Writing an Action Plan

Putting action plans together to develop your club does not need to be a complicated task. In fact, the simpler the better. Complicated plans can be difficult to follow and therefore hard to achieve.

A well thought out plan will demonstrate to your members and external organisations that you know what you want to achieve.

It doesn't matter whether it is a one-pager or a short novel, a plan will quickly show that you know what you want to do, where you want to go and how you will get there, when you want to do it by and why you need it.

Why plan?

Good plans are realistic and achievable and should be directly relevant to the needs of your club. Committing plans to paper can be helpful as it serves as a reminder of what your club hopes to achieve and can help to focus activity. Also, development plans are now required by many local and national funding bodies to support applications for capital or revenue grants.

A planned and coordinated approach ensures:

- Everyone knows their starting point, where they are going and how they are going to reach their goal. It brings together all the people who have an interest and role to play in achieving the goal
- The best use of resources. It avoids the duplication of effort and helps to bridge gaps in the pathway so that one step dovetails neatly into the next.

A plan does not have to be long and complicated. It should consider the following questions:

- What aspect of your Club, or your Club's work, do you need/want to develop?
- How are you going to do it?
- Who is going to do it?
- When is it going to be done?
- What will it cost?
- Can you afford it?

Some common principles exist that will help you produce a realistic, achievable and meaningful plan:

- Know your starting point.
- Have a clear, agreed vision of your future or final destination.
- Break the vision down into specific aims or goals.
- Set a challenging but achievable timescale.
- Keep the plan simple.
- Involve the right people and encourage everyone to own the plan.

- Use the plan as a living management tool to guide its implementation.
- Check progress to ensure you are on course, but do not be afraid to change the plan as it comes to life – some things may happen more quickly than you had originally planned.
- Use your experience to influence the development of the next plan.

Consider the following:

Think of a plan in which you have been involved, not necessarily in sports development but maybe at school or at work. Was the plan's implementation successful?

If **yes**, what helped it to be successful? Which of the principles contributed to the plan's success?

If **no**, what factors contributed to its failure? Which principles might have helped to make it a greater success?

Planning ahead is the easiest way to help any club develop. A development plan provides a framework that will require the cooperation of all those within the club. A simple development plan can also open up potential funding opportunities that will allow you to ensure you have the finances to put the plan into action.

Your members should contribute to the plan, have access to it and ultimately feel responsible for it.

The planning process

The planning process can be broken down into six stages:

Step one: Whose plan is it?
Who are the people you wish to involve?

Step two: What is the starting point?
Gathering information.

Step three: Where are you going?
Agreeing a shared vision of the future.

Step four: How are you going to get there?
Setting aims and objectives.

Step five: Turning objectives into action
Producing actions plans for each objective.

Step six: How are you getting on?
Using the plan to monitor progress.

Example action plan:

Objective	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale	Cost
To attract new members to the club	Run 6 Beginners courses per year at the club's ground	Fred – membership secretary, Jane & Stuart - coaches	Every 2 months	Nil cost to the club
To provide better facilities for members and guests	Redecorate club house – paint walls, clean floor	Ted – volunteer – will organise club day to clean clubhouse	By end of October	£50 – paint £10 – cleaning products

What next?

Consider sending electronic copies to all relevant local organisations for example your County, local SDO and CSP/Sports Council. Keep it up to date and relevant in case you need to make a funding application or come across a potential sponsors.

You may also want to let your County Development Coordinator have a copy so that they can build up a picture of what needs the clubs in each county have.

Once completed **on***target* clubs are asked to complete the '**on***target* Club Resources Questionnaire' to highlight the needs of clubs to achieve the objectives in their action plan.

For more information on action planning visit:

www.runningsports.org

www.helpforclubs.org.uk

www.sportwales.org.uk/coaches--clubs/clubs--teams/starting-a-club.aspx