

# Planning

*'Planning allowed us to put down in writing all the ideas we had for the club in the future and start the process of working towards achieving them'*

Dundee Wanderers Hockey Club

A well-known saying within the sports world is:

*'If you fail to prepare, then prepare to fail'.*

The same should apply to all those who work within sports clubs.

Planning is a critical aspect in the long-term sustainability of every sports club in Scotland. This insert of **clubwise** aims to identify what the long-term benefits of planning are, what the planning process involves and what should be included in your development plan.

By writing a Development Plan your club can focus their work on developing key areas that will assist with the clubs long-term sustainability.

## Why plan?

There are a number reasons why good planning is essential to sports clubs. Most importantly it will help the long-term sustainability of the club by:

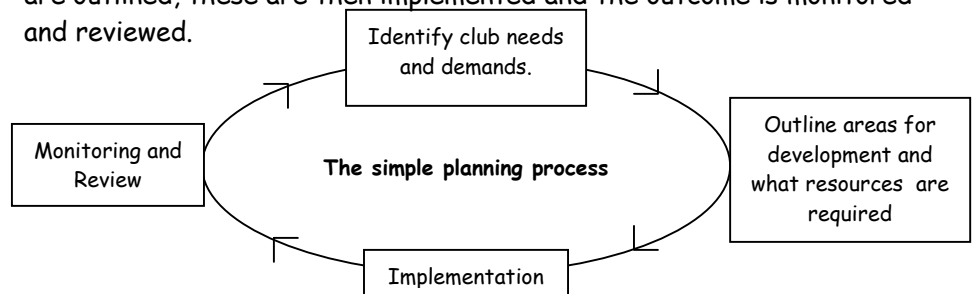
- More efficient and effective use of club resources;
- Prioritising club aims and aspirations;
- Recognising the current status and the history of the club;
- Assisting with building team spirit;
- Planning can lead to financial assistance e.g. Local Authority Grant Aid;
- Showing a professional approach;
- Showing commitment to the local community;
- Allowing change to be carried out effectively.

## What is planning?

In the most simplistic terms, planning means to put down in writing, usually in the form of a development plan, a well thought out course of action of a clubs intention for the future.

## The Planning Process

The simple planning process is based on a four-stage cycle whereby the needs and demands of the club are identified, the areas for development and resources required to meet these needs and demands are outlined, these are then implemented and the outcome is monitored and reviewed.



## Who should be involved in planning?

The effective management of any planning process is vital, and will take time and careful consideration. The involvement of key people within the club structure is essential. These persons will be asked to take on a lead role in the implementation of the plans. It is suggested that a small working group is formed to take the process forward.

However, the whole club should be involved in some stage of the planning process. It may be a good idea to start the planning process with a club planning day, whereby all members are invited to attend a session to brainstorm and input ideas. Remember the more involvement club members have at the start of the process, the more ownership they will take when trying to implement the plans.

## Hot Tip:

A club planning day is a great idea. It gets the whole club together to decide on its future. Your local sports development officer will have information on how to organise a club planning day.

# Planning

## Identifying club needs and demands

Before the club can start the planning process the following questions need to be answered:

- 1) **Where is the club now?**
- 2) **Where does the club want to go?**

There are various methods that can be used to find out the answers to the above.

### Where is the club now?

Two of the most popular ways to identify this is by a SWOT analysis or by answering a questionnaire.

#### SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a process that will enable the club to identify it's

#### STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES THREATS

It is a fairly simple process that can be completed by brainstorming and idea generating. This may be a tool that is used at an organised club planning day so as to get the input of all club members. You should use your SWOT Analysis as a model of everything that you would like, balanced by those influences that may affect them.

#### Filling out the Analysis:

##### Strengths and Weaknesses

These are the internal aspects of your club. Have a discussion about areas your club is strong

at and areas that require some help. Internal aspects include areas such as staffing and structure.

#### Opportunities and Threats

External aspects, which affect how you are able to develop in future, should be considered here. These are things that you do not have any particular control over. Things such as facilities, athlete supply etc.

For example you may identify an opportunity providing better access for your top group of athletes. However, the threat may be that the local authority is unable to provide this.

#### REMEMBER - EVERY WEAKNESS OR THREAT SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN OPPORTUNITY!

You may find it useful to use a separate SWOT Analysis sheet for the different areas of your club.

#### Example of a club SWOT

##### Analysis:

###### Strengths

Wide Membership

Well Qualified Coaches

Dedicated Volunteers

###### Opportunities

Establish better Local Authority Links

Coach and Volunteer Recruitment Drive

###### Weaknesses

Fundraising

PR and Marketing

Not enough Helpers

###### Threats

Local Authority Cutbacks

#### Questionnaire

A simple questionnaire can be drawn up to help you answer the key question. 'Where are you now'? The questions can be carried out under key headings such as Coach Education, Equipment and resources, Facilities, officials, Recruitment, Community Links, Competition, Finance and Youth Development.

#### Where does the club want to go?

Once you have identified where the club is, it will become clear on what areas the club is weakest on and therefore, where improvements need to be made.

From this imagine that money is no option and draw up a wish list. This will become the basis of your development plan.

A brainstorming session is a great way to identify new ideas and future plans. Again this could be carried out at a club planning day that will involve a wider group of members.

These 'wishes' will now have to be prioritised into a) those that can be carried out immediately with very little or no cost (short term plans) and b) those which may require funding and therefore will take slightly longer to achieve (long term plans).

#### Hot Tip:

Don't give up on ideas that at first glance look impossible. Include them in the plan and be aware of any changes in circumstances that could help achieve this goal in the future.

# Planning

## Outlining Areas of Future Development and Resources

Once the club has identified its 'wishes', the club needs to identify how these needs and demands will be achieved. In other words:

### How does the club get there?

A club development plan is basically an outline of what the club wants to achieve over an identified period of time, and with what resources. Your prioritised 'wish' list that was compiled in the last part of the process will form the basis of the club's development plan. Try to set it out in a logical order. Specific headings may help, such as the ones you used in your SWOT Analysis or club questionnaire. Your Development Plan will be a long-term document, between 3 - 5 years.

A development plan allows clubs to identify areas within the club that need to be strengthened, and provides forward direction in these areas. It will enable the club to work towards the same, identified goals rather than members working towards varied, random goals.

Drawing up a plan does not need to be a lengthy or complicated process. You should involve as many people as possible so that all views are taken into consideration and also so that the workload is manageable and spread evenly and fairly. To get you started, your local sports development officer will have a template you could use as the basis for your club's plan.

### Why should you draw up a Club Development Plan?

It is very important that all clubs, no matter how large or small, have a development plan in place.

When applying for any type of funding, whether from your Local Authority or the Lottery, a development plan will enhance your application and it will also show that the club is organised and that any funding received will be part of a long term, sustainable plan.

## Implementation

To ensure that your plan is implemented successfully, an **Action Plan** can be drawn up. An action plan will identify the tasks that need to be achieved in order to meet what has been identified within the club's development plan. In particular it identifies the following:  
**What is the task that needs to be undertaken?**

**When must the task be completed?**

**Who is responsible for carrying out the Task?**

**What resources are needed to carry out the task?**

**What has been achieved (Outcome)?** i.e. Club is now constituted, the Club now has a structured pathway, The Club now has 4 extra officials etc.

## Monitoring and Review

Now that you have your Development Plan it is important that there is ongoing monitoring and reviewing carried out to ensure that targets are being met.

The Club Committee should review the plan on a regular basis, how often this is carried out is up to the Committee members.

It is important that areas of work are fairly specific to allow for easy monitoring.

E.g. Use numbers instead of general terms. You should not worry if some tasks don't get completed within the timescale identified.

Sometimes things will turn up that will slow a process down, or a task may take longer than originally thought.

A development plan should be ongoing with the workload decreasing as your club becomes more organised and as it develops.

### Hot Tip:

Set shorter targets to reach your ultimate goal and keep things simple! This will mean clearer directions and the satisfaction of seeing a situation develop or improve.