

High Peak Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment

December 2007

Leisure Services Provision

Introduction

High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council provide a similar range of leisure services within their respective areas and residents from one area may access services in the adjoining area. Due to these similarities a joint EIA has been undertaken of leisure services.

Background

The HPBC Cultural Services team (including leisure services) is relatively small compared to other services within the Council, although its impact is diverse and extensive. Cultural Services not only has a direct impact on the Council in meeting its core aims, it also contributes to many other cross cutting issues which are the focus of other service areas and those of other providers such as: primary care trusts; community safety partnerships; regeneration partnerships and those of the voluntary and private sectors.

There are 13 contracted staff. However the use of part time, casual and specialist staff, for example sports coaches and volunteers, means that around 50 people directly contribute to activities and initiatives provided by the service. The annual core net revenue budget for 2008/09 is £350,000. They also manage a number of externally funded projects, these vary from year to year and include Gamesley Community Centre and the community sports coach scheme.

The team, over the last few years has developed a number of strategies (arts, sports and recreation strategies) that link with those of our partners, locally, regionally and nationally. These strategies are living documents, have comprehensive work plans linked to performance and are reviewed half yearly. The main work areas of the team are identified in these work plans and consolidated in an action plan summarised below:

- Supporting the delivery of national and local policies and strategies for sport, art and community development.
- Development and planning for sport, art and community initiatives particularly for younger and older people, hard to reach groups and people with difficulty in accessing services.
- Supporting the development of social enterprise, regeneration and tourism through sport, arts and community development.
- Provision of information and advice to individuals and community organisations.
- Provision of training and education opportunities for local people and groups in relation to cultural activities.
- Development and promotion of good practice amongst the cultural sectors.

- Develop and support improvements in the cultural sectors physical infrastructure (sports facilities, pitches, use of local environments, theatres etc).
- Involving local people in the planning and delivery of sport, art and recreation through a community led approach, for instance, through local forums.
- Providing and supporting initiatives that address a range of leisure, social, community safety issues.
- Partnership development to enable access to external funding and joint working.
- Providing opportunities for people to participate in cultural activities within their own neighbourhood and enabling people to work together to improve the quality of the local environment.
- Managing our land and buildings in a way that complies with the council's environmental policy.
- Promoting the use of the unique landscape of the High Peak in a sustainable way.
- The achievement of nationally recognised standards for the delivery and improvement of high quality services, for example, Quest and Investors in People.
- Contributing to the overall improvement of Council services.

Methodology & Sources of Data

A partial EIA was completed jointly by both Business Managers responsible for Leisure Services within the authorities. As a result of this the following matters were identified for assessment and consultation due to the possibility of inequality of service delivery:

1. Accessibility Issues
2. Fees and Charges (Concessions)
3. Transgender Issues
4. Grants
5. Transport

These issues were brought to a one-day consultation and assessment conference in September 2007, when stakeholders and leisure services staff were invited to look at these issues in detail and also identify any other areas that were an issue due to inequality of service delivery.

Assessment of Impact on Relevant Groups

As a result of the conference, the following analysis was undertaken of issues and ways of addressing these matters for the future. The analysis is summarised below:

1. Accessibility

There have been significant improvements in access to leisure services for those with special needs but more needs to be done.

- Information and Communication

When advertising sessions the descriptions used should seek to allow the maximum access for people who would benefit from the session rather than being restrictive e.g.

Quiet swim should also include who could attend and how it is structured. (width swimming only)

- Authorities should improve advertising of what services are available at which location -This should be through the use of web based information, hard copy directories, mailing lists and available in libraries and other public venues. The directory needs to include details of physical access arrangements.

- High Peak Disability Sports Group is producing a directory of sports groups in High Peak and details of their ability to cater for special needs (contact Emma Champion)
- Education and Training

-Leisure staff need regular updates on equalities issues at all levels

- Who could deliver this training? Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living are a training resource (elaine@dcil.org.uk)
- It does not have to be accredited and could be delivered by voluntary groups with the relevant experience and expertise
- Emma Champion (Phillip Howard School- Glossop) has access to Autism training

-Parents or carers of children with special needs can be best source of information and training on the needs of children in their care and this information can be passed to other staff.

- Peak District National Park Authority established a panel of representatives (stakeholders) who could be used as a sounding board for issues to be discussed. This panel still exists and could be expanded and used by DDDC and HPBC as well as PDNPA.
- Residential afternoons with different service users could help staff gain a better understanding of needs of users with special needs.
- Staff could become specialists in particular needs but all staff gaining experience is the best model
- Local direct consultation needed
- Joined up local service planning required
- Need more accessible community spaces
- Build in accessibility as part of procurement process, inc gyms
- Mystery shopper exercises could be used as a way of testing services. This could be done by volunteers as well as staff.
- The attitude of Leisure staff can be a bigger barrier than physical access issues. Agree joint training across districts, e.g. customer care. Use local trainers who know what they are talking about!
- Involve user groups from the start when considering changes

2. Fees and Charges (Concessions)

The variety of different charging structures for different needs is confusing.

- In HPBC carers do not pay when accompanying disabled customers
- A basic subsidy for all users exists in HPBC - leisure is a subsidised service
- Who is getting an unfair advantage? Can use pricing as a motivator
- The use of the Active Card system is helpful as this reduces the need to 'prove' need.

- Possible to road test new prices before implementation, using focus groups
- Are we addressing health inequalities as part of the pricing structure? Should we reduce prices for people in need of exercise?
- The provision of sessions which cannot be accessed by a particular group due to the time of the session could be discriminatory eg 50+ sessions held in the afternoon that can't be accessed by working 50+. The 50+ sessions in the day should be relabelled as 'retired' if this is the actual target group. If reduced prices are being used to attract more customers during off peak times then they should be marketed as such rather than at a specific target group.
- Concentrate on unwaged people

3. Transgender Issues

- There is a wide range of needs related to Transgender.
- These are best dealt with on a one to one basis related to individual need.
- The individuals status should be accepted by leisure staff
- HPBC need a policy statement on access to facilities for Transgender people, based on Derbyshire Dales. Need clear policy statement
- T. Junction is a useful source of help
- Train staff before issues arise, peoples' attitudes are key
- Need corporate approach
- Facility design is key
- Recognise local uniqueness

4. Grants

- Do we 'equality' proof our grant giving schemes
- There should be a way of auditing/ monitoring and evaluating grants that have been allocated
- Targets should be included and monitored
- Level of monitoring depends on the size of grant
- How well are grants advertised?
- An analysis of who receives grants could assist in assessing success.

Hathersage Parish Council Swimming Pool

- Is a differential grant and therefore pricing structure acceptable between HPBC and DDDC? Not really.
- For all Hope valley residents, Hathersage Pool is nearest
- The attendance figures should be used to get details of the cost per person
- Any subsidy should be linked to ensuring that the pool is fully accessible
- Funding should be linked to accessibility
- What is the legal position?

5. Rural isolation

Transport

Who is disadvantaged by transport issues?

- Elderly
- Young

- Non drivers

Are there any standards for access to services linked to isolation?

Improved footpaths and cycle ways would help reduce isolation for non-drivers (This is a county council matter).

Improve routes between settlements, access for all, disabled and families

Consideration of Alternative Approaches/Mitigation of Adverse Impact

As a result of the conference the following actions have been identified for the borough council:

Accessibility

Actions

- ❖ Increase usage by disabled people by re-branding disabled swimming sessions and promote new quiet swims to include disabled people.
- ❖ Increase awareness of the Councils' leisure activities through sports directory and website and include access for disabled people as criteria.
- ❖ Increase numbers attending leisure activities by providing training for staff on access to activities using local organisations such as DCIL (elaine@dcil.org.uk)
- ❖ Improve the quality of services by including equality checks in mystery shoppers' visits.
- ❖ Ensure that all equipment purchases take equalities into account (elaine@dcil.org.uk)
- ❖ Ensure that local equality groups are consulted when planning new sports facilities and services – for disability access, consult DCIL (elaine@dcil.org.uk).

Fees and Charges (Concessions)

Actions

- ❖ Remove stigmatisation for equality groups by introducing a new leisure card in High Peak in partnership with DC Leisure
- ❖ Hold customer focus groups at all leisure centres to road test changes in fees and charges
- ❖ Equality proofing to be carried out on all fees and charges for 2008/09
- ❖ Increase the number of over 50s using the Councils' leisure services by rebranding daytime over 50s sessions as retired groups

Transgender Issues

Action

- ❖ Provide new policy and training for High Peak Borough Council on transgender usage of leisure centres using Derbyshire Dales policy as well as advice from Derbyshire Friend and T Junction

Grants

Action

- ❖ Equality proof existing and planned funding schemes to ensure that they do not adversely affect equality groups

Hathersage Parish Council Swimming Pool

Action

- ❖ Provide a revised funding agreement between both Councils and Hathersage Parish Council

Rural isolation

Action

- ❖ Work in partnership with Derbyshire County Council to improve the network of footpaths and cycle ways linking settlements and services.

Monitoring Arrangements

The actions shown below will be monitored by the relevant Business manager and reviewed by the Policy Officer in September 2008

| Issue | Action | When/who |
|--|---|--|
| Accessibility | | |
| Increase usage by disabled people by re-branding disabled swimming sessions and promote new quiet swims to include disabled people. Increase awareness of the Councils' leisure activities through sports directory and website and include access for disabled people as criteria. | To include in High Peak Leisure business plan linked to contract hand-over. Include as part of the Cultural Services Web review. | Mark Warburton-Contract manager by April 2008. Chris Nightingale- Sports Development Officer by September 2008. |
| Increase numbers attending leisure activities by providing training for staff on access to activities using local organisations such as DCIL (elaine@dcil.org.uk) | Incorporate disability awareness training into the Cultural Services training plan for 2008/09. | Chris Nightingale- Sports Development Officer by April 2008. |
| Improve the quality of services by including equality checks in mystery shoppers' visits. | Incorporate mystery shopper (access related issues) into the annual marketing plan for High Peak Leisure Centres. | Mark Warburton-Contract manager by April 2008. |

| Issue | Action | When/who |
|--|---|---|
| Accessibility | | |
| Ensure that all equipment purchases take equalities into account (elaine@dcil.org.uk) | Include a purchase protocol within the procurement practices for High Peak Leisure. | Mark Warburton-Contract manager by April 2008. |
| Ensure that local equality groups are consulted when planning new sports facilities and services – for disability access, consult DCIL (elaine@dcil.org.uk). | Review service communication plans to ensure access groups on contacts data base. | Andy Brown-Cultural Services Manager by April 2008. |
| Fees and Charges (Concessions) | | |
| Remove stigmatisation for equality groups by introducing a new leisure card in High Peak in partnership with DC Leisure | This included in leisure management contract and DC Leisure business plan. | Mark Warburton-Contract manager by September 2008. |
| Hold customer focus groups at all leisure centres to road test changes in fees and charges | To include consultation of fees and charges as part of the High Peak Leisure marketing plan. | Mark Warburton-Contract manager by September 2008. |
| Equality proofing to be carried out on all fees and charges for 2009/10 | As above | As above |
| Transgender Issues | | |
| Provide new policy and training for High Peak Borough Council on transgender usage of leisure centres using Derbyshire Dales policy as well as advice from Derbyshire Friend and T Junction | Include transgender training as part of the High Peak Leisure Training plan. | Mark Warburton-Contract manager by September 2008. |
| Hathersage Parish Council Swimming Pool | | |
| Provide a revised funding agreement between both Councils and Hathersage Parish Council | For a joint working group with Derbyshire Dales and Hathersage Pool and agree new funding strategy. | Andy Brown-Cultural Services Manager by Jan 2008. |
| Rural isolation | | |
| Work in partnership with Derbyshire County Council to improve the network of footpaths and cycle ways linking settlements and services. | Develop links with DCC access officer and in-put into the Green Way strategy. | Andy Brown-Cultural Services Manager by Jan 2008. |

| Issue | Action | When/who |
|---|---|--|
| Accessibility | | |
| | | |
| Grants | | |
| Equality proof existing and planned funding schemes to ensure that they do not adversely affect equality groups | Carry out review of equalities monitoring within Community Fund Grants: | Dave Bennett: Policy Officer Q4 2007/8 |

Formal Consultation

The EIA consultation has been carried out through the one day conference with stakeholders. Further consultation will be undertaken on the proposed actions in relation to the specific proposals by sending the EIA report to stakeholders.

Publication of Equality Impact Assessments

The EIA will be published on the council website and copies sent to all stakeholders involved in the conference

Conclusions

The EIA has identified a number of areas for action that have been summarised above and incorporated into the Leisure Services Action Plan. All actions should be complete by September 2008.

December 2008