



COMMUNITY ASSET FUND DEVELOPING YOUR IDEA

JANUARY 2017



INTRODUCTION

*DEVELOPING A SPACE TO BE ACTIVE IN ANY COMMUNITY IS A REALLY IMPORTANT ROLE
- AND IT CAN SEEM LIKE A LOT TO TAKE ON*

As part of the Community Asset Fund programme, we hope to build resources and provide advice for any organisations hoping to get more people active. This should be of benefit regardless as to whether we can offer your organisation funding.

This resource is dedicated to providing some key thoughts, examples and links to existing advice that you might find useful if you are developing your project or idea.

You can also call or email us if you want to discuss your projects or any initial thoughts. Please call us on 0348 508 508 or [email](#).

There is also advice available on the Sport England [website](#).

THIS RESOURCE IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING SOME KEY THOUGHTS, EXAMPLES AND LINKS TO EXISTING ADVICE

FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN

PUTTING THE CUSTOMER AT THE HEART OF WHAT YOU DO WILL HELP TO PROVIDE YOUR COMMUNITY WITH WHAT IT WANTS AND NEEDS TO BE ACTIVE

It's important to understand who your customers are or could be, what they want, and any barriers that are currently preventing them from taking part in sport or being more active.

This will mean finding out information about the individuals and groups who are interested in using your facility or already use it. Sometimes you might think this information is obvious, but when you start to ask a small number of people what they think, it's likely they will have different opinions. People's opinions also change, so it's worth reviewing any previous thinking.

If you already run a sports facility, then it might be worthwhile doing a survey to find out:

- How customers use your facilities (e.g. which sports and activities, how long for, number of spectators or volunteers)
- Where your customers live and how they get to your facility
- The additional facilities customers would like to have (e.g. better experience, changing accommodation, hot water, quality playing area, floodlighting)

Whether your customers have particular needs (e.g. an accessible changing area) and if these are being met.

Likewise, if you're planning to take over a sports facility or would like to create a new one, carrying out a survey of potential customers across the whole community along with local groups who you think will use the new facility, will be central to your proposal.

AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR IDEA, IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP GETTING VIEWS ON WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE PLANS

You might want to capture the information that describes what your local area is like so you can understand the contribution sport and physical activity could make locally to health, wellbeing and community cohesion – which might help you understand who can support you.

As you develop your idea, it's important to keep getting views on what people think about the plans – they may be interested when they weren't before or have some good ideas to identify issues or add value.

To find out more from the people involved, you could:

- Hold an open day, fun day or free session – it gives you the chance to meet people and ask for their views on your plans
- Contact local schools, groups, Parish Councils and offer to send someone to speak about your project at an assembly or meeting
- Distribute a questionnaire or newsletter – publicity from your local radio or newspaper may help increase the response rate, or try encouraging participation with a prize draw
- Ask for feedback on social media – especially good for reaching a younger audience.

This evidence will create a strong understanding for why your project is needed and who values it in your local community. It also helps to identify the social impact of what getting people active can do.

/ CASE STUDY: STONEHOUSE SKATE PARK

Stonehouse is a small town near Stroud with a population of around 7,700 – of which 1,850 are young people. The town's only youth club closed in 2011 and, as a result, the need for more things for young people to do was one of the top priorities in the 2011 Community Plan.

SPL4SH, a skate park lobby for Stonehouse, was established as a result of consultation with young people which identified a skate park as their number one priority.

From the outset, SPL4SH were involved in the project. The group contributed to the design brief and were actively involved in the selection of the design and build contract. The group also worked hard to raise funds to contribute to the project alongside Section 106 funding provided by the district council.

Donations were received from local charities and businesses. Stonehouse then applied to us for the funding they couldn't attract locally.

The extensive amount of consultation and lobbying activity undertaken along with support from the town council was key in getting this project off the ground. Surveys with young people who wanted to use the park, a Facebook site with 158 members plus exhibitions at town galas and events all helped to publicise the project.

Overwhelming support came from people of all ages who wanted to see new facilities and positive activities for young people. The success of the project has also helped to foster a much better relationship between the council and its young people.



GET PEOPLE INVOLVED

IT'S IMPORTANT TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED FROM THE START TO HELP YOUR THINKING AND PLANS DEVELOP

It also helps to share the tasks of any work or responsibilities.

At this stage it doesn't matter whether you're a formal or informal group, but you'll need to think about who will:

- **Take the lead for your project and plan your next steps.** This will be undertaking the research you need about what people want, as well as scoping and planning what is possible.
- **Support your organisation and the project and help you make decisions during the development stage.** This might mean accessing professional support and gathering evidence to help inform decisions.
- **Manage and operate the facility when it's in use.** This might mean you need to think about maintenance, how you will get people involved and who will be responsible day-to-day. (Think about this early may also change your thinking when you're planning the project – e.g. you might change a key access to something electronic – as someone can't always be available)

You may also need to think about other organisations in your area that can help. This might be people that are interested in your project being a success as they might directly benefit, or it could be bodies that could offer support – such as the local authority.

If you're an informal group, you can get ideas on starting your project from the [My Community website](#).

AT THIS STAGE, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU'RE A FORMAL OR INFORMAL GROUP – BUT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THINGS YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT

DO YOU NEED SPECIALIST ADVICE?

Specialist advice may be needed for larger-scale projects or those that are more complex e.g. changing something structurally in an existing building may require specialist advice.

Do you need any specialist help to plan or deliver the project, such as an architect or planning advisor? Our [Asset Transfer Toolkit](#) has advice about appointing and managing professional help.

There are also schemes like [Pro-help](#), which will match you up with professionals who offer charities and community groups free professional help.

If you are thinking of applying to us, don't worry if you don't have access to these skills yet – you can still tell us about your plans and we can help later if we are able to support your project.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

When you're planning your project, make sure you think about how to keep your facility operating at its best. You'll need to consider how to:

- Meet running costs
- Operate your facility on a daily basis
- Maintain and manage your facility, even if it's small or in an open space – find information about facilities management on the [Club Matters](#) website
- Keep people informed about what's on offer, for example, using a website or newsletter
- Publicise what you're doing by sending out press releases and talking to the media – you can get training and advice on media engagement from the Media Trust.

You might also want to consider the energy efficiency of your building. To keep running costs down by making your building energy efficient. [Sustainable Clubs](#) has information on how to save money.

DOING YOUR BIT TO RAISE MONEY

YOUR PROJECT WILL BE STRONGER IF YOU HAVE THE SUPPORT OF PARTNERS AND YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

This might be through their commitment to using your facility, but they may also be able to offer financial support.

There are various ways of raising funds and finance that you could try, including:

- Fundraising such as a car boot sale, a cake bake or a prize draw
- Asking for donations from a business, residents' association or school
- Raising finance – typically for larger sums - where contributors receive a return on their investment
- Crowdfunding.

Further information can be found on our [other funding available pages](#).

/ CASE STUDY: FINSBURY PARK

Dilapidated changing rooms, mouldy toilets, leaky taps and dead mice were the less-than favourable attractions at the Finsbury Park athletics track in north London.

But one local community club is looking to change that. London Heathside recently ran a successful crowdfunding campaign to raise the £6,000 required for a feasibility study into building a new pavilion at their Finsbury Park home.

After rebuilding the track, which was covered in moss and crumbling at the edges, three years ago, the crowdfunding campaign sought to raise funds for a new pavilion to replace the outdated concrete carbuncle currently in situ.

The campaign surpassed the lower target and went on to raise more than £9,000. The proposed changes will see new changing rooms and shower facilities, a gym area as well as a multi-purpose community room for meetings, classes and events.

The track isn't just the home of a growing athletics club, either, but also the heart of the local sporting community.

The club worked alongside other users of the facilities, including London Blitz, an American Football club that boasts up to 2,000 supporters at their home games, Dynamic Fitness Academy and Access to Sport, an initiative that encourages and enables disabled people to take part in sport.

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