

Producing a Club Development Plan

Setting the Sporting Scene

The SWOT analysis is the first step in determining your organisations priority areas for development. It will allow you to identify your organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In doing so, it will help your organisation to identify which areas you need to move forward and concentrate your efforts and resources on and will help to clearly identify your project requiring grant aid support. It is also the first part in producing a Club Development Plan and can be used to describe the main characteristics of your organisation on a grant application form.

It is a good idea to involve as many members and sections of your organisation as possible in assembling a SWOT analysis and to organise a session where everyone is invited to input into the process.

Strengths and weaknesses relate to the internal aspects of the club such as facilities, members, coaches and equipment whereas opportunities and threats are those external aspects relating to the club, such as funding, school/club link opportunities and issues relating to weather, security of tenure etc.

Here is an example of a SWOT analysis which was prepared by a sports club to begin the process of club development and producing a draft Club Development Plan.

Strengths

- Broad club membership in terms of age, ability and gender
- Open membership policy
- Club membership in terms of participants and committee members being enthusiastic, hard working, trustworthy, supportive and self sufficient
- Reputation of producing quality players (past and present)
- Coaching experience, knowledge and expertise
- Coaching is provided to all players / sections
- Location of club
- Access to facilities
- Successful social events and reputation of being a music/social venue
- Strong club history

Weaknesses

- Ageing membership
- High turnover of members (go to other Clubs)
- Small elite group
- Poor communication and leadership
- Confusion on links with junior section
- Fragmentation of coaching system
- Insufficient coaches and volunteers (lack of time)
- Old club facilities and equipment
- Insufficient storage
- Poor gym equipment

Opportunities

- Local area provides a large catchment area for potential membership
- Links with Sports Development Officer to promote junior recruitment
- Excellent performance facilities in the area
- Funding opportunities through grant aid support to support new projects
- Fundraising opportunities through hire of clubhouse facilities for private parties and bands
- Publicity and recruitment opportunities through social events

Threats

- Competition from other clubs
- Club does not own club site and the end of clubhouse lease is imminent
- Local politics and commercial pressures

If it is not possible to organise a session where all members can attend you could look at assembling a Swot Analysis at your next committee meeting amongst all committee members. If you have other committees for different sections of your organisation then you should try to ensure that each section is represented in some way. However, the involvement of all your members will give some real momentum and ownership to overall club development and securing grant aid for different projects being planned.

The process of assembling a SWOT analysis is such an important stage in writing a club development plan as it will ensure that everyone has been involved and consulted with, on the way the organisation should move forward and develop over the next few years.

Here is a checklist which outlines a number of different areas to be included for a sports club:

- Date founded
- Membership
- Sections, squads and teams
- Facilities
- Leagues and fixtures
- Coaches & volunteers
- Other information

Date founded

Outline when your organisation was founded. Remember to highlight if you are an old organisation with plenty of history or if you are a new organisation keen to move forward.

Membership

Outline how many members you have as well as any interesting trends, for instance, you might have lots of junior members, veteran members or female members.

Sections, squads and teams

Outline how many sections you provide, including seniors, veterans, juniors, girls and women as well as how many teams and squads belong to each section including appropriate age groups. If space allows, you can also provide specific days and times for training sessions and matches.

Facilities

Outline what facilities you currently own/lease/ use in terms of (a) playing facilities such as the number of pitches and courts (b) ancillary facilities such as changing rooms and gym facilities and (c) social facilities such as clubhouse, bar and function room. Alternatively, if you do not own any facilities simply outline where your organisation plays such as the local leisure centre, sports hall or astro turf pitch. Please also remember to tell them where you are based ie in which village, town or city.

Leagues and fixtures

Outline what leagues and fixtures you take part in, as well as any interesting features relating to competitive opportunities, such as any achievements or good performances.

Coaches and volunteers

Outline how many coaches and volunteers are involved in managing the club and coaching each section or team and if they coach in a voluntary or paid capacity.

Other information

If there is sufficient space there are a number of other characteristics which could be included to describe your sports club. This might include whether your club is accredited by any other body, whether your club implements procedures relating to child protection and has a child protection policy, as well as any codes of conduct for players, coaches and spectators.

The list can go on and on and only you know best what needs to be included and what will make your club sound like a good organisation to support. However, always try to completely fill the space provided for this question.

The purpose of a club development plan

A club development plan allows clubs to pinpoint opportunities and areas for development over a number of years. It can also encourage partnerships and joint working with key organisations in sport to help increase membership and long term sustainability.

It is a written document which sets out a long-term vision and specific goals and targets for clubs to achieve over a given period of time and identifies a framework for the provision of equal opportunities for everyone to participate in sport and realise their full potential. There are significant benefits in having a club development plan. It allows clubs to use resources more effectively and is a useful starting point for a club wanting to recruit new members or to further develop existing players, coaches or volunteers.

It can provide some real momentum to the development of a project and generally help with the day to day planning and management of the club. It outlines who is responsible for different tasks with timescales clearly set for completion. This means that different tasks are spread out evenly amongst committee members and different sections of the club and avoids one person doing everything!

It can create and open up more promotional opportunities for joint work with other organisations and groups such as the National Governing Body of Sport, Local Authority, County Sport Partnership and School Sport Partnership as well as help to achieve and provide focus for club accreditation.

It can also help to secure grant aid support for different projects and is sometimes a requirement for a grant application being submitted, particularly relating to larger building projects. However, even if it is not specifically required, it is always useful to include a copy of a club development plan to demonstrate the clubs commitment to overall development and is generally looked on favourably by a grant assessor. It cannot harm your grant application and can only help to improve your chances of being successful!

The success of a club development plan will depend on the full cooperation and ownership of it by club members. All sections of the club therefore, need to be involved in the production of the club development plan if it is to be truly effective!

Therefore, when you are in the process of assembling a SWOT analysis with all members you must also try to draw out and identify a number of priority areas for development. They might say we need to increase the number of coaches and improve community links and therefore these areas will need to be included in your club development plan as priority areas for development.

What to include in a club development plan

A club development plan is defined through a series of aims and objectives in a number of different priority areas supported by numerous tasks/actions, outputs, timescales, key partners and resources.

Priority areas can include various headings relating to club development and can be adapted and added to accordingly. The size and complexity of a club development plan can also vary as it can range from a comprehensive examination of a club including a full summary of the current position in all areas to a straight forward action plan.

The timescale for a plan may also differ in length and can range from between 1 – 5 years. It should primarily reflect the needs of the club and be reviewed on an annual basis to determine all progress being made.

The following should be included:

1. Priority areas

- Priority areas are those areas which the club wishes to move forward and develop. There is no right or wrong way on the selection of priority areas, as clubs can select as many priority areas and different sections to the plan as is appropriate. Here are some examples of priority areas for development; Club Management, Coaches, Referees and Volunteers, Junior Development, Adult & Senior Development, Community Links and Facilities & Equipment.
- Club Management – This could include issues related to the overall management and governance of the club including general administration, legal matters, finance, publicity and promotion.
- Coaches, Referees & Volunteers - This could include matters related to the overall coaching, refereeing and volunteer structure and education and training requirements.
- Junior Development – This could include things related to the effective recruitment and retention of junior members such as training, welfare, competition and social and elite development.
- Adult & Senior Development – This could include things related to the effective recruitment and retention of senior members such as training, welfare, competition, social and elite development.
- Community Links – This could include all initiatives and events being run in association with the local community such as taster days as well as all marketing and PR work.
- Facilities & Equipment – This could include all matters related to the development and maintenance of facilities and equipment.

NOTE Priority areas can be grouped in a variety of ways. For example, a club might want to join junior development and adult and senior development under one heading of player development and include facilities and equipment under club management. Alternatively, a club might wish to create additional sections for performance and elite development and competition and leagues. At the end of the day it is your club development plan and should be laid out to suit your club needs and requirements!

2. Aims

These are broad statements which describe what a club would like to achieve in each priority area. For example -To improve links with the local community to increase club membership by 40%.

3. Objectives

These are more specific statements which begin to breakdown what the club needs to do to achieve the overall aim. For example – To develop proactive links with the local authority sports development team.

4. Reference

These link the action to the objective so that you can clearly distinguish between actions, and objectives.

5. Actions

These are specific actions and tasks to be undertaken by the club. For example – To set up annual meetings with the County Sports Partnership Sports Development Officer.

6. Outputs

These are specific targets to be achieved ie number of participants or coaches recruited or developed. For example – 1 meeting with Sports Development Officer each year

7. Timescale

This includes the start date and frequency of delivery. For example the club would start to action the meetings with the Sports Development Officer in the first year of the plan 2010 and they would take place every October thereafter.

8. Lead Person

This includes the person within the club who is responsible for taking the action forward ie the Chair, Secretary etc. For example, the Chair would organise and attend the meetings with the Sports Development Officer.

9. Key Partners

This includes all other key partner organisations who can support the club in delivering the action such as National Governing Body of Sport (NGB), Local Authority (LA), County Sport Partnership (CSP) and Schools.

10. Resources

This normally includes the finance required to deliver the proposed action.

Example:

Priority Area: Coaches, Referees and Volunteers						
Aim: To improve and increase the number of qualified coaches, referees and volunteers at the Club by 25%						
Objectives:						
1. To provide a coaching structure based on age and ability						
2. To provide all coaches, referees and volunteers with adequate coach education and training						
3. To provide all coaches, referees and volunteers with appropriate mentoring and development opportunities						
4. To satisfy the NGB codes of conduct and safety procedures						
Ref	Action	KPI	Timescale	Lead Person	Key Partners	Resources
1.1	To produce task descriptions for coaches	1 produced	Jun 2010	Chair	NGB	Nil
1.2	To appoint coaches for all sections	5 coaches	Jul 2010	Chair	NGB	Nil
2.1	To fund all coaches to obtain a coaching award	5 coaches	Aug 2010	Chair	NGB	£1000
2.2	To fund coaches to attend additional training, including Safeguarding & Protecting Children Equity in your Coaching A Club for All	5 coaches	Aug 2011	Chair	SCUK LA	£200
3.1	To fund all coaches to attend the annual Coaches Conference	5 coaches	Sep 2010	Chair	NGB	£500
3.2	To provide all coaches with a coaching scholarship to support additional mentoring	5 coaches	Sep 2010	Chair	None	£500
4.1	To display the Coaches Code of Conduct on the notice board	1 displayed	Sep 2010	Safety Officer	NGB	Nil
4.2	To ensure that all coaches adhere to the coach/performer ratio as specified by the NGB	5 coaches	Sep 2010	Safety Officer	NGB	Nil