

<b>11 March 2014</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Health and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Thurrock Coalition – “Sport For You” Initiative</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Ian Evans, Executive Director, Thurrock Coalition (The User-Led Organisation for Thurrock)		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> N/A	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> N/A		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> N/A		
<b>This report is</b> Public		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> The purpose of this report is to inform the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the progress made by Thurrock Coalition in relation to its "Sport For You" initiative in co-production with Thurrock Council.		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Thurrock Coalition offers advice and support for disabled and older residents of Thurrock and their carers. We are a wide network of individuals and groups aiming to inform people about their rights and entitlements and to improve the quality and choice of services that might assist them.

Thurrock Coalition was invited by Senior Officers at Thurrock Council to look into ways of sustaining the interest and momentum behind the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, focussing upon increasing participation, inclusion and involvement in sports, activities and recreation in Thurrock for individuals of all impairment types.

One of the main issues that needed to be addressed was access to information and awareness of: what sport/activity related opportunities are actually available in Thurrock and how people can be encouraged to get involved within the local area.

To this end, the “Sport For You” Conference was held in order engage Citizens of Thurrock, parents, carers and families and Council Members Officers and Third Sector groups to explore, map and discuss current and potential future provision of Sport and Activity for Disabled people in Thurrock.

Following the Conference and feedback from the Access to Sport Survey in May 2013:

- There is now an online, searchable database of sport and activity opportunities in Thurrock, which can be interrogated by geographical area or activity type. There is a dedicated sports page on the Thurrock Coalition website and information is shared via email bulletins which are distributed monthly, we also publicise events via social media and the local press.
- There are now daily inclusive sports opportunities for disabled people taking place in Thurrock through Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions (Monday-Friday). These include: Table Cricket, Indoor Cricket, Netball, Bowls, Soft Archery, 10 pin Bowling, and football (both TLS and Mencap now have football teams that play competitive games across the region). With transport being provided for attendees using existing TLS minibuses (and individual car-pooling where necessary). We have also made links with BATIAS with a view to sharing skills and equipment, including table tennis and boccia.
- Individuals and organisations made pledges to provide time, venues, equipment and transport, adopting a truly “strength based” approach to community development. These have all been followed up and made available/implemented.
- Working closely with Council Staff from Housing, residents of sheltered housing, the Lead Member for Sport, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions, Mencap, and other supported living providers - Thurrock Coalition facilitates a Sports/Activity afternoon every 6 weeks, which demonstrates “skill and strength sharing” and highlights what can be achieved when communities are supported to help themselves. It is the prototype for future Thurrock Coalition events that bring isolated and vulnerable people together in social and sporting activities – to have a huge positive impact upon the health and well-being of participants. The events provide a great opportunity for individuals to meet with friends and to come and try out some of the different activities that are now available in Thurrock, these include: Indoor Bowls, Table Cricket, Table Tennis and Darts. We are planning to roll out the format to other sheltered housing complexes. In addition, Tai Chi is now delivered for residents of sheltered housing.
- Four out of the five of the most popular sports identified at the conference (football, archery, table tennis, swimming) are now more widely available in Thurrock.

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **1.1 That the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee are aware of the Thurrock Coalition "Sport For You" initiative**

**1.2 That the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress made by the initiative to date.**

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

2.1 Thurrock Coalition was invited by Senior Officers at Thurrock Council to look into ways of sustaining the interest and momentum behind the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, focussing upon increasing participation, inclusion and involvement in sports, activities and recreation in Thurrock for individuals of all impairment types.

2.2 The “Sport For You” conference held in May 2013 helped to inform the development of networking, information sharing and increased communication between individuals and organisations to improve availability of opportunities for sport and activity for Disabled people in Thurrock.

2.3 Since the event Thurrock Coalition has continued to work closely with Thurrock Council’s Sports Council, partners and individuals.

2.4 Thurrock Coalition has helped to ensure that the Pledges made at the event were fulfilled wherever possible.

2.5 Thurrock Coalition has developed an “Opportunity Database” for Thurrock that effectively and accurately reflects the consultation feedback and includes the views of individuals their parents, families and carers.

2.6 Thurrock Coalition continues to support and strengthen the partnership between local government and the people of Thurrock.

### **2.7 The “Sport For You” Conference**

2.7.1 The event was held in May 2013 following 6 months liaison, planning and co-ordination, from the Sport For You Steering Group, membership of which comprised: Ian Evans, Executive Director, Thurrock Coalition, Cllr. Steve Liddiard, Lead Member for Sport, Thurrock Council, Mike Lee, MENCAP, Grant Greatrex, Sports & Leisure Manager, Thurrock Council, and representatives from Public Health.

2.7.2 The aims of the day were to:

- Map current access to and provision of sports activities for disabled people (of all impairment types) in Thurrock.
- Identify current barriers to inclusion and participation in sport for disabled people in Thurrock (including what's missing).
- Begin to develop solutions for the removal of all such barriers (including looking at what types of sports opportunities people would like more of) using a Strength Based or Asset Based approach – drawing on the collective knowledge, skills, experience and Community Connections of

individuals within the borough in order to improve opportunities for sport and activity of Disabled People in the borough.

## **2.8 Findings:**

- Attendees were asked to address a series of questions around current provision, how to improve provision opportunities in terms of communication, accessibility, transportation, sustainability, equality & diversity and then if the views gathered on the day were realised, what might sport and activities in Thurrock look like in 12 months' time and finally what "gifts" they can pledge (in terms of practical application, knowledge, networking, commitment and drive) to make new opportunities a reality.

2.8.1 Feedback was provided through the views and experiences gathered on the day under the following headings:

## **2.9 Current Provision**

2.9.1 The mapping exercise produced some interesting results, including nearly 80 opportunities for sport, activity and recreation for disabled people in Thurrock ranging from cricket, bowls, swimming, golf and archery, to sailing, badminton, football and Tai Chi. The map and accompanying table in the appendix details the Area, Type of Activity, Time and Place of each opportunity. This information has been corroborated using Google and is accurate as of May 2013 (to be reviewed in May 2014).

## **2.10 What people value and want more of**

2.10.1 The Breakout Groups were asked to address how they would improve each of the following in terms of sport/activities in Thurrock:

## **2.11 Communication**

2.11.1 In terms of Communication, the overwhelming feedback was that people would like to be able to access a Directory, and perhaps a Sports Page in the Thurrock Enquirer detailing all available opportunities and sports events for disabled people in Thurrock, or at least be signposted to a place or organisation which can assist and advise accordingly. The Thurrock Council Sports Council and associated pages should be widely publicised. People felt that information about opportunities could be shared as widely as possible (including on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Sports clubs could consider including schools/colleges on their publicity/distribution list.

2.11.2 People also said that group emails should be set up to better share information and associated meetings, to raise the profile of existing clubs and members and perhaps develop a User-Led newsletter consisting of content and contribution by individuals and clubs. Attendees were also keen for all information and findings from the "Sport For You" event to be shared, cascaded and distributed. Attendees also expressed an interest in holding an

Annual Thurrock Sports “Come and Try” day as people currently have to travel out-of-borough to Basildon.

## **2.12 Accessibility**

- 2.12.1 The Breakout Groups were inspired by the presentation given by the Representative from the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) particularly in relation to the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI). Note: Impulse Leisure – Blackshots has been recognised by the IFI Scheme as an inclusive club offering fitness facilities for everyone.
- 2.12.2 It was suggested that Thurrock could develop and design its own equivalent Inclusive Fitness Standard – with up to 5 points or levels which venues/organisations would sign up to and would then be audited by individual disabled people. Interest and uptake would have to be gauged once activities and providers are identified.
- 2.12.3 A further suggestion was that all information leaflets should be produced in Easy Read as a rule, with plain English and associated pictures.
- 2.12.4 A need to link sport/activity opportunities with social activities (e.g. camaraderie) was identified by the Groups which also suggested greater interaction between groups.
- 2.12.5 People also expressed the importance of being able to try out an activity without having to become a member of the club/centre/provider first, focussing more on enjoyment, recognising achievements and keeping fit, healthy and maintaining well-being.
- 2.12.6 People also recognised the need for access to funding for specialised coaches and for equipment to support the clubs themselves. It was suggested that the Thurrock Sports Council be approached to discuss such funding streams.

## **2.13 Transportation**

- 2.13.1 It was felt that Transport is a major hurdle to participation, it is expensive and cheaper options/alternatives are limited. There is currently not enough affordable transport in Thurrock and Transvol could be linked to specific clubs, a discount could then be offered. This would benefit the clubs via increased membership numbers and Transvol in terms of consistent volume of repeat business and potentially increased memberships Also, Wheelchair accessible busses should be linked with specific clubs.
- 2.13.2 A car-pool scheme or system could also be set up informally to ensure that transport is no longer a barrier to sports, inclusion and participation.

## **2.14 Sustainability**

- 2.14.1 The different funding streams and sources should be accessed and a central grant application be made on a “Consortia” basis, the funds could then be coordinated and redistributed accordingly throughout the accessible Sports clubs.
- 2.14.2 Links should be made with the Thurrock Council Housing Directorate and Schools throughout Thurrock to audit and locate existing “free” resources e.g. school halls, sheltered accommodation complexes (unused in the evenings/weekends).

## **2.15 Equality & Diversity**

- 2.15.1 Equality and Diversity is continuously reviewed and monitored to ensure that Disabled people are included, involved and provided the opportunity to take part in consultations, clubs, opportunities and developments in the sector that may affect the provision of accessible sport in Thurrock.

## **2.16 Best hopes for the future – “What would Thurrock look like 12 months from now? (May 2013)**

- 2.16.1 The recurring feedback for a vision for the future can be succinctly stated as follows:

*“If our best hopes for this consultation event were realised, we would be noticing lots of disabled people taking part in sport with easy access and transport to and from the clubs. People would be happy, healthier, exhausted, informed and aware of available sports opportunities throughout Thurrock.”*

## **2.17 Making the Top 5 Sport/Activities – identified through the Thurrock Diversity Network Survey – a reality**

- 2.17.1 The “Top 5” sports activities identified through the Thurrock Diversity Network Survey are: Swimming, Table Tennis, Basketball, Football, Archery. The Groups were asked to think about creative ways of making them a reality. For example in terms of the resources needed, such as People, Time, Space, Equipment, Transport, Funding – This question links closely to the “Pledges” made at the end of the day (see below).

**Swimming** – more inclusive and accessible opportunities for swimming could be made by liaising and opening a constructive dialogue with the various leisure centres and schools in the borough. It was suggested that Swimming needs supervision from a qualified attendant

**Table Tennis** – equipment, location and storage is needed to make this a reality, but would be relatively straightforward to achieve, use of empty hall space and storage would be useful. Publicity would be needed to measure uptake and interest (See Pledge below).

**Basketball** - more inclusive and accessible opportunities for Basketball could be made by liaising and opening a constructive dialogue with the various leisure centres and schools in the borough. There is an Essex Team based in Chelmsford, suggest contacting them for assistance with good practice knowledge, process and procedures for starting a club. Publicity would be needed to measure uptake and interest.

**Football** – A number of accessible and inclusive teams exist in Thurrock (some as a direct result of the Thurrock Diversity Network Sports Accessibility Survey). Mencap have a team, affiliated with Essex. Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions have started several teams from their locality bases.

**Archery** – There is an interest in Archery, discussions were had around venues, location (there are both indoor and outdoor variants of archery). Davey Down and Grange Waters were suggested as potential venues to approach. The need for specialist coaching and storage of equipment was also identified.

**Note:** Attendees also expressed an interest in finding out more about and starting where possible opportunities around drama, dance, walking, darts, snooker and bowls.

It was suggested that the potential uptake for the above activities needs to be measured through event attendees as well as all those who took part in the Thurrock Diversity Network Survey to then organise and signpost accordingly

## **2.18 The Pledges**

2.18.1 Individuals and Providers were then asked to “Pledge” any skills, knowledge, experience, time that they are able to offer in order to create a pool of resources as a basis for improving well-being and involvement in sports and activities.

2.18.2 Pledges, covering time, venues, resource for items of equipment, transport solutions, “come and try” and inclusive sessions were made by Thurrock Harriers, Thurrock Sports Council, Thurrock Adult Social Care, Tai Chi For Health (Essex), Essex F.A. and Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions.

## **2.19 Conclusion**

2.19.1 The “Sport For You” Conference was used as an opportunity to engage Citizens of Thurrock, parents, carers and families and Council Members and Officers in order to raise awareness of current sport and activities in Thurrock, to inspire people to get involved, participate and share information, knowledge and skills to improve the overall well-being of Disabled people in Thurrock.

2.19.2 The aim of the event was to find out about individual and organisational experiences when looking for accessible sports activities and clubs in Thurrock. We hope that by sharing experiences and information we can influence the improvement of services in the future.

2.19.3 Overall, we hope to have inspired people, sparked an interest in providing Disabled people with opportunities to become involved and participate in sports and activities, to socialise and improve health and well-being.

2.19.4 The issues of communication, accessibility, transportation, sustainability, equality and diversity have largely been addressed and will continue to be monitored. We will continue to work closely with Individuals, Thurrock Council, partners, stakeholders to monitor the fulfilment and implementation of the various pledges made on the day.

### **3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:**

3.1 N/A

### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

4.1 N/A

### **5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 N/A

### **6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

6.1 The ongoing Thurrock Coalition “Sport For You” initiative and its related positive outcomes for Disabled people align closely to the Building Positive Futures Programme. Furthermore, the initiative contributes to the delivery of Thurrock Council’s corporate priority to “improve health and well-being of Thurrock people”.

### **7. IMPLICATIONS**

#### **7.1 Financial**

There are no financial implications that relate to this report

#### **7.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications that relate to this report

#### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

As a User-Led Organisation (ULO) we work to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment in the running of the organisation without discrimination, in accordance with the protected characteristics of any individual as provided for under the Equality Act 2010. Equality and Diversity is continuously reviewed and monitored to ensure that Disabled people are included, involved and provided the opportunity to take part in clubs, opportunities and developments in the sector that may affect the provision of accessible sport in Thurrock.

#### **7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

N/A

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**



- The Full Report from the “Sport For You” Conference is available at:  
<http://www.thurrockcoalition.co.uk/Reports.html>  
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**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- N/A

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