

running
SPORT

Laying the foundations

Starting a building project
to develop sports activities



**ENGLISH
SPORTS
COUNCIL**

Starting a building project to develop sports activities

Laying the foundations

This is an introductory booklet in the Running Sport programme.

Running Sport is an English Sports Council initiative developed in partnership with the Sports Council for Wales, the Scottish Sports Council and the Northern Ireland Sports Council. The programme is designed to improve the knowledge and skills of everybody working in sport, both voluntary and professional.

This booklet was edited by Dr John Palmer of the English Sports Council from material produced by Kit Campbell of Kit Campbell Associates and the Lottery Sports Fund Guide to Project Development.

What do you

really want?

If, as a member of a club, another sports organisation or a community organisation, you have become involved in a project to develop your facilities, then this booklet is for you. It gives you an outline of the basic steps you will need to take to start your project, and highlights some of the pitfalls to look out for along the way. It is not a complete guide, but it will get you started and may save a lot of hard work.

The first step is to decide what it is you really want to achieve. New changing rooms, a new or upgraded court or pitch or more equipment immediately come to mind. Is that what you *really* want? On a more basic level you actually want more activity, more teams or better conditions for members, so your club can grow and develop into a dynamic organisation with a long-term future. A building project is a means to an end, but it may not be the best solution. Look at all the options.

You can't do any of this planning on your own. You should set up a small group to share out the work and make sure the views of all your members are taken into account. Include a sceptic or two, as well as the far-sighted. Make sure, if it is not you, that someone is identified as the project leader.

What is

vision?

The first step for the group is to develop a vision for the long term.

Answer these questions:

- What sort of club/association do you want to be in, in 10 years' time?
- Where are you now; where do you want to be?
- What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for your organisation (SWOT analysis)? Jot them down.
- What activities do you want to take place?
- What are alternative ways of achieving more or better activity, such as cooperation with other clubs or schools or sharing facilities?
- Will possible solutions be viable in ten years' time?
- Have you considered radical approaches, such as moving to a new site that gives scope for future expansion?
- What standards will be expected 10 years from now? Expectations rise – minimum standards today will rapidly become outdated. Think quality.

This first step involves drawing up a long-term plan or vision. You may not be able to achieve it in one go. Think big, and don't think too much about the cost at this stage in your planning.

Develop a vision

Think long term

Think quality



From

vision to

Having decided where you want to be long term, the next stage is to look in more detail at how you can get there. An internal review is the first step, in order to identify:

Aims and priorities

- Existing aims and objectives – are they suitable for the current situation?
- Current priorities – are they the right ones for the future?

Problems

- Are there any looming emergencies – eg a new roof, asbestos, new boiler, pitch drainage?
- Are there problems with the existing site/location – eg drainage, close to housing so floodlights might not be acceptable, a short lease?
- Are there any major problems with the existing facilities – eg lack of parking, boiler plant at the end of its useful life?

Resources

- Existing economic viability – where does the money come from, where does it go?
- What resources are available or potentially available – people, staff or volunteers with skills, and land as well as money?

Identify local

S

The next stage is to assess local needs to see how they fit with your plan. These can be identified in a number of ways, by obtaining:

The views of partners

- the views of the local authority leisure and recreation service, especially sports development staff about how your plans could complement other local provision
- the views of local clubs and schools about their activity programmes
- the views of local authority sports facility managers – they may be turning away customers for the type of facility you are considering

Market information

- trends in membership or use over time, and trends in your sport both nationally and locally, eg what effect will the project have on membership and will national trends affect the project?
- simple market information – use questionnaires and talk to people in the area about what they want and what facilities they would like
- details of the catchment areas, which will rarely exceed about 20 minutes' travel for most sports facilities
- Census data – it should be available at the local planning department or public library and will tell you about the ages and types of people in your area

With all this information you should have a good idea if a building project will help to move you towards your vision of your club's future.

the business

If the vision, the internal review and the analysis of local needs still indicate a green light for a building project, now is the time to start putting together a business plan.

Please don't throw away this book yet. A business plan doesn't involve accountants and corporations – it is a grand title for a statement of what you want to do and how you propose to do it. For a simple project, two sides of A4 could be enough.

The business plan should contain the following:

Project

- proposed facilities

Benefits

- statement of what you hope to achieve
- a list of the benefits of the proposed project and who will benefit, both inside and outside your club

Market

- information about other clubs and facilities in the area

- statement of local needs and how they have been assessed, estimated levels and types of use, anticipated numbers and types of members or users

Management

- proposed ownership and management structure, including both volunteers and any paid staff
- partnership arrangements, especially with local authorities, schools and other clubs
- what price you are going to charge for use of the facility and how that fits with other facilities
- how you are going to promote use
- skills, experience and resources of your organisation and key people in it

Resources

- estimate of income and expenditure, both for the capital project and for the first two or three years after opening – include maximum and minimum figures and identify any risks
- how much capital you have available for the project
- external funding requirements

Timescale

- how long it will take to complete

With your

ssion

Even freehold sites cannot always be developed exactly as you would like. You will know you have to obtain planning permission from your local authority for all but the smallest extensions, but you may also have to check with other people before committing yourself to expenditure:

General

- landlords – check the lease for leased sites
- restrictive covenants in the title deeds (eg no alcohol)
- local education authority policies
- water companies and the Environment Agency, especially if you are near a river
- utility companies if your land is crossed by pipelines or powerlines

Planning permission

- the view of the local planning authority (district or borough or city)
- the view of the highway authority (unitary authority or county council)
- listed building consent
- What needs permission? Is it a change of use or operations?

- There will be a Local Plan for your area, which may indicate what sort of developments are acceptable – your local planning authority can give you advice
- Which is appropriate at this stage – outline permission (if you have a general idea with sketch plans) or full permission (if you have detailed designs)?

What the planners check:

- whether you are planning to change the use (eg from farming to sports use)
- access and parking
- bulk, and how close you are to houses and other buildings
- landscape
- potential nuisance, eg cars revving late at night, floodlighting

The planning authority will normally take six to eight weeks to give you a decision on your application. They have to consult with your neighbours (it is a good idea to talk to them informally before applying) and may have to go to the Planning Committee, especially if there are lots of objections.

From **dream**
to

There are many ways of transforming your plans and dreams into bricks and mortar. Do not consider just the initial cost. Think of the cost over the full life of the building, which may be more than 60 years. Take into account maintenance costs over that time. An apparently cheap option in its initial costs may turn out to be expensive in the long run.

The main options are:

- **Traditional** – appoint a design team and then obtain tenders from local builders or contractors. You employ the design team and the contractor separately, and you control each step.
- **Design and build** – ask several design-and-build contractors to prepare design proposals and price them; you then sign a contract for the design you like that offers best value for money (not necessarily the cheapest).
- **Develop and construct** – you appoint a design team, who produce an agreed design and specification but not full working drawings. This is then put out to tender and included in the price will be the completion of the detailed drawings – one design, several competing builders.
- **Package deals** – for small projects, eg squash courts, changing room units, off-the-shelf standard products may be available.
- **Self-build** – you employ a designer to produce plans and obtain planning permission, then you provide all the sub-contractors, including volunteers. Don't go for this option unless the project is very small; if you do, keep the design simple.



If you opt for traditional methods of building, you will need professional help. The main advisers will be:

- **planning supervisor** – mandatory on all but the smallest projects
- **architect** – leader of the design team
- **quantity surveyor** – adviser on costs
- **engineer** – adviser on specialist aspects such as structural, electrical, mechanical (for heating and ventilation)
- **landscape architect** – external works
- **specialist advisers** – sometimes advisers are needed to cover aspects such as public health, fire prevention, crime prevention and environmental impact.

Always have one professional adviser who is leader of the design team and through whom all the instructions are sent to the design team and the contractor. The fees for this are likely to be between seven and 15 per cent of the total costs, depending on the size of the project. Pick the best for the job, not the cheapest. The quality of the advisers is crucial to the success of your project.

Always have proper agreements with professional advisers using standard forms, even when their services are being offered free. That should ensure they have proper insurance cover and you will know where you stand if things go wrong, but always make specific checks.

To get the building you want and expect, you will need to brief the designers clearly, whichever method you use. Leaflets such as the English Sports Council's Guidance Notes will help you, but there is more to it. The level of detail required depends on how you are approaching the project:

- With the *traditional* route, the brief is produced in discussions between you and the design team, so it can be less detailed at the start.
- With *design and build*, the brief is a contractual document and so it must be clear and cover everything from the start. Drawing it up will probably require professional help.

There is no standard form of brief, although the Sports Council has published guidance in the datasheet entitled 'Project Briefs' in its Facilities Factfile 2, *Planning and Provision for Sport* (1992).

The datasheet recommends a five-part approach:

- **administrative brief** – to set the ground rules (eg your name and who you represent, services to be provided by the design team and fees they will be paid)
- **planning brief** – to provide information about the site
- **design and performance brief** – what is needed and what type of activities will take place under what conditions; also how it will stand up to wear and tear, for example the acceptable time to first major maintenance or repair, or what temperature it will be when it is minus 4°C outside
- **management brief** – to summarise how the project will be owned and managed, including outline operating cost estimates (for example, the design team will be able to calculate energy costs as the design evolves)
- **programme brief** – to set out the timetable for the design and construction of the project, taking into account the playing season

From the brief the design team will produce drawings and plan the project, including applying for planning permission.

You will soon have a drawing, but how do you know if the design is what you want? Reading drawings is a skill. If something is not clear, ask the design team to explain it. Try to imagine using the building. Some of the things you need to consider include:

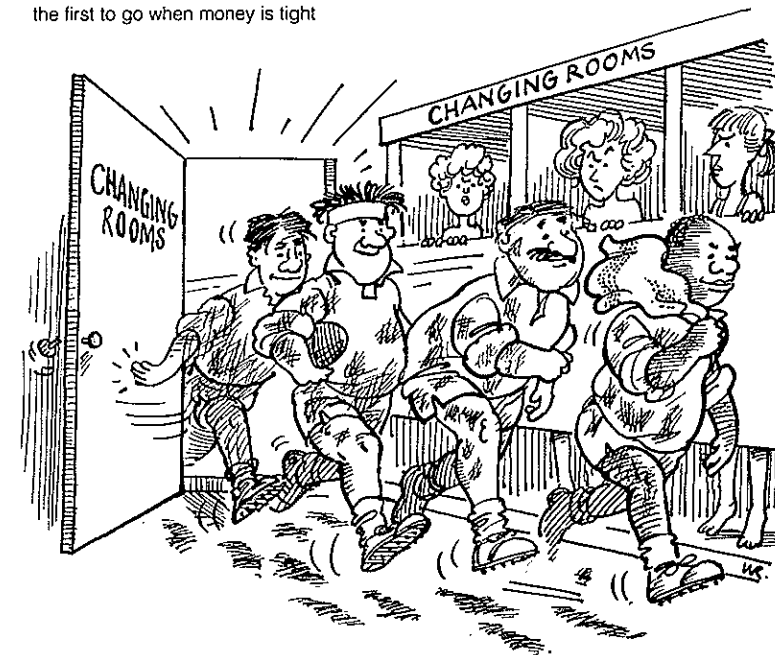
- The site layout – will it be convenient and safe at night? Are there any built-in problems, eg a grass path which will become muddy, linking the changing rooms to a synthetic pitch? Is there enough parking?
- The accommodation provided – is it all there? Are rooms the right size? It is easy to make mock-ups if necessary. How will the building be extended in the future if this is required?
- Is it user-friendly?

- Manageability – will the facility be easy to operate?
- Accessibility – buildings *must* be accessible to people with disabilities, not just wheelchair users.
- Critical dimensions and design features – do they comply with English Sports Council Guidance Notes?
- Ease of maintenance – will the building grow old gracefully and be easy to maintain? Are materials and finishes of high quality?
- Is it energy efficient and right for its use?
- Will users (particularly women and children) be safe in and around the building, especially at night?
- Capital cost – will the building be affordable, bearing in mind how much money you can raise?
- Operating costs – how do the estimated costs of things like electricity and gas compare with the assumptions in the business plan?
- Does it look good?

When looking at drawings and plans, you should also be on the lookout for design features that won't work, such as:

- accessible flat roofs, especially those with roof lights – not vandalproof
- poor external lighting
- inadequate privacy, especially for women in changing areas
- poor storage – the most essential feature, especially for multi-activity use, and often the first to go when money is tight

- incorrectly orientated pitches or tennis courts (north – south is best in the UK)
- poor heating and ventilation, especially in changing rooms that will be used only occasionally
- poor control of access and no separation of indoor from outdoor players in changing facilities
- opportunities for vandalism – the local police crime prevention officer will advise



Let building

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To
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After finalising the design, the last step is to put the work out to tender, usually to a minimum of three companies, but be realistic. Tenders should be checked by the experts, your advisers, and then comes the crucial decision:

- award the contract on the basis of the tender
or
- negotiate savings with the contractor, but do not make savings that will cost more in the long run
or
- abandon the project and have a major rethink

Do not sign anything and do not start work on site until you have firm offers in writing for all the funding (see pages 14–15) – assume nothing! If you do, you may lose the chance of a grant.

You've chosen the design, awarded the building contract and obtained funding. Now building can commence. There are still things to bear in mind:

- Building sites are unsafe places; stay away from them. If it is necessary to visit the site, make arrangements in advance through the design team (eg to get hard hats and boots).
- The design team or professional adviser will issue certificates at regular intervals; pay them promptly. Funding organisations will usually accept claims on a monthly basis, backed up by certificates from the design team.
- Do not change your requirements once the plans are agreed if you can possibly avoid it. It could cost you big money. If you do have to make changes, pass the details to the contractor through the design team, agree the cost in writing first and keep a careful record. It may be cheaper to correct minor problems by using a local trader after the building is complete.

When work is underway, plan the opening and combine it with a recruitment drive. Amend the business plan and make it work. This is only the beginning. You have now to generate what you really want – more activity. Go back to that vision and start to plan the next phase.



This booklet is not about funding: it is covered in detail in the Running Sport Introductory workshop and booklet *Raising Money and the Key course Finding the Funds*. Laying the foundations of a project does require you to know that there are reasonable prospects of help towards the cost. That will be part of the business plan, and will also affect how ambitious you are at the outset. It shouldn't affect your vision, just the timescale for reaching it.

For sports building projects the most likely sources of significant funding are:

Local

- local authorities, including town and parish councils
- water companies

National

- the Foundation for Sports and the Arts (FSA) – tel: 0151-259 5505
- Lottery Sports Fund (LSF) – tel: 0345 649649
- Countryside Commission
- Rural Development Agency
- Forestry Authority
- Football Trust
- some national governing bodies of sport

There are many others, and you will normally finish up with a combination of several funding partners, all contributing for different reasons. You must make sure their aims fit with the aims of your project. You can't normally get a grant from both the FSA and the LSF. Contact funding bodies direct to obtain advice.

Applying to the Lottery Sports Fund:

- The LSF has a standard form and an Information Pack is available. Before getting a pack, you should have sorted out at least the first few steps in this booklet, you should know where you are aiming and should have started to put together the makings of a business plan.
- When you have done that, request an Application Pack. You will be well on the way to putting together the information needed to present a successful application. Normally the highest level of grant you can get is 65 per cent, but most projects receive less. For some priority areas it is possible to obtain higher levels of funding. That is for the building costs. Whatever level of grant you are seeking, the business plan must show that the project can run itself on a long-term basis without external support, and that you have tried all other possible funding partners.

If you have reached the end of this booklet, you will have a good idea of what is needed to make your vision come to life. That is where it starts. The planning needed is hard work but, taken a step at a time, it is manageable with help. There are plenty of people in your organisation and community who will give you that help. Be patient, plan carefully and thoroughly and your dream could come true.

running SPORT

This is one of a series of introductory level advisory booklets published as part of the Running Sport programme.

Booklets in the series include:

Raising Money

Marketing and fund-raising

Running a Club

The role of the secretary

Getting Things Done

Recruiting and training volunteers

Looking After the Money

Guidelines for treasurers

Running Meetings

The role of the chairperson

Making your Point

Presenting your views

Starting a Junior Section

Getting it going and seeing it through

Getting it Right

Sports ethics, disciplinary procedures and appeals

Making a Match

Organising teams and competitions

Managing the Risks

Insurance guidelines for sports clubs

Taxation and Sport

Where you stand on taxation

If you found this booklet useful and would like to learn more, you should consider attending a Running Sport short training course in your area.

The following Home Study Packs and workshops on the same subjects are available:

Valuing Volunteers

Motivation and Teambuilding

Personal Effectiveness

Leadership and Delegation

Time Management

Balancing the Books

Smart Marketing

Finding the Funds

Managing the Money

Effective Networking

Building for the Future

(available May 97)

For further details on the Running Sport programme, booklets and workshops, use the Running Sport hotline, tel: 0345 585136 (local rates); fax: 0113 231 9606.



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Mission statement

We aim to lead the development of sport in England by influencing and serving the public, private and commercial sectors.

Our aim is:

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

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