

## PRINCESS ROYAL SPORTS ARENA, BOSTON

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### The Way Forward: Stabilisation Plan



Princess Royal Sports Arena

Great Fen Road

Boston

Lincolnshire

PE21 7PB

t: 01205 358666

f: 01205 366510

email: [prsa@bladerunner.co.uk](mailto:prsa@bladerunner.co.uk)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The Princess Royal Sports Arena (PRSA) is a sports and leisure facility located on the outskirts of Boston, Lincolnshire, primarily providing athletics, rugby and health / fitness facilities for both disabled and able bodied men and women. The Arena also caters for other types of sport, such as badminton, football, multi-sports courses and social events. It is operated by the Boston Sports Initiative (BSI), an independent Charity governed by a Board of voluntary Trustees.

The project was the initiative of Boston Borough Council as part of the regeneration plans for Boston. The funding for the arena and facilities came from many valuable sources, including, but not exclusively, Sport England, the East Midlands Development Agency, Lincolnshire Enterprise, Nestle, the general public, Boston Haven and Boston Borough Council. The arena also received commercial sponsorship from UNUM and Finn Forest and loan support from the Medlock Trust and Lloyds TSB. The PRSA initially opened in 2003 with a formal launch by HRH The Princess Royal in October 2003.

In July 2005 the BSI Trustees, along with Boston Borough Council, commissioned Focus Consultants and Chimera Consulting to review and report on the progress to date and the potential for the future of PRSA. This review culminated in this Way Forward Stabilisation Plan to reflect the intention to make recommendations for the future in light of the issues faced by PRSA during the first three years of operation. The recommendations of this report are the collaborative results of the review.

The report has been produced at a time of considerable national interest in health and well being especially of Boston residents. The Sport England Active People Survey of October 2005 – April 2006 shows that Boston is bottom of the rankings for the percentage of people taking part in sports, and the local authority health profiles of the Department of Health also shows Boston to be at the bottom of the tables on obesity with one in three people clinically obese, and low levels of life expectancy. Both of these reports featured prominently on national television news and other high profile media including the Sunday Times.

In addition the Audit Commission report produced in June 2006 summarised that councils should “improve the strategic planning of sports and recreation provision and increase overall efficiency by:

- assessing current and future sports and recreation needs locally and their relationship to regional and national needs
- collaborating with the private, voluntary, health and education sectors and working across administration boundaries in the planning, procurement and delivery of services
- appraising the options for delivering sports and recreation services systematically in an open and transparent way and testing the market to ensure that the best value option is identified
- improving the collection, analysis and use of performance information in order to demonstrate value for money, for example by including financial performance and social outcomes in all contracts.”

Against this background, PRSA has great potential to contribute:

- To the health and lifestyle of the local community
- First class facilities for sports people with disabilities
- First class professional sports arena for athletics clubs, rugby clubs and others in Lincolnshire.

PRSA has the potential to attract business from both within and outside Lincolnshire through the promotion of:

- Training Camps for Athletics
- International / National events
- Triathlon events.

PRSA represents a major and unique facility for Boston and one that could be taken forward in partnership with a wide range of local organisations to make a positive contribution to the future of the Borough.

The report looks at the potential and opportunity at the Arena and addresses key areas to ensure PRSA can take advantage of major future sporting opportunities. Where relevant it looks at sport as a whole in Boston and how this could be integrated with the PRSA. The report contains positive recommendations in the areas of:

- Potential and Opportunity
- Image / Offer
- Financial performance
- Capital design
- Capital debt
- Partnership and management arrangements
- Delivering the agreed PRSA Sports Development Plan
- Sports & Leisure facilities in Boston
- Monitoring and evaluation.

The recommendations of each of these areas are brought together in an Action Plan at the end with timescales and partners, to provide PRSA with a sound base for the future.

## **2.0 PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

A composite set of objectives for the PRSA that reflect the aspirations and priorities of the partners have been agreed. These were agreed to be:

### **Strategic Objectives**

- Increase participation in sport, particularly Rugby Union and Athletics
- Be recognised as a Sub-Regional Centre of Excellence in Rugby Union and Athletics
- Be recognised as a Regional Centre of Excellence in disabled prosthetic athletics
- Provide access and opportunities for all members of the community
- Contribute positively to Boston's 'offer' as a place to live, work and visit.

### **Operational Objectives**

- Provide a base for Boston Rugby Football Club (BRFC) and Boston And District Athletic Club (BADAC)
- Deliver growth in capacity, activity and financial strength in both clubs
- Maximise membership of Fitness Club
- Deliver outputs required by funding providers
- Achieve the targets set within the PRSA Sports Development Plan
- Increase the number of users / beneficiaries year on year
- Develop a distinct positive brand image
- Be sustainable as a community enterprise.

The above objectives were used in the review of the PRSA and guided the partners in identifying actions that would contribute to their achievement.

### 3.0 KEY ISSUES AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

A number of key strategic and operational issues facing PRSA have been identified and this report suggests ways forward to address these. The key issues are:

- Potential and Opportunity
- Image / Offer
- Financial performance
- Capital design
- Capital debt
- Partnership and management arrangements
- Delivering the agreed PRSA Sports Development Plan
- Sports & Leisure facilities in Boston
- Monitoring and evaluation.

These are considered in turn.

#### 3.1 Potential and Opportunity

PRSA has the potential to offer significant opportunities for the borough, however to maximise the benefits of these opportunities action is required by partners in the following areas:

##### 3.1.1 Evolving Strategic Partnerships

There are a number of potential opportunities to introduce new groups, clubs and sports at the arena. A few of these are currently being investigated and it is evident that there is potential for more. This may require capital investment (see later in report) but a business case for each potential development would demonstrate viability.

###### *Boston College*

Discussions with Boston College indicate that they are currently considering relocating elements of the College's sports provision to PRSA from their existing campus on Skirbeck Road. This potential partnership with Boston College presents a very tangible opportunity to improve the capital facility and the operational performance of the PRSA. If Boston College decide to relocate some or all elements of their sports provision to PRSA it may be possible to include some capital improvements to the existing facilities as part of this relocation. This would raise the profile and appeal of PRSA, increase income generation potential, use under utilised spaces, boost daytime use and help to deliver the Sports Development Plan and its outputs. If this development were to go ahead, the capital improvements could attract additional investment from emda, Lincolnshire Enterpriser, Sport England, Learning and Skills Council and other funding bodies. This investment would be likely to require match funding, and it may be worthwhile exploring with the Borough Council the potential to convert the existing Borough Council loan to a grant, which would in effect act as match funding to the investment sought.

#### *Boston Judo Club*

Discussions with Boston Judo Club have also been initiated with a proposal to possibly build a purpose built Martial Arts block, accommodating at least three mats, viewing areas, and changing facilities. This would be used by all martial arts groups for training, and competition. There is potential to obtain funding for such a development, and there is identified potential space at PRSA to position the facility.

#### Action Required

- BSI and partners continue to remain in discussion with Boston College and Boston Judo club regarding their future plans and work together to identify ways that PRSA can evolve to meet their requirements.
- Explore potential for further capital investment from funders such as emda, Lincolnshire Enterprise, Sport England and the Learning and Skills Council
- Explore further development of the site and facilities, such as introducing further clubs and facilities.

#### 3.1.2 Training Camps (2012 Olympics and other games)

With the first class facilities on offer at PRSA, there is enormous potential to place the arena on the list of Training Camps used by sport in the lead up to major competitions. Whilst the most obvious potential is Athletics there are also possibilities for other related sports, such as power lifting, triathlon, and road racing.

The 2012 Olympic Games represent a significant opportunity for PRSA to work with *emda* and Sport England to maximise the opportunities from the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The two themes that are of particular relevance to PRSA are:

#### *Tourism*

The Games offers PRSA a unique opportunity to present itself to the rest of the world as a destination for overseas visitors as a Regional Centre of Excellence in disabled prosthetic athletics. The East Midlands' position centrally in the UK and its proximity to London mean that it is well placed to do this.

#### *Legacy*

The Games will provide opportunities to establish lasting benefits in the East Midlands and Boston. The Olympics and Paralympics can be used to deliver an East Midlands programme of sports and cultural celebrations, some of which may be hosted at the PRSA. The Games will also help to bring about a healthier region, by encouraging people in the region to think about physical activity, diet and nutrition and participate in new sporting activities.

#### Action Required

- BSI and partners develop a proactive strategy to capitalise on the potential benefits of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and that they remain in dialogue with key regional partners to ensure that PRSA is programmed as a regional facility for any activities relating to the Games.

### 3.2 Image / Offer

The positive promotion and publicising of PRSA has been limited and appears to have had a minimal impact on changing public perceptions. However, there does appear to be recent signs of improvement. Overall, negative perceptions need to be addressed through a co-ordinated and adequately resourced marketing strategy.

#### *Partnership*

All partners need to be committed to raising the profile of PRSA and to implementing this strategy, to increase usage and improve public perception. The partners also need to refocus on one of the key distinguishing features of the facility - provision for sports men and women with a disability.

#### *Signage*

Highways signage throughout the borough is very limited and relatively low key, with plans by Lincolnshire County Council to address this being the subject of discussions between the borough and the County Council. The Trustees have raised this issue formally with Lincolnshire County Council and are awaiting a response. Highways signage would greatly help to facilitate access to PRSA, raise awareness of the facility and encourage more people to visit PRSA when travelling along main routes.

#### *PR Strategy*

Public Relations have taken a back seat in the initial years of the PRSA's operations. These now need to be brought to the forefront and a PR Strategy developed and implemented to build on the lessons of the past and develop positive and meaningful relationships that lead to a more participative and inclusive progression of the arena.

The previous section, potential and opportunity illustrate the very tangible opportunities for PRSA to improve its image, profile and offer. The capital improvements set out in the following section 4.4 would also improve the offer of the facility.

#### *Actions Required*

- Develop a targeted campaign to raise awareness and highlight the positive aspects of PRSA, including its recognised specialism in sports for people with disabilities.
- Develop a Marketing Strategy for the arena in partnership with all interested parties, such as the clubs, BBC and Bladerunner.
- A Public Relations Policy should be agreed by all partners and implemented as soon as possible.
- Improve highways signage throughout the borough and encourage Lincolnshire County Council to implement previous agreement. Erect a main feature signboard including rolling events provision at, or close to, the junction of Boardsides and the A1121.

### 3.3 Financial Performance

The Audit Commission report of June 2006 refers to the historic national position with under investment and poor maintenance of sports infrastructure, and Boston could claim to be ahead on this front through PRSA with clear investment and the intention to sustain. The Commission report also points to the ongoing need for public subsidy for sports facilities, particularly those with ambitious facilities such as athletics tracks.

PRSA is operated by BSI whose financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> October until 30<sup>th</sup> September. Past financial performance is difficult to assess with the early years including the capital spend on the arena and equipment and grants received to do this. It is only in the last year or so that the true revenue position has begun to emerge, and whilst there is clearly a need to continue public financial support there is also a need to identify and establish the facilities and services to be provided to the community on an ongoing basis.

In terms of income and expenditure, the operational performance of PRSA to date is below the original and revised projections. This is primarily due to flaws in original assumptions and estimates and it is important now to move on and start with a zero base. In this way a robust and challenging financial plan can be developed alongside an operational and strategic plan for the PRSA.

As part of this report the Trustees have reviewed income and expenditure projections and have concluded that it is unlikely the project will be in a position to repay the current capital debt and the annual interest on this. Taken together these factors, as well as the need to create a sinking fund to maintain the building, mean that it will be difficult for PRSA to become a sustainable financially independent organisation in the short to medium term. As such BSI, the resident clubs and Bladerunner all need to work together to improve the overall financial health of PRSA.

The revised financial projections are positive in showing year on year increases in revenue - which builds on the improved performance of the health and fitness club membership in the 7 months up to May 2006, substantially in excess of the approved Business Plan.

Financial performance can undoubtedly be improved, but nationally it is recognised that community sports facilities still require subsidy, a fact of life not unique to PRSA. There remain though a number of key considerations:

#### 3.3.1 Leisure Management:

The management of the PRSA is carried out by Bladerunner, a private sector facilities operator appointed by BSI. The contractual agreement between BSI and Bladerunner clearly requires Bladerunner to act as BSI's agent for the whole of the PRSA facility. Until recently, Bladerunner were focusing their efforts mainly on the Fitness Centre with limited resources available for the remainder of the facility. The performance of the Fitness Centre was initially disappointing after an encouraging start, with membership tailing off, and the average spend per head being less than anticipated. However, since Christmas 2005, the Fitness Centre has shown signs of an upturn with an increase in membership and income, and by the end of August 2006, membership numbers stood at 1,034.

Bladerunner has developed realistic and achievable usage and income targets to inform robust income and expenditure projections to address the financial performance of the Arena in the future.

Bladerunner and the Board of BSI must now develop an effective marketing strategy to achieve targets for the facility as a whole.

#### Actions Required

- Affirm Bladerunner have the authority to manage and make decisions in the best interests of the facility as a whole, with all other users accountable to Bladerunner. Implement necessary staff training and empowerment accordingly.
- Undertake a survey of existing and previous members to identify reasons for people leaving to be followed by action to address these issues and develop realistic and achievable targets for usage and income. Further assess competing health and fitness facilities to identify elements of an improved offer at PRSA and / or explore joint working arrangements.
- Bladerunner to actively contribute to the development and implementation of a robust business plan and income and expenditure projections based on realistic and achievable targets for usage and income.
- BSI should undertake a complete contractual review to ensure that the best arrangements are in place for the management of the PRSA and its constituent parts, namely the Health & Fitness Centre, the Athletics Track, the Rugby Pitch and the Indoor Training Hall. This review should include investigating the merits of renegotiating the Bladerunner contract on an improved performance basis.

#### 3.3.2 Income Generation

The earned income of PRSA is presently dependent almost entirely on the Fitness Club operated by Bladerunner. A workshop was held in November 2005 to look at potential alternative sources of income, which identified possibilities with an initial estimated annual impact of up to £56,000.

The draft leases appear to be restrictive and based on prices and assumptions made some time ago. It is strongly recommended that BSI undertake a complete review of these in the light of the financial performance to date to ensure that they are financially sustainable in the future.

##### *Renting Additional Space*

A limited number of spaces / facilities that could provide potential secondary sources of income include:

- “The Street”, the broad corridor after the reception area which runs the length of the facility and which is currently unoccupied.
- The space on the ground floor across the Street, known as the function room, opposite the entrance to the Fitness Centre
- The Mezzanine area above the Athletics club house.
- The office occupied by BBC currently on a no-charge basis.
- The spare office / consulting room.

### *Community Facility*

Other possibilities identified included weekday use by schools, colleges and / or community groups, with the facility being offered on an “at cost” basis, helping to stimulate interest amongst different groups. This would be consistent with the approach of using PRSA as a community facility which, as well as a sports facility, would also meet the wider needs of the Boston community.

A further possibility is the Management Agreement between BSI and Bladerunner, which should reflect the duty to the arena as a whole.

### *Catering*

One key income source is catering, and here BSI have granted sole concessions to Boston Rugby Football Club in return for 25% of the 11% of turnover that BRFC will receive from the caterer less an annual ‘lease’ charge of £4,000 p.a. that BRFC pay for Club House and pitch usage. It would appear from the accounts that this income is barely sufficient to cover the basic costs of grounds maintenance and ought to be revised in the light of the financial information.

Here BSI needs to work with the Rugby Club to ensure the catering facilities are attractive to all users of PRSA and consequently maximise income.

### *Actions Required*

- Review the agreements with BRFC and BADAC and consider alternative arrangements.
- Implement the ‘approved’ additional income generation proposals identified at the workshop on 02/11/05 and prioritise the ‘possible’ additional income generation ideas whilst continuing to identify potential new sources. Develop and agree a structured plan to investigate and test the feasibility of the ‘possible’ sources and any new ideas identified.
- BSI to work with BRFC to ensure catering facilities are put in place in a welcoming environment to attract as many customers as possible and therefore to maximise income.
- Instigate regular meetings of BSI Trustees with the Chairman of BRFC and BADAC to review the operation of the contracted concessions and look to implement changes over time to the benefit of all parties.
- Review the bonus arrangements in the Management Agreement between BSI and Bladerunner to achieve parity between the Fitness Centre and the rest of the Arena.

### *3.3.3 A Commercial Approach*

PRSA needs to adopt a clearer, hard, committed and focused commercial approach. Key to this is the appointment of a Managing Director to provide dedicated operational support to the Trustees, to drive the necessary operational changes, to improve partnership working and operational performance. BSI has now appointed to this post on a part time basis.

The Managing Director needs to develop and implement a robust business plan building on the recommendations set out in this report. This should include realistic income and expenditure projections and user numbers. The business plan will need to be monitored closely with progress reported to BSI and partners regularly. BSI, Bladerunner and the resident clubs should all take responsibility to work together to implement the business plan and to work towards the overall financial health of the facility.

#### Actions Required

- Managing Director to drive the necessary operational changes, to improve partnership working and operational performance.
- Managing Director to prepare a business plan with realistic income and expenditure projections.
- All partners to be involved in the business plan preparation and to take responsibility for its delivery and achievement of targets.
- Managing Director to put in place arrangements to monitor performance of the business plan.

### 3.4 Capital Project Design

Issues with the capital elements of PRSA continue to impact on the operation and maintenance of the facility and therefore the way forward. PRSA needs additional capital expenditure to improve its appeal – although Bladerunner invested £40,000 in the changing rooms when they took occupation, further investment is still required. This needs to link into setting realistic budget and support agreements with BBC for the future provision at the PRSA.

Areas within PRSA that are not effectively used include:

- The Street
- The space on the ground floor across the Street opposite the entrance to the Fitness Centre
- The spare office / consulting room.

There are further issues with the development of the catering facilities. Here BSI must work with the BRFC, who have been granted the sole catering and bar concession to improve, expand and re-brand the existing facilities so that they appeal to the widest range of user groups to generate catering income throughout the day. This could include for example a coffee bar or juice bar which is likely to appeal to the users of the Fitness Centre and therefore increase the spend per head.

It is unlikely that in the short term PRSA will be able to attract any more grant funding for these capital improvements, and the introduction of a new partner would be a more realistic option. Here it may be possible to work with Boston College who are considering relocating elements of the College's sports provision to PRSA from their existing campus on Skirbeck Road.

This would certainly involve changes to meet the College's requirements, and it may be possible to include some capital improvements to the existing facilities as part of this, although a significant relocation would also involve capital investment in land acquisition and new classrooms and facilities. This would raise the profile and appeal of PRSA, increase income generation potential, boost daytime use and help to deliver the Sports Development Plan and its outputs. The Clubs and other users would also benefit from working with College staff.

#### Actions Required

- Develop and agree a structured plan of investigation to test the viability of the secondary income source spaces identified.
- Develop a list of required capital improvements linked to income generation as part of the business planning exercise and identify contributors for example Bladerunner on an invest to save basis.
- Begin discussions with Boston College regarding the relocation of elements of the College's sports facilities to PRSA. Consider offering free use of PRSA to Boston College for a defined period in return for capital investment.

### 3.5 Capital Debt

If PRSA is to become more operationally stable a way must be found to remove the capital debt. The debt needs to be managed in the short to medium term, and in the long-term ways found to remove it.

The current operational financial position is such that it is unlikely the project will be able to service the debt interest, or repay the capital to Boston Borough Council which is also guaranteeing the loans from the Medlock Trust and Lloyds TSB.

In the medium term there would be merit in revisiting negotiations with the Medlock Trust to explore ways in which the ability of PRSA to generate significant new additional outputs of interest to the Trust may offset interest and/or capital payments. The key priorities of the Medlock Trust are:

- Education
- Community development
- Health.

All of these would link to the development and delivery of the PRSA Sports Development Plan, and would therefore be within the remit of BSI, and in the spirit of the agreed objectives.

At this stage the Lloyds TSB loan should be re-phased with a view to repayment in the medium to long term after the suggested changes have been implemented.

The potential to convert the BBC loan to a grant should be investigated with the council.

#### Actions Required

- Discuss with the Medlock Trust their aspirations for PRSA and develop and implement a plan to deliver added value and additional outputs as part of a long term plan to see the existing capital debt converted to grant.
- The Lloyds TSB loan should be re-phased with a view to repayment in the medium to long term after the suggested changes have been implemented.
- The BBC Loan should be negotiated and possibly converted to a grant.

### **3.6 Local Partnership Management Arrangements**

The key partners to the successful operation of PRSA are Boston Sports Initiative, Boston Rugby Football Club, Boston and District Athletics Club, Boston Borough Council and Bladerunner, the private sector facilities operator appointed by BSI.

The structure of the partnership has resulted in Boston Borough Council carrying the major financial risk which limits the incentive to other partners to improve their performance.

For the report to be effective there needs to be a strong, committed partnership to overcome the problems identified, with all partners accepting an element of financial responsibility, and commitment to the delivery of the outputs required by funding partners.

To ensure that all partners are focusing on the key project objectives, changes need to be made to the key partnership arrangements. Recommendations are therefore included for the short term and then the medium term.

#### *Short term*

The first priority for partners is to concentrate on working together on the approved PRSA Sports Development Plan with its vital sports outputs, considered in detail in the next section.

Also important in the short term is to develop a partnership agreement for all parties with clearly defined roles and responsibilities particularly for financial and output performance. In addition, it is important that people with key sports skills and an understanding of sports development and a full time professional management team strengthen the management team of PRSA. BSI has taken steps to address this with the recent recruitment of a part-time Managing Director. This professional management team need to integrate the findings of this report into a full robust business plan.

#### *Medium term*

PRSA would greatly benefit from close integration with wider sporting provision in Boston Borough. The Boston Masterplan clearly identifies the need for a borough-wide Sports Development Strategy to guide the development of future provision. PRSA would certainly benefit from being part of a strategic partnership approach to sports provision in Boston, and from positive links with other partners, groups and facilities. This could be facilitated through the creation of a Council led borough-wide Community Sports Trust to develop and implement the Sports Development Strategy and to manage an improved range of community sports provision across Boston, comprising the key players locally, i.e. PRSA, BBC, Boston College, Peter Paine and Mayflower Sports.

### Actions Required

- Develop a partnership agreement between all key partners including Boston Sports Initiative, Boston Rugby Football Club, Boston and District Athletics Club and Boston Borough Council. This should set out the roles and responsibilities of each with clearly defined lines of communications. The agreement should set out the financial and output responsibilities of each partner and the agreement should be signed by all.
- Undertake skills needs analysis of Board Members and implement training and recruitment programmes to address gaps.
- Boston Borough Council to lead on a feasibility study into the creation of a Boston Sports Trust, engaging BSI and other key players (Boston Sports Forum, Boston College, Council Facility Managers etc) in this review.

### 3.7 Sports Development Plan

The Sports Development Plan (SDP) is an integral part of the operation of PRSA and a key factor in the projects success as it outlines how key sports outputs will be delivered. It is directly linked to the capital grant for PRSA received from Sport England, having been approved through the application for this grant, and accepted as the vehicle for outputs to be achieved.

For this report key stakeholders were asked to respond to a number of points of the SDP, and identify their individual priorities. Analysis shows that stakeholders could benefit from focussing their actions to the demands of the SDP on a regular and ongoing basis.

#### Review of Sports Development Plan

A key element of revising the Sports Development Plan involved consulting with stakeholders to identify ways in which they could work together to support the objectives of PRSA. Their responses are particularly relevant for this report as they provide information on areas for development and consequently activities where additional outputs may be achieved.

Initiatives which have been particularly successful primarily relate to the work undertaken with schools and community organisations, which have extended the sporting programme to new activities and successfully attracted new participants to the Arena.

These types of community activities and outputs are not currently part of the information being collected for the major public sector funding agencies, and yet they are central to the interests of partners such as the Medlock Trust and Boston Borough Council.

If this type of work continues at PRSA then it may open up new avenues for future funding from grant agencies with community interests at their heart.

#### Action Required

- BSI collect and document additional community outputs as a first step for renegotiating with funding bodies.
- All key delivery partners need to collectively review progress made under each of the Action Plans in the PRSA Sports Development Plan 2002, particularly in relation to targets achieved. This should then be reported to Sport England through the monitoring return process.
- The partners should work together to develop an updated PRSA Sports Development Plan for the next three years to address the 'gap' in achievement under the 2002 SDP, submit this to Sport England and then use it as the principal monitoring tool.
- This new SDP will need to be guided by current / future strategies, and should also cover any new and additional community / health outputs developed.

### **3.8 Sports and Leisure facilities in Boston**

The report has been produced at a time of considerable national interest in health and well being especially of Boston residents. The Sport England Active People Survey of October 2005 – April 2006 shows that Boston is bottom of the rankings for the percentage of people taking part in sports, and the local authority health profiles of the Department of Health also shows Boston to be at the bottom of the tables on obesity with one in three people clinically obese, and low levels of life expectancy. Both of these reports featured prominently on national television news and other high profile media including the Sunday Times.

Boston Borough Council is in the process of renewing their CIPFA statistics, which, when available will more valuable information to these national studies, and will help to benchmark Council services and those of PRSA.

In addition the Audit Commission report produced in June 2006 summarised that councils should "improve the strategic planning of sports and recreation provision and increase overall efficiency by:

- assessing current and future sports and recreation needs locally and their relationship to regional and national needs
- collaborating with the private, voluntary, health and education sectors and working across administration boundaries in the planning, procurement and delivery of services
- appraising the options for delivering sports and recreation services systematically in an open and transparent way and testing the market to ensure that the best value option is identified
- improving the collection, analysis and use of performance information in order to demonstrate value for money, for example by including financial performance and social outcomes in all contracts."

The Boston Masterplan, published in 2004, clearly identifies the need for a borough-wide Sports Development Strategy to guide the development of future provision. PRSA would certainly benefit from being part of a strategic partnership approach to sports provision in Boston, and from positive links with other partners, groups and facilities. This could be facilitated through the creation of a borough-wide Community Sports Trust to develop and implement the Sports Development Strategy and to manage an improved range of community sports provision across Boston, comprising the key players locally.

The creation of a borough-wide Community Sports Trust would have a significant impact on the stability and sustainability of PRSA as well as sports provision in Boston as a whole. Strategically, this would ensure an integrated approach to the management of sports provision in the borough and operationally, through economies of scale, it would help to bring financial stability of PRSA and ensure value for money in the delivery of all community sports provision in Boston.

The creation of the new Community Sports Trust could also bring the expertise and interests of the partners together to ensure that all are working towards the agreed objectives of the Sports Development Strategy and the financial sustainability of PRSA.

Such a Trust would have a full time professional management team and could put in place a Service Level Agreement with Boston Borough Council for the delivery of sports provision linked to a programme of funding. The Council could also place their professional sports management and development staff in the Trust to support the management of the sports facilities and the delivery of targets.

This would help to rationalise and reconcile sport and leisure facilities across the borough, and bring competing supply together to realise assets and plan for expansion at a strategic level.

Such a Community Sports Trust made up of a wide partnership would be in an ideal position to implement a borough-wide Sports Strategy, take advantage of the 2012 Olympics and integrate facilities provision, attract wider usage, develop sports tourism and, make decisions on improvements to the capital design of PRSA in the light of all of these. Such a programme would directly meet the sports and tourism aspirations of Boston Borough Council, and help to boost Community Sports for the borough as a whole.

It is therefore vital that a borough-wide Community Sports Trust is established to bring together the sports community to implement the Sports Development Plan and manage sports provision in the borough. The creation of such a borough-wide Trust would have a significant impact on the stability of PRSA, as well as sports provision in Boston as a whole, and is a major recommendation of this report.

#### Actions Required

- Boston Borough Council to complete the review of their CIPFA statistics with respect to average costs and investment, and benchmark their services alongside those of PRSA. BBC to share this information with BSI.
- Feasibility study into the creation of a borough-wide Community Sports Trust to coordinate the sports community of Boston Borough and all sports and community facilities.

### **3.9 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The PRSA capital development was funded by Boston Borough Council, Sport England and the East Midlands Development Agency, to deliver certain outputs, including those relating to sports, community and economic development.

BSI is responsible for these outputs, but is almost totally reliant upon Bladerunner / BRFC / BADAC for their achievement. Furthermore Boston Borough Council is the accountable body for the grants, and consequently will be held responsible if the outputs are not delivered. It is therefore in the interests of Boston Borough Council that these outputs are achieved. Each funder is also likely to have prescriptive timescale requirements for the delivery of outputs.

There appears to be efficient collection and recording of outputs in certain areas, such as Bladerunner with the Fitness Centre, however, in other areas monitoring systems need to be implemented.

#### Actions Required

- Prepare a comprehensive matrix detailing the outputs required by all funders together with prescribed timescales.
- Put in place formal recording systems for recording, collating and distributing output information. Prepare an action plan for the achievement of the outputs and allocate outputs to different partners each of who will be responsible for achievement, monitoring and evidencing outputs.
- Introduce responsibility for delivering and recording outputs into agreements with BRFC and BADAC and all other regular PRSA users.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TIMESCALE Short / Medium / Long Term*	Lead Responsibility	Supported by
BSI and partners continue to remain in discussion with Boston College and Boston Judo club regarding their future plans and work together to identify ways that PRSA can evolve to meet their requirements.	Medium	BSI	BBC
Explore potential for further capital investment from funders such as emda, Lincolnshire Enterprise, Sport England and the Learning and Skills Council	Long	BSI	BBC
Explore further development of the site and facilities, such as introducing further clubs and facilities.	Short / Medium	BSI	Bladerunner BBC
BSI and partners develop a proactive strategy to capitalise on the potential benefits of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and that they remain in dialogue with key regional partners to ensure that PRSA is programmed as a regional facility for any activities relating to the Games.	Short / Medium	BSI	Bladerunner BRFC BADAC BBC
Develop a targeted campaign to raise awareness and highlight the positive aspects of PRSA, including its recognised specialism in sports for people with disabilities.	Short / Medium / Long	BSI	Bladerunner
Develop a Marketing Strategy for the arena in partnership with all interested parties, such as the clubs, BBC and Bladerunner.	Short / Medium	BSI	Bladerunner
A Public Relations Policy should be agreed by all partners and implemented as soon as possible.	Short	BSI	BBC Bladerunner
Improve highways signage throughout the borough and encourage Lincolnshire County Council to implement previous agreement. Erect a main feature signboard including rolling events provision at, or close to, the junction of Boardsides and the A1121.	Medium	BSI	BBC Lincolnshire County Council
Affirm Bladerunner have the authority to manage and make decisions in the best interests of the facility as a whole, with all other users accountable to Bladerunner. Implement necessary staff training and empowerment accordingly.	Short	BSI	Bladerunner
Undertake a survey of existing and previous members to identify reasons for people leaving to be followed by action to address these issues and develop realistic and achievable targets for usage and income. Further assess competing health and fitness facilities to identify elements of an improved offer at PRSA and / or explore joint working arrangements.	Short / Medium	Bladerunner	BSI

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE Short / Medium / Long Term*</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Supported by</b>
Bladerunner to actively contribute to the development and implementation of a robust business plan and income and expenditure projections based on realistic and achievable targets for usage and income.	Short / Medium	Bladerunner	
BSI should undertake a complete contractual review to ensure that the best arrangements are in place for the management of the PRSA and its constituent parts, namely the Health & Fitness Centre, the Athletics Track, the Rugby Pitch and the Indoor Training Hall. This review should include investigating the merits of renegotiating the Bladerunner contract on an improved performance basis.	Medium	BSI	BSI BBC
Review the agreements with BRFC and BADAC and consider alternative arrangements.	Short/Medium	BSI	BADAC BRFC
Implement the 'approved' additional income generation proposals identified at the workshop on 02/11/05 and prioritise the 'possible' additional income generation ideas whilst continuing to identify potential new sources. Develop and agree a structured plan to investigate and test the feasibility of the 'possible' sources and any new ideas identified.	Short / Medium / Long	BSI	Bladerunner
BSI to work with BRFC to ensure catering facilities are put in place in a welcoming environment to attract as many customers as possible and therefore to maximise income.	Medium	BSI	BRFC
Instigate regular meetings of BSI Trustees with the Chairman of BRFC and BADAC to review the operation of the contracted concessions and look to implement changes over time to the benefit of all parties.	Short	BSI	
Review the bonus arrangements in the Management Agreement between BSI and Bladerunner to achieve parity between the Fitness Centre and the rest of the Arena.	Short	BSI	
Managing Director to drive the necessary operational changes, to improve partnership working and operational performance.	Short / Medium	BSI	
Managing Director to prepare a business plan with realistic income and expenditure projections.	Medium	BSI	
All partners to be involved in the business plan preparation and to take responsibility for its delivery and achievement of targets.	Medium	BSI	BRFC BADAC BBC
Managing Director to put in place arrangements to monitor performance of the business plan.	Medium	BSI	
Develop and agree a structured plan of investigation to test the viability of the secondary income source spaces identified.	Medium	BSI	Bladerunner
Develop a list of required capital improvements linked to income generation as part of the business planning exercise and identify contributors for example Bladerunner on an invest to save basis.	Medium	BSI	Bladerunner

ACTION	TIMESCALE Short / Medium / Long Term*	Lead Responsibility	Supported by
Begin discussions with Boston College regarding the relocation of elements of the College's sports facilities to PRSA. Consider offering free use of PRSA to Boston College for a defined period in return for capital investment.	Medium	BSI	BBC
Discuss with the Medlock Trust their aspirations for PRSA and develop and implement a plan to deliver added value and additional outputs as part of a long term plan to see the existing capital debt converted to grant.	Medium	BSI	BBC
The Lloyds TSB loan should be re-phased with a view to repayment in the medium to long term after the suggested changes have been implemented.	Medium / Long	BSI	BBC
The BBC Loan should be negotiated and possibly converted to a grant.	Short	BBC	BSI
Develop a partnership agreement between all key partners including Boston Sports Initiative, Boston Rugby Football Club, Boston and District Athletics Club and Boston Borough Council. This should set out the roles and responsibilities of each with clearly defined lines of communications. The agreement should set out the financial and output responsibilities of each partner and the agreement should be signed by all.	Short	BSI	BRFC BADAC BBC
Undertake skills needs analysis of Board Members and implement training and recruitment programmes to address gaps.	Short / Medium	BSI	
Boston Borough Council to complete the review of their CIPFA statistics with respect to average costs and investment, and benchmark their services alongside those of PRSA. BBC to share this information with BSI.	Short	BBC	BSI
Boston Borough Council to lead on a feasibility study into the creation of a Boston Sports Trust, engaging BSI and other key players (Boston Sports Forum, Boston College, Council Facility Managers etc) in this review.	Medium	BBC	BSI Boston Sports Forum Boston College
BSI collect and document additional community outputs as a first step for renegotiating with funding bodies.	Short	BSI	
All key delivery partners need to collectively review progress made under each of the Action Plans in the PRSA Sports Development Plan 2002, particularly in relation to targets achieved. This should then be reported to Sport England through the monitoring return process.	Short	BSI	Bladerunner BRFC BADAC BBC
The partners should work together to develop an updated PRSA Sports Development Plan for the next three years to address the 'gap' in achievement under the 2002 SDP, submit this to Sport England and then use it as the principal monitoring tool.	Short	BSI	Bladerunner BRFC BADAC BBC

ACTION	TIMESCALE Short / Medium / Long Term*	Lead Responsibility	Supported by
This new SDP will need to be guided by current / future strategies, and should also cover any new and additional community / health outputs developed.	Short	BSI	
Feasibility study into the creation of a borough-wide Community Sports Trust to coordinate the sports community of Boston Borough and all sports and community facilities.	Medium	BBC	BSI Boston Sports Forum Boston College
Prepare a comprehensive matrix detailing the outputs required by all funders together with prescribed timescales.	Short	BSI	BBC
Put in place formal recording systems for recording, collating and distributing output information. Prepare an action plan for the achievement of the outputs and allocate outputs to different partners each of who will be responsible for achievement, monitoring and evidencing outputs.	Short	BSI	Bladerunner BRFC BADAC
Introduce responsibility for delivering and recording outputs into agreements with BRFC and BADAC and all other regular PRSA users.	Short	BSI	

**\*Note :**

- Short Term – Within next 3 months
- Medium Term - Within next 6 months
- Long Term – Within the next 12 months.