

South Derbyshire District Council: Housing & Community Services Leisure Management Contract: Active Nation

1. Introduction to Active Nation

Active Nation is a registered charity. It has a simple, cause-led mission: “to persuade the nation to be active” – campaigning to increase participation in sport and exercise and, working with other organisations, encourage local people to sustain a healthy lifestyle.

It currently partners five other local authorities, managing fourteen venues:

Chorley Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Seasons Leisure Centre • Brinscall Swimming Pool • Clayton Green Sports Centre
City of Lincoln Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarborough Leisure Centre • Birchwood Leisure Centre
Rushmoor Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpine Snowsports (Aldershot)
Southampton City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quays Swimming & Diving Centre • Bitterne Leisure Centre • Chamberlayne Leisure Centre • Southampton Outdoor Sports Centre • Woodmill Outdoor Activities Centre • Southampton Water Activities Centre • Southampton Ski Centre
Vale of White Horse District Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Horse Leisure & Tennis Centre

Its seven year contract with South Derbyshire District Council commenced 1 April 2011: to manage Greenbank Leisure Centre and Etwall Leisure Centre.

2. Aims for the Contract

The contract’s overall strategic objectives are to:

- a. Ensure the provision of a high quality service
- b. Enhance equality of opportunity
- c. Increase participation
- d. Increase partnership working to address cross-cutting issues
- e. Reduce cost and increase quality of service delivery

Four specific key performance indicators have been established to:

Increase Participation

- Develop a Year 1 baseline position – then increase individual (at least x3 a week) participation in sport and exercise by 1% per annum;
- Increase usage across facilities by 3% in Year 1 against the baseline – then 2% per annum thereafter;
- Support “New to Exercise” Scheme by achieving annual targets set by Derbyshire NHS – currently 456 referrals with 274 (60%) of these referrals being retained by 20th session.

Improve Customer Satisfaction

- Achieve customer service satisfaction rating of 85% in Year 1 – then 1% rising to 90% in Year 6

Increase Partnership Working and Club Development

- Increase quality and participation rates of voluntary clubs and organisations that use the facilities.

Operational Performance

- Achieve Quest Accreditation at Etwall Leisure Centre
- Retain existing Quest Accreditation at Greenbank Leisure Centre
- Retain existing ASA Swim 21 Accreditation at Etwall Leisure Centre
- Achieve ASA Swim 21 (or similar) Accreditation at Greenbank Leisure Centre

3. First Six Months Performance

a. Background

Greenbank Leisure Centre (SLM Everyone Active) and Etwall Leisure Centre (South Derbyshire District Council) previously traded independently of each other. Each facility had its own autonomous operating systems and organisational arrangements. A key challenge has been to understand these differences and, where possible, quickly create a more integrated approach, with minimum disruption to service users.

b. People

A total of 159 staff transferred to Active Nation under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) Regulations, comprising:

- 48 – Etwall Leisure Centre
- 111 – Greenbank Leisure Centre

Two disparate payrolls have been incorporated into one single structure. Pensions have also been transferred as part of the TUPE process. Introductory meetings and induction training sessions were completed in specialist areas. Staff worked well through the transfer process and remained focussed on service continuity.

c. Processes

Emphasis has initially been placed on amending and/or replacing processes for:

- Health and Safety
- Financial Management
- Campaigning and Communications

Performance monitoring and control measures continue to be implemented, including assessments of building dilapidation and arrangements for contract communication and scrutiny.

Technical ‘hitches’ – associated with the setting up new ICT systems – have been ironed out, including the creation of a new single database of Supporters (and coherent collection of monthly membership monies).

d. Campaigning & Communications

Active Nation worked with the Council to agree the ‘look’ of new signs and promotional materials – and have begun to work collaboratively with Officers to ensure effective linkages with, for example:

- School Sport Competitions & Festivals
- Olympic & Paralympic Events
- Community Sport & Health Initiatives

Further work is underway to jointly agree priorities and produce action plans for the 2nd half of the year and prepare for the New Year 2012-13.

4. Key Achievements

The uninterrupted succession of the service from SLM Everyone Active and South Derbyshire District Council to Active Nation took precedence – and the contract mobilisation period’s completion has brought clarity about the on-going transitional need for:

- More consistency and cooperation between facilities;
- Further training – particularly about service quality – to improve standards;
- Challenging ‘convention’ – to create and embed a new culture based on the Charity’s purpose (persuading people to be active) and optimising opportunities to work with others involved in community sport and health improvement across the District.

Audits have been completed – and resulting action plans established – for:

- Health & Safety;
- Financial Management.

A single Campaign leadership structure has been set-up to ensure consistent and coordinated delivery of local recruitment and retention activities across both facilities.

Periodic (financial and non-financial) performance review mechanisms are in place to highlight issues and implement corrective action.

Active Nation has managed the:

- a. migration and assimilation of two ICT systems (MRM+2 at Greenbank and Xn Leisure at Etwall) into one;
- b. generation of 219 new Supporters through its “Summer 6” Campaign (July & August):
 - 147 at Greenbank Leisure Centre

- 72 at Etwall Leisure Centre
- c. the data capture and start-up of 6,998 Supporter Cards across both facilities;
- d. recruitment of an additional:
 - 800 Active Supporters at Greenbank leisure Centre (from 1,285 to 2,085)
 - 528 Active Supporters at Etwall Leisure Centre (from 436 to 964)

5. Future Plans

Short-term priorities are six-fold through to 31 March 2012:

- a. Establishing an improved operational platform and more effective local leadership structure to deliver the Contract's aims and achieve its key performance targets;
- b. Improving service quality and increasing consistency in operational performance – completing Quest self-assessments and action plans; and implementing the 2nd phase of Active Nation branding (to coincide with the completion of Greenbank's Swimming Pool Changing Room refurbishment project);
- c. Delivering a series of "Relationship & Rapport Building" sessions with the Council's Sport & Health Team, John Port School/Joint Management Committee, Sports Clubs & Sports Coaches, Sports Governing Bodies;
- d. Developing greater innovation within programming, pricing and product development – including the introduction of new propositions for Exercise and Swimming;
- e. Completing Supporter Satisfaction Surveys (to create a Year 1 baseline) – together with the assembly of detailed demographic maps and Supporter Profiles (using Sport England's Market Segmentation tool);
- f. Positively responding to an unprecedented opportunity for participation growth and improved impact by working in collaboration with the Council and its strategic partners (health, education and economic) - to incorporate Active Nation in development strategies and delivery structures for 2012-13 and beyond, including Derbyshire Sport, Derbyshire NHS, Badminton England.

6. Capital Development Plans

Active Nation has worked with the Council to prepare development proposals for:

- Etwall Leisure Centre – creation of dedicated Exercise Studio and extended Fitness Facility;
- Greenbank Leisure Centre – outlining options and opportunities for alternative uses of existing Bar and Health Suite areas, together with ways to enhance the main Arrival/Reception areas and Grove Annexe.

Preparatory work for capital funding applications (Sport England – "Inspired Facilities") is underway for both facilities.