



## Financial Investment in Sport

### Background

- As well as providing participants and spectators with years of enjoyment and entertainment, sport makes a significant contribution to our economy, our environment and our society.
- For a whole host of reasons – from promoting urban regeneration to protecting the countryside – everyone has a stake in the well being of sport.
- In short, sport is important to everyone. Millions benefit directly, through active participation. For millions more, the benefits are less direct but no less important.

The sporting community knows and accepts this simple truth but we often miss out on potential funding by not being explicit about the true benefits and value of sport. This is particularly true when we talking to organisations that are not familiar with what can be achieved through sport.

### Sport makes a difference!

- The rest of the briefing note provides illustrations of how sport can make a difference. These statements can be used as a basis for promoting the importance for sport in applications for funding.
- It is also important to share success stories in securing funding from a variety of sources so that we can inform the sporting community and encourage others to follow your example.
- Consider your project and organisation, club or group and think about your strengths and the benefits that you create as a result of the activities you run.
- Whilst your 'core business' is sport, just take some time to spell out the positive impact on your community. What would happen if you were not there? Who do you work with at the moment? Who will you be working with in the future? Take the time and effort to carefully identify and explain **all** the various aspects of what you do.
- When considering a funding application imagine **you** are the person assessing it. Try to focus on the information that is strictly relevant to that funding agency and do not cloud the issue with reams of explanation. Provide clear facts and substantiate any claims you make.

## Specific areas where sport makes a difference

- **Tackling social exclusion** - Consider how you bring all parts of your community together and how you use sport to motivate people facing social problems to gain qualifications e.g. coaching, increase their self esteem, increase their employability and develop their social skills. Give specific examples if possible.
- **Community safety** - Evidence shows that active participation in sport reduces the chances of young people slipping into lives of crime. There is a reduced risk of a person re-offending if they can be encouraged to participate in sport. Sport can help tackle social exclusion and address drug-related problems and associated criminal activity.
- **Increasing employment and training opportunities and strengthening the local economy** - Sport is already a major employer, providing over 400,000 full-time jobs in England (between 34,000 – 46,000 in the East Midlands). It is also a growth industry. For example, sports tourism has grown rapidly over recent years. Sports clubs are small businesses run by volunteers and/or staff. Volunteers take on the key business roles and apply existing skills and gain a variety of new skills e.g. from accountancy, computer literacy to motivation and personal development. In many instances sports clubs create new and sustainable employment opportunities. If this is the case, make sure you emphasize this in your application.
- **Enhancing the environment** - The growing number of households is increasing the demand for land for new houses so intensifying the pressure on our countryside, playing fields and green belts. Sports fields provide green spaces for our towns and cities, while new facilities can regenerate previously derelict land. In the countryside, many sports (such as canoeing, sailing and mountaineering) contribute to the health and sustainability of the rural economy. Proposed developments on playing fields have been a major cause of public concern illustrating how much the general public value local sports facilities and playing fields.
- **Lessons for life** - Children and young people need to receive high quality teaching enabling them to meet their academic potential. But a well-balanced education does not end in the classroom and cannot be judged solely on academic results. Children need to learn lessons that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives - a process in which sport can play a key role. As countless sports stars have confirmed, sport can be character building. It teaches people the benefits of self-discipline, teamwork, mutual respect and fair play. It enables young people, in particular, to channel their energy, competitiveness and aggression in a constructive way.
- **Promoting health** - Cars, computer games and labour saving devices have their attractions, but they mean that our lifestyles are becoming more sedentary and this is becoming a burden to our health. According to the

## Sport England in the East Midlands

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Chief Medical Officer, adults who are physically active can reduce their risk of developing coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancers by up to 50%. Despite this, only 30% of adults in the East Midlands are achieving the recommended 30 minutes moderate physical activity on 5 or more days of the week. Similarly, other surveys have shown that many children have worryingly low levels physical activity and this is contributing to the epidemic of obesity amongst children. Children and young people should participate in one hour a day of moderate physical activity.

- **Urban regeneration** - Improving sports facilities, and hosting major sporting events, can modernise an area's image and improve local self-esteem.
- **The value of volunteers** - The Government has recognised that voluntary activity is a key element in creating and sustaining an active and inclusive society, and that sport is one of the main ways in which people choose to put something back into their communities. From organising local clubs to running international competitions, volunteers play a crucial role in promoting sporting activity. 26% of all volunteers in England volunteer in sport. Indeed, sport benefits from the time, talent and dedication of no fewer than 1.5 million volunteers whose work is invaluable in promoting social inclusion.

#### **Further information**

- For information on Sport England's Community Investment Fund, managed by the Regional Sports Boards, and a detailed funding guide for projects and individuals, that also provide potential funding support from various organisations click on our web site at:  
[http://www.sportengland.org/eastmidlands\\_index/eastmidlands\\_get\\_funding.htm](http://www.sportengland.org/eastmidlands_index/eastmidlands_get_funding.htm)