



CABINET – 21ST MAY 2025

SUBJECT: ACTIVE GWENT REGIONAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the Council's Sport Caerphilly team to enter into a formal partnership in the Gwent region with Sport Wales and the other four Gwent Local Authorities. Newport City Council are to act as the host authority for the new Gwent Sports Partnership.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Sport Wales provide funding for Sports Development to all Local Authority areas in Wales. Caerphilly currently receive partner investment funding directly from Sport Wales. The funding for 2024-2025 was £583,888 to deliver Sports Development, Free Swim and 60+ Active Leisure activities.
- 2.2 There is a national directive from Sport Wales to move towards a regional model of sports governance and delivery, with the aim of better supporting the national 'Vision for Sport' in Wales. Regional partnerships have been developed in response across Wales and Gwent is the final area to establish its regional vehicle. The preferred approach in the Gwent region is to develop a hosted model to progress the development of a Sports Partnership in the Gwent region. It is proposed that Newport City Council are the host authority who will be required to staff the partnership, provide secretariat functions and accounting services in relation to financial resources held for distribution, along with other key tasks.
- 2.3 While funding will be allocated through the host authority, Newport City Council, Sport Caerphilly staff will remain employed and managed by Caerphilly Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet approves:

3.1.1 The Council's Sport Caerphilly team entering into a formal partnership (the Gwent Sports Partnership) in the Gwent region with Sport Wales and the other four Gwent Local Authorities

3.1.2 That Newport City Council act as the host authority for the new Gwent Sports Partnership for the first five years of the partnership.

3.1.3 That Newport City Council's Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, Head of Finance, Head of Law and Standards have delegated authority to action the creation of the sports partnership preparing the required legal agreements, funding and finance management, and operational tasks relating to the host role.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To enable Caerphilly Council to be part of the new Gwent Sports Partnership and continue to participate in Sport Wales's sports development funding scheme.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Sport Wales provide funding for Sports Development to all Local Authority areas in Wales. There is a national directive from Sport Wales to move towards a regional model of sports governance and delivery, with the aim of better supporting the national Vision for Sport in Wales.

5.2 The ultimate function of the sport partnership will be to provide strategic focus and oversight to sports development in their region, including the development of a regional vision and strategic plan as well as the administration of all pooled Sport Wales funding currently directed to individual local authorities and partners. The future direction of funds will align with the vision, priorities and objectives of the regional partnership. Whilst this could result in a divergence from local priorities this would be mitigated by active engagement in partnership governance. In a key difference to current arrangements, Sport Wales require that the new strategic entity includes representation from the wide array of stakeholders alongside the local authority members, to ensure alignment with other national priorities and ensure the strategic board has the required skillsets, diversity and competencies to deliver a coherent and equitable strategy for the region.

5.3 These partnerships operate differentiated models based on regional requirements, with North Wales choosing a 'hosted' model whilst other areas have implemented new company entities. The optimum format of the Gwent Sport Partnership has been a focus for discussion across Local Authorities,

Leisure Trusts and other partners. The preferred approach is to develop a hosted model to progress the development of a Sports Partnership in the Gwent region. The host authority will be required to staff the partnership, provide secretariat functions and accounting services in relation to financial resources held for distribution, along with other key tasks.

- 5.4 The direct costs known to Newport are to be confirmed, however Sport Wales will provide an administrative fee to cover the full costs to the host authority, and the indicative figure at present is £220,000 per annum. Sport Wales undertake that the cost of hosting the partnership is neutral to the authority performing this function.
- 5.5 As noted above, the full quantum of the Sport Wales funding awarded across Gwent will be passported through Newport as the host authority from 2025/26. An estimated £2,269,565 will be dispersed by Newport City Council through 2025/2026.
- 5.6 Like any move to a regional partnership arrangement there is a risk that this could lead to a divergence from local priorities. While funding will be allocated through the host Authority, Newport City Council, Sport Caerphilly staff will remain employed and managed by Caerphilly Council.

Conclusion

- 5.7 Cabinet are asked to approve Caerphilly Council entering into a formal sports partnership in the Gwent region, with Sport Wales and the other four Gwent Local Authorities.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The above costs are based on what has been provided by Newport Council through the exercise that they are currently undertaking with Sport Wales and their consultants.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 No Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken as this is how Sport Wales are funding Sports Development going forward.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Caerphilly currently receive partner investment funding directly from Sport Wales. The funding for 2024-2025 was £583,888 grant funding to deliver Sports Development, Free Swim and 60+ Active Leisure activities. This funding will come through the host, Newport City Council, going forward in line with funding proposal outlined in 8.2 and 8.3.

- 8.2 Once established, the host organisation structure will act as receiver for the full quantum of regional funding for the Gwent area. For the transition period (years 1-3), it is proposed that aggregated regional funding will be maintained to avoid disruption of partnership delivery and disbenefit to service users across Gwent. From year 4, it is expected that the Active Gwent Partnership will have matured fully as a structure and will receive funding based on the regional allocation mechanisms being derived by Sport Wales.
- 8.3 Throughout the initial five-year period, the partnership hosted by Newport City Council will therefore be passing Sport Wales funding to approved groups for agreed purposes, acting as the legal entity and will be responsible for keeping records, paying invoices and the distribution of funds in accordance with the instructions of the Active Gwent Board. Clearly separated accounting processes will be required.
- 8.4 The host organisation may finally also be required to provide hybrid working/office space for Active Gwent staff with appropriate costs agreed by the Board and will form part of the host agreement. Newport City Council has existing office space available at Newport Civic Centre.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications at present.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Author: Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager

Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Richard Edmunds, Chief Executive
Robert Hartshorn, Director of Environment and Regulatory Services
Jeff Reynolds, Interim Director of Environment and Regulatory Services
Natalie Thomas, Sport Caerphilly Team Leader

Robert Tranter, Director of Legal, Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Director of People Services
Stephen Harris, Director of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Leanne Sykes, Deputy Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer