

Appendix 2

Active Communities Investment Programme – Belfast City Council’s Response to Sport NI’s Invitation to Contribute to the Midpoint Review

As part of its review of the Active Communities Programme, Sport NI has asked the Council to contribute to its consultation process, to “ascertain the views of project partners in relation to Active Communities with a view of influencing future programme development”.

The following points represent the views of key officers who have been involved with the Council’s delivery of the programme to date:

Positives

- The programme provides an excellent coaching resource for the city;
- The database used in the programme is an excellent tool for performance management;
- There has been a high number of participants in the programme in the city (over 10,000 individuals since April 2012);
- Good support has been provided by Sport NI staff in both setting up and managing the programme; and
- The programme has provided the Council with the opportunity to work in partnership with a wide range of groups and organisations throughout the city.

Areas for improvement

- The overall purpose of the programme needs to be made clear;
- The overarching framework within which Active Communities is delivered should be reviewed;
- The intended outcomes of Active Communities (rather than outputs in relation to participation numbers, number of coaches etc) need to be made clear and monitored/evaluated or there needs to be a mechanism by which Sport NI’s monitoring/evaluation of the programme considers the contribution of the programme to achieving the Council’s intended outcomes for sport and physical activity;
- The programme needs to focus more on strategic outcomes relating to long term participation in sport/physical activity as opposed to focusing on the involvement of individuals in one-off programmes;
- There needs to be improved buy-in by sports governing bodies to putting in place participation pathways within the city, ensuring that participants in Active Communities taster programmes can feed into local clubs;
- Sports-specific strategies for those sports involved in the programme in the city need to be produced;
- The cost of programme delivery needs to be taken into account going forward; and
- Funding is required to appoint more coaches to deliver considerably more activity, in order to build on the success of the programme to date.