

# Legacy 2014: Sustainable Sport for Communities Fund

---

Evaluation and Learning

Baseline Report: Executive Summary

January 2016

---

**Funded by:**



**Supported by**



This is the baseline evaluation report for the Legacy 2014: Sustainable Sport for Communities Fund. It is the first in a series of reports which will seek to explore how funded organisations are progressing against the Fund's outcomes and to better understand what the drivers for organisational change and success are for organisations seeking to use a sport social enterprise or sport for change approach.

There is recognition that sports organisations play an important role in increasing physical activity levels through enabling access to sport. It is also recognised that many of these organisation are delivering (or have the potential to deliver) wider impact within their communities through the use of sport as a tool to deliver social outcomes in areas such as health and wellbeing, skills, confidence and community cohesion.

However, there can be significant challenges for community based sports organisations aspiring to move beyond a sports participation model. Feedback from Fund partners, and from Fund applicants and award recipients, suggests that there are two main areas where organisations can face barriers if they decide to develop new areas of work or ways of working: capacity and resources; and skills and knowledge. This can affect their ability to take on ownership and management of facilities and to deliver sustainable, impactful services in their communities.

Legacy 2014: Sustainable Sports for Communities Fund is a £1m programme which aims to support the sustainability and capacity of aspiring and existing social enterprises delivering sport and physical activity in communities across Scotland. The outcomes of the fund are:

- Funded organisations have increased knowledge, skills and capacity to operate, earn income, deliver services and operate facilities
- Funded organisations demonstrate increased ownership and management of community assets
- Funded organisations are more sustainable
- Funded organisations are better able to meet the needs of their community through delivery of appropriate services and facilities

In addition, it is hoped that learning from the programme will improve understanding of the critical success factors in asset management, organisational sustainability and delivering social impact and inform the work of relevant funders, policy makers and support agencies going forward.

Between December 2014 and June 2015 award offers were made to 33 organisations across Scotland through two strands aimed at organisations at different stages of their development:

- **Strand 1:** offered support and funding to organisations considering taking on ownership or management of a facility to enable them to develop their plans and test their viability. Twenty-three organisations have been awarded support through this strand. This strand is being managed by Social Investment Scotland.
- **Strand 2:** offered support and funding to organisations which are already operating as a social enterprise within their community to enable them to build their skills and capacity and become more sustainable. Ten organisations have been awarded support through this strand. This strand is being managed by The Robertson Trust.

The Programme was designed to benefit awarded organisations beyond the simple injection of a cash resource. Both strands are being delivered with learning and development support as a built in element of the award.

Over the duration of the programme, and for a period of up to three years beyond this, evaluation will be carried out with the awarded organisations and the programme partners to see how well the programme is progressing towards achieving its outcomes and to understand better what is working to enable this to happen.

Legacy 2014: Sustainable Sport for Communities is a partnership between the Scottish Government and The Robertson Trust who have both made an investment of £500,000 in the programme. The programme is being supported by an Advisory Group made up of representatives from Scottish Government, The Robertson Trust, **sportscotland**, Senscot and Social Investment Scotland.

## **KEY MESSAGES**

- There is an evident desire for capital investment into the sporting sector from organisations working in this area. However, investment into the physical infrastructure of sport alone is not enough to ensure improved outcomes for participants or increased sustainability for the organisations involved.
- Community sports organisations may require additional support with capacity, skills and knowledge to take on wider aspects of organisational operation, governance and development beyond delivery of sport. Without this, organisations can become financially and operationally vulnerable and this can make the operation of facilities and the delivery of quality services difficult to sustain.
- Sport can play a role in addressing wider social issues. Many clubs seeking to move to a beyond sport model can make the assumption that this happens automatically as a result of being involved in sport, or lack the skills and capacity to be able to effectively adopt this model.
- Awareness of sport for change approaches and how these differ from sports development is not fully understood.
- Volunteers are a key asset within the sporting sector but organisations often lack the time, knowledge and resources to support their involvement and development.
- Many community sports organisations lack the awareness or capacity to develop a social enterprise model of operation or may be operating as a social enterprise “accidentally”.
- Many community sports organisations work in relative isolation from the non-sporting third sector and statutory partners in their area. Partnerships tend to be with other sporting delivery agencies.
- There was a clear desire from applicants to the fund for more support to be made available around organisational development, project management, partnership working and community engagement.
- One of the challenges for investors within the sporting sector is to better understand the impact that investment into facilities has on increasing participation in sport, increasing sustainability of recipient organisations and delivering wider social outcomes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Funders and third sector support agencies should recognise the need for resources to be made available to support the core and on-going operational costs of organisations beyond capital and sports development.
- Organisations working to support community sports organisations should recognise that training and support needs go beyond sporting delivery and should extend this to look at wider governance and infrastructure support (including support to volunteering).
- There is some evidence of sports organisations working up capital plans in isolation. An approach to capital development which supports and encourages clubs, governing bodies, local authorities and other interested parties to adopt a joined up approach (whether thematic or geographic) is recommended.
- Funders should consider the governance and management capacity of organisations seeking to take on capital development to ensure that they have the requisite skills and capacity to operate it sustainably once it is built.
- Work should be done to raise awareness of the specific needs of the community sport sector with third sector support agencies and sport specific support agencies.
- Additional work is required to raise the profile of Sport for Change as an approach.
- Funders and partners should work with sports organisations to identify how they can produce better evidence about the impact they are making which goes beyond recording participant numbers.