

7. INVESTING IN ACTIVE COMMUNITIES – DISCUSSION DRAFT

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The purpose of this report is to offer the opportunity for the Council to provide feedback on the Discussion Draft of 'Investing in Active Communities' circulated by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC).

INTRODUCTION

In June 2002 SPARC announced its decision to discontinue the Community Sports Fund and signalled a desire to develop a new partnership with local government to promote healthy communities.

SPARC's Chief Executive Officer, Nick Hill, attended a briefing of elected members in August 2002 and answered questions about SPARC's decision and direction. In November 2002 members of the Community and Leisure Committee met with Mark France, General Manager, Physical Activity, to discuss the new relationship further.

SPARC has now published 'Investing in Active Communities: Guidelines for Strategic Partnering with Local Government' (circulated separately) and is seeking the Council's feedback by 28 February 2002.

CONTENT

The Investing in Active Communities document includes a summary of key points from SPARC's strategy 'Our Vision, Our Direction'. This includes SPARC's strategic vision for New Zealand:

'All New Zealanders have a right to enjoy participating and reaching their potential in sport and physical recreation, are proud of their own active, healthy lifestyles and are proud of their achievement as a nation in sport.'

SPARC has adopted a mission of seeing New Zealand recognised by 2006 as world leading in its approach to sport and physical recreation, as measured by:

- Being the most active nation
- Having the most effective sport and physical recreation systems
- Having athletes and teams winning consistently in events that matter to New Zealanders.

SPARC recognises similar benefits to those identified by the Council from people being involved in physical activity and sport on a regular basis. In the document SPARC acknowledges its need to work with other organisations (including local government) to achieve its vision.

It recognises that councils are the representatives of communities, know their communities and are leaders of them. Councils bring all these to the partnership with SPARC. SPARC itself brings the support of central government, the capability of co-ordinating central government policy and the continuation of its national awareness campaign (Push Play).

SPARC would like to be a strategic investor in initiatives with councils aimed at making New Zealand the most active nation.

The potential role of Regional Sports Trusts (Sport Canterbury in this case) are identified as having the potential to add to the partnership.

The document identifies at least four areas for strategic partnership between SPARC and councils:

- Sharing information and best practice
- Guidelines and priorities
- National/community awareness campaigns
- Strategic investment

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GUIDELINES

Strategic partnering to achieve the goal of “*more people, more active, more often*” would involve the following aspects:

- The more a strategy contributes towards meeting this goal, the more support it is likely to receive. Similarly, the greater the investment, the greater the accountability required of the organisations SPARC is investing in.
- SPARC recognises councils as the elected representatives of their communities and as leaders in the provision of facilities and urban open spaces, and opportunities for physical recreation.
- SPARC will focus on providing assistance to enable councils to implement strategies that they identify as being most likely to result in “*more people, more active, more often*” in their community.
- SPARC’s support for these strategies will be based on the concept of investment, not grants or entitlements.
- An essential element of any investment will be an individual formal partnering agreement between SPARC and the Council, setting out other areas for co-operation and information sharing, communication protocols, roles and accountabilities, and other matters of mutual benefit.
- SPARC supports physical recreation opportunities that are accessible to all New Zealanders. It will expect the proposed strategies to include consideration of opportunities for participation by Maori, Pacific people, women, young people, older New Zealanders and people with a disability.
- SPARC recognises that different communities face different barriers to participation, and have different demographic characteristics. It anticipates that councils will reflect these differences in the nature of the strategies proposed.
- Not all proposals will be able to be accepted for investment by SPARC, nor will all successful proposals receive all the funding sought. The proposed strategies will be considered with all other potential investments considered by SPARC each year.
- Councils will be able to submit proposals for investment at any time that fits their planning and financial cycles.
- The term of each investment will depend upon the nature of the strategy, timeframe for expected outcomes, potential for sustainability and other factors. Terms of one to three years are likely.

SPARC proposes the overarching criterion for accepting proposals for strategic investments will be the extent to which they contribute to achieving the goal of ‘*more people, more active, more often*’.

In assessing proposals put forward by councils SPARC will take into account the following factors:

Is the proposal:

- Based on implementing an identified strategy?
- Aimed at removing barriers to participation?
- Focused on participants not organisations?
- Promoting best use of existing facilities?
- Incorporating identified best practice or innovative development?
- Providing assessment of expected outcomes?
- Inclusive of an evaluation process?
- Inclusive of a clear programme for eventual sustainability?
- Providing leverage? (Priority will be given to joint-funded projects)

In terms of the process to submit projects for strategic investment, they will have to be submitted in writing including consideration of the criteria, whom the project targets, how it will be monitored, what other partners you consider involving (such as your regional sports trust or perhaps a neighbouring Council). It should preferably not be more than five pages in length (excluding appendices).

SPARC will acknowledge all applications within 10 days of their receipt and will agree a timeframe to respond, seek clarification and consider the proposal. Consideration of the proposal will usually include meetings to discuss the proposal, its scope and expected outcomes.

FIT WITH COUNCIL POLICY

The most relevant pieces of Council policy are the Recreation and Sport Policy and the recently completed Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy.

The Recreation and Sport Policy states that:

The Christchurch City Council is committed to making a significant and sustainable contribution to the quality of life of its residents, particularly its children and youth, by supporting a broad range of recreation and sport services, facilities and programmes.

The policy is based on the following beliefs and values:

- That participation in recreation and sport makes a significant contribution to the health, well-being and quality of life of the people of Christchurch.
- That recreation and sport makes a positive contribution to the local economy.
- That all people have the right to participate in recreation and sport regardless of age, ability, discretionary income, ethnicity, gender and geographical location.
- That the Council must manage its limited recreation and sport resources, including human, financial and physical assets, in a manner that ensures equity, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy aims to bring together the many organisations involved in providing recreation and sport to move in a common strategic direction. It identifies the following vision:

Moving together to provide a city where people participate and enjoy, and have the opportunity to perform and excel in physical recreation and sport.

STAFF COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

There is clearly significant common ground between SPARC's vision, the Council's Recreation and Sport Policy and the vision in the Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy. All are based on an underlying belief that there are a number of personal and community benefits attributable to people participating in physical recreation and sport and that the aim is to increase the level of participation in these activities.

SPARC has recognised the need to work together with a range of other organisations including local authorities in order to advance its vision. In a similar manner the Council has recognised the need for a co-ordinated approach by the recreation and sport sector in the Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy.

The Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy has been developed using the knowledge and views of a wide range of organisations involved in recreation and sport in the city. Consequently it provides a solid indication of what the aims are and the areas to work on at a strategic level. From the Investing in Active Communities document it is clear that SPARC is relying on councils to understand the needs of their areas. The Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy provides an excellent vehicle to develop specific schemes and projects aimed at addressing the issues identified by the sector as a whole and to which SPARC may wish to become a strategic partner.

The guidelines for Strategic Partnerships outlined in the document should be considered in the context of other elements of SPARC's work. It is investing in a number of the national sports bodies and the New Zealand Academy of Sport. It is also investing in sport and physical recreation through its contracts with the Regional Sports Trusts. Sport Canterbury has been selected as one of four Regional Sports Trusts to pilot a new form of contract with SPARC that is based largely on local/regional need rather than predetermined national programmes. The details of this contract are being negotiated by Sport Canterbury.

SPARC is hoping to establish relationships with the Council in a number of areas, specifically; sharing information and best practice, guidelines and priorities, national/community awareness campaigns and strategic investment. These are all appropriate areas for partnership with potential benefits to recreation and sport in Christchurch.

The guidelines published for SPARC's strategic investment with councils are fairly broad and the application process pretty straightforward. This allows the Council considerable flexibility in the programmes and projects it can put forward to SPARC for it to consider investing in.

It should be noted that SPARC has indicated that its investment is likely to be for a one to three year period and amongst the proposed criteria is the need to have a clear programme of eventual sustainability. This is signaling that SPARC views its financial role through Investing in Active Communities as short term and at times to help new programmes etc become established. If these are to be ongoing programmes, however, then longer term funding needs to be found from other sources.

In terms of the proposed criteria proposals do not have to meet every one in every case but the more of these they meet the better and the more likely the proposal is to receive support.

Staff have sought clarification on the criterion *'Is the proposal focused on participants not organisations?'* At a local level the distinction between the participants and the organisation is somewhat difficult to apply. Frequently the participants and the organisation are effectively the same thing. On enquiry to SPARC it was explained that SPARC is proposing to make its investment in programmes and projects that have the participants as the outcome rather than the survival and operation of an organisation itself. Consequently it will not invest in schemes designed to assist the viability of clubs and associations for example from this area of activity. However, if the Council identified a programme to perhaps increase participation or removing barriers to participation amongst a group in the community that was to be delivered through clubs, then this would meet the criteria. SPARC has made the point that it is investing in areas such as club survival in other ways such as through its contract with Sport Canterbury.

It is the view of staff that the distinction SPARC is attempting to make between the participants and the organisation will be quite difficult to apply at a local level and that in many cases without a viable and operationally effective organisation the opportunities for participants to take part will not be there. It appears particularly curious that SPARC is proposing this position given one element of its mission is to be recognised as *'Having the most effective sport and physical recreation systems'*. Organisational capability is surely an element of the systems referred to and to achieve its mission it is important to have effective systems at a local as well as a national level. These are perhaps some issues the Council may like to convey to SPARC in feedback to its discussion document on Investing in Active Communities.

At the meeting with SPARC in November 2002 several possible programmes that SPARC might invest in were suggested by staff. These were:

- Healthy lifestyle coaches
- Girls on the Go
- Pilot Programme aimed at Obese youth
- Sports Clubs Quality Mark
- Establishing a pool of funding for active communities applications at a local level.

At first glance it would appear that the first three would fit the criteria well but the last two probably would not.

CONCLUSIONS

SPARC has published its discussion document of Investing in Active Communities: Guidelines for Strategic Partnering with Local Government and is seeking the Council's feedback on it.

SPARC is aiming to progress towards its vision and mission by working in partnership with local government. As there is considerable commonality between SPARC's vision, the Council's Recreation and Sport Policy and the vision in the Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy there is scope for successful partnering of the type proposed by SPARC.

Investing in Active Communities is one of a number of areas of work SPARC is involved in and needs to be viewed in that context. SPARC is indicating a desire to develop relationships with local government in a number of areas; sharing information and best practice, guidelines and priorities, national/community awareness campaigns and strategic investment.

The criteria published by SPARC for its strategic investment are fairly broad and allow sufficient flexibility for councils to submit proposals that meet the local needs. The Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy provides a sound basis for what is required at a strategic level in Christchurch from which specific proposals can be developed.

SPARC is indicating that it sees its investment being relatively short term (1 to 3 years) in any particular project or programme and that there must be a clear means to make it sustainable from the outset.

Amongst its criteria SPARC indicates a desire to focus on participants not organisations. At a local level this distinction may be difficult to apply and appears to run counter to part of SPARC's mission related to 'having the most effective sport and physical recreation systems'. This is an issue the Council may wish to make to SPARC in its feedback.

The process to seek investment by SPARC appears straightforward.

| # | CONDITION: | Meets condition ✓✓0* | HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION: |
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| The Natural Step | | | |
| N1 | Reduce non-renewable resource use | 0 | NA |
| N2 | Eliminate emission of harmful substances | 0 | NA |
| N3 | Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems | 0 | NA |
| N4 | People needs met fairly and efficiently | NA | NA - See People Step + Economic Step |
| The People Step | | | |
| P1 | Basic needs met | 0 | NA |
| P2 | Full potential developed | ✓✓ | Participation in sport and physical activity has outcomes of improved health, is essential to human development and people developing their potential and is strongly correlated with perceptions of quality of life. |
| P3 | Social capital enhanced | ✓✓ | Participation in physical recreation and sport is significant in building strong communities and families. |
| P4 | Culture and identity protected | ✓ | Recreation and sport are at times vehicles to develop local identity and pride. |
| P5 | Governance and participatory democracy strengthened | ✓ | Many recreation and sports organisations are voluntary organisations in which local people come together to meet their own needs. Recreation and sport can be the vehicle to develop community leaders who later may become involved in a wider range of issues, local politics etc. |
| The Economic Step | | | |
| E1 | Effective and efficient use of all resources | ✓ | By effective strategic partnering with SPARC (and other organisations) the Council is able to achieve its recreation and sports outcomes more effectively and efficiently. |
| E2 | Job rich local economy | ✓ | The proposed strategic investment is unlikely to have a significant impact on employment in a direct way. However it will contribute to employment indirectly e.g. through sales of sports and recreation related products and services to a larger population of participants. |
| E3 | Financial sustainability | ✓ | By effective strategic partnering with SPARC (and other organisations) the Council is able to achieve its recreation and sports outcomes in a more financially sustainable way. |

Staff

Recommendation: That staff prepare a submission on the Council's behalf indicating a general level of agreement with what is being proposed, raising the issues around the criteria focussing on participants not organisations detailed in this report and any other issues identified by members of the Community and Leisure Committee.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.