

Executive Summary

GROWING WORKFORCE

The scale of the sporting workforce is big and is growing! Recent national research reveals:

- Over 400,000 people nationally are employed in sport, which has increased from 1.5% of those in employment in 1998 to 2.0% in 2003 (Sport England 2003).
- There are almost 6m sports volunteers in England representing 15% of the adult population and sustaining 106,400 affiliated clubs with 8m members (Sport England 2002).

Recent regional research for the East Midlands Development Agency (2004) reinforces these conclusions and reveals that over £331.5M GVA is generated through sport in Leicestershire and this does not include that part of the County covered by the Welland Strategic Sub-Regional Partnership.

Local research through this study provides further evidence to these findings but also reveals:

- No vision for the workforce
- No strategic approach to workforce planning
- No structured career path for those involved
- Inconsistent standards of operation
- Low investment – limiting capacity to progress
- Significant growth potential not being realised
- Practical issues not being adequately tackled

Within the next few years the workforce will become a major factor limiting access to sporting opportunities and will not be able to respond adequately to new government policy in schools and health and well being.

LEICESTER-SHIRE AND RUTLAND SPORT

The Leicester-Shire and Rutland (L&R) Sport Partnership includes agencies from the local community, education and sports that are committed to working together through sport and active recreation to improve the quality of life for people its area. It is well positioned to take a 'helicopter' view of the needs, issues, ambitions and aspirations of the sporting workforce from an employers and an employees perspective. It also is well positioned to influence regional policies and support local suppliers and deliverers. To do so it needs the authority and remit, resources and a clear direction from its partner agencies.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the research study were to:

- Review the current and future requirements and demands on the local coaching workforce
- Identify the aspirations, issues and support needs of both the “employers” and “employees” networks, including the voluntary sector
- Identify future priorities, actions and targets for L&R Sport and for local partners, (i.e. Local Authorities; Governing Bodies; Education including FE/HE and Active Sports)
- Explore new investment opportunities.

The work focuses on the 'coaching' workforce.

Definitions

Sport: wide interpretation including PE and physical activity

Coach: anyone who delivers or assists the delivery of a sporting, recreation or physical activity

| <i>Leicestershire Strategic Sub-regional Partnership</i> | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Population | 889,502 represents 21.3% of the East Midlands' population. |
| Employment | 10,917 jobs within Leicestershire SSP are in the sports sector. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This represents 24.0% of the sports related jobs within the region. • 1,226 more jobs (12.7%) than might have been expected had there been an equal distribution of sports employment and population. • Above average numbers of people employed in outdoor facility sports, clubs and associations, manufacturing and retail activities (95.6% above). • Below average numbers employed in motorsport and indoor facility sports. |
| Company size | 79.2% contain 10 or fewer employees, 1.8% contain over 100. |
| Income | £213.6M in income per annum. |
| GVA | £331.5M is generated through sport in the Leicestershire SSP. |
| Growth areas | Sports clubs; 26.6% [46], Activity centres; 16.2% [28], Sale, retail, hire & repair; 23.1% [40], Other sports;13.3% [23]. |

APPROACH

The research examined the needs and aspirations of employers and employees in four settings across the County:

- **Braunstone** - through the Sports Action Zone to cover local community and health networks
- **Charnwood** – through the Borough Council to cover District wide networks
- **Hinckley and Bosworth** - through the Borough Council to cover District wide networks
- **King Edward VII** – through the School Sports Partnership to cover local school networks

Two further settings, rugby and swimming, agreed to be part of the research study. Due to events and opportunities as the work progress these settings were replaced by three additional case studies and a literature review:

The research also looks at three case studies:

- **In 2 sports Ltd** - commercial
- **Community Sports Coaches Scheme** - multi agency
- **CPD needs analysis** – public sector

The first two case studies are providing new opportunities for employing coaches and for significantly expanding the paid workforce. They highlight the potential that exists and could remain unfulfilled if critical issues are not addressed.

The terms employers and employees include all organisations and people working to develop sport and physical activity on a commercial, public and voluntary basis.

Information was collected from each setting through a flexible methodology to attract interest, involvement and ownership.

40 employers and 123 employees have provided views and responses for this study.

The findings from the local research are compared with other national and local research. The emphasis of the study is to understand current practice in terms of recruiting, deploying and developing the people involved in sport and to assess their career ambitions, skills and training needs. It also considers supply and demand factors in relation to workforce planning. As such the study concentrates on qualitative rather than quantitative information and analysis.

FINDINGS

The research reveals:

- There is evidence in all of the settings that the industry is growing and expanding in terms of the range of sport and fitness related activities, the level of performance and the number of people involved
- Whilst there is a strategy for sport in the county it is several years old and does not take into account the radical recent changes that have taken place within the sports industry
- No-one is leading the development of the sporting workforce or has the remit and resources to do so
- Current practice is uncoordinated and lacks the basic tools for workforce planning
- Much of the work taking place is reactive rather than proactive
- There are areas where effort is being duplicated and conversely gaps that no-one is covering
- There is no clear career pathway for those entering or already engaged in the industry
- Both employers and employees have expressed interest in training and skill development
- There is a perception that the commercial, public and educational sectors are working in relative isolation
- There are no mechanisms for joint planning between the employers, training agencies and suppliers to join up part time job opportunities
- Demand is high and growing for sessional staff but there are few full time job opportunities
- Sessional staff and volunteers experience difficulties in finding full time employment opportunities in sport
- Sports volunteers provide a pool of skilled coaches for recruitment to paid positions
- Short-term funding and contractual arrangements is a major on-going concern and limiting factor for all involved.

Study Findings

(sample size: 40 employers and 75 employees)

**75% of employers anticipate business growth
Employees have:**

- **A wide range of skills and ambitions to develop**
- **Found difficulties entering the industry**
- **Leave the industry for higher pay or more security**

The research confirms sport is a relatively 'young' and growing industry. There is much scope to help build, extend the influence and transform the industry through investment in the workforce. This is a weak link that has received little systematic investment. Investment in key areas could offer rapid payback and have impact.

The main conclusions to emerge are:

- **Growth industry** – almost 75% of employers are planning for growth now or within the next few years
- **Young industry** – the majority of paid employees are young, new to the industry, have relatively little experience but are eager to learn and progress
- **Need for vision and leadership** - a shared vision and strong leadership is critically important for raising aspirations, motivating, giving direction and making the right things happen. This is particularly so given the growth potential of the industry and the inexperience of its workforce
- **Need for a career pathway** – encouraging new people into the industry and building up an ideal career pathway will help aspirations and retention of talented people
- **Limited workforce planning and development** – for an industry dependent on the quality of its workforce insufficient investment and priority is being given to the rudiments of workforce planning or to proactively recruit, deploy, develop and retain its workforce
- **High demand but restricted opportunities** – evidence from employers suggests high demand; evidence from employees indicates high interest; much is sessional, seasonal or of a part time nature. Co-ordinating effort could unlock considerably more full time jobs, personal and career development opportunities
- **Variable standards of operation** – there is a wide-spread desire across the public, private and voluntary sectors for regulating operating standards to protect employers, employees and consumers of services
- **Lack of basic systems and duplication of effort** – having a few basic systems, such as a countywide data base of coaches, are required to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- **Big Issues** – Low pay, short term contracts and high turnover are major issues that inhibit the industry and the individuals within it. Whilst there is no quick fix, these are core issues that need to be addressed with concerted effort over time.

The literature review reveals common themes starting to emerge for the sporting workforce. These themes are evident in Leicestershire. These themes together with this research provide insight on where to target intervention for best results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ten practical actions are recommended to stimulate interest, lay foundations and achieve early wins:

- 1 Agree a shared vision for the sporting workforce
- 2 Produce a longer-term Workforce Strategy
- 3 Have a sporting workforce dimension to all strategies and action plans
- 4 Demonstrate leadership and invest in leaders
- 5 Commit dedicated resources for workforce planning and development across the county
- 6 Support visible and practical projects that have potential for creating employment opportunities and business growth
- 7 Establish basic processes, tools and standards of operations
- 8 Establish an employers network
- 9 Have a co-ordinated Leicestershire-wide continuous development programme for employees
- 10 Build a career pathway for the sporting workforce.

Action Plan

An Action Plan for 2005-06 is proposed based on this research.