional extra.
2. All staff must be engaged and involved and an effective way of doing this is to involve them in the delivery and/or planning of the community programme. This is likely to require additional staff resources (to allow for the time off in lieu) but it is arguable that this is a worthwhile investment that will produce long-term dividends and reduce conflicts.
3. Sufficient resources must be allocated in terms of facilities, equipment and staffing if a full and satisfactory programme is to be delivered.
4. Sufficient numbers of qualified staff must be appointed, especially where casual use is encouraged and where the school and community populations are using the facilities at the same time. By employing permanent staff on a shift system, increased charges outside traditional core hours can be avoided.
5. If an authority is committed to the community use of its schools every effort must be made to ensure that the facilities are appropriate for community use. This may involve some design changes which would arguably benefit both the school and the community.

6. It is of great advantage to offer catering services whenever the centre is open. These can be combined with the provision of school meals and can be contracted out.
7. By integrating the school and the community centre in the way that WHEC has done, both school and community benefit – socially, educationally and in terms of available amenities – and the cost to the Council is less than that required to run two separate facilities.

## Policy

### All depends on a clear philosophy

- 1) Define the strategic role of the community use of schools:
  - a) Desired balance between child-centred educational establishment and community resource
  - b) Role in contributing to existing strategies for sport, culture and life-long learning
- 2) Develop a coherent funding policy:
  - a) The strategic role of community use requires a consistent and coherent approach to subsidy levels, one which encourages, enables and develops such use
- 3) Define clear management responsibilities and allocate resources:
  - a) Identify clear responsibilities for strategic direction
  - b) Allocate appropriate level of human and financial resources
- 4) Define precise role of head teacher and allocate resources:
  - a) Clarify role of head teachers
  - b) Provide training and management support
- 5) Community use manual:
  - a) Document all aspects of policy and practice
  - b) Provide framework for local management and/or agreement with third parties (eg, voluntary groups, leisure trusts)



## Strategy

### A widespread need for a strategic, developmental approach

- 1) Define the complementary role to be played by community use of schools:
  - a) Precise strategic and local contribution to existing strategies for sport, culture and life-long learning
- 2) Financial and staff resources:
  - a) The nature of community use (casual/letting; weekend and holiday) must be reflected by appropriate resourcing
  - b) Imperative that the standard, costly janitorial approach be reviewed
- 3) Pricing and subsidy levels:
  - a) Community use of schools, like wider leisure provision, will require appropriate levels of subsidy
  - b) Pricing should be complementary to other leisure provision and encourage development
- 4) Development – sport and arts:
  - a) There is a need to move beyond current reactive, lettings-based approach to a marketing, developmental approach (especially for the arts)
- 5) Quality, investment and design:
  - a) The development of community use for sport will require improved changing and showering facilities
  - b) Evidence suggests that improved quality leads to increased use
  - c) Community use must be designed into all new build and renovation projects
- 6) Staff involvement:
  - a) All relevant staff should be involved in the development of strategy



## Provision and Management

### Proactive management is essential

- 1) Support for head teachers:
  - a) Head teachers must be provided with relevant administrative and financial resources
  - b) Head teachers' commitment to community use is central to its success
- 2) School sport/cultural coordinators:
  - a) Such appointments, working across several schools, are essential to a developmental approach
- 3) Management regime:
  - a) Essential to review the balance between lettings, casual and developmental work
  - b) Management approach and resources must reflect strategic policy objectives
- 4) Weekend and holiday use:
  - a) To achieve complementarity of provision, weekend and holiday use may be essential
  - b) Issues of management and cost must be considered to enable this provision
- 5) Day time use and zoning:
  - a) Where there is demand for use during the school day, simple design and zoning approaches should be implemented
- 6) Community user groups:
  - a) There is a need to establish community user groups to contribute to development and management
- 7) Management and monitoring information:
  - a) Need to improve collection of performance information (especially where community use is contributing to a wider sports and/or arts strategy)