



Creating an  **active**alliance

# Conference Report

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# Background

The 'Strategy for Sport in Essex' portrays a vision for the county - to take advantage of revolutionary changes within the structure of sport to ensure short term impact, whilst pointing the way forward for long term development.

It also identifies that the delivery of sport and physical activity needs to be properly coordinated through an effective partnership framework, if it is to impact on the lives of its entire people.

And it is the first of six action plans [which aim to deliver on a range of shared outcomes] within The Strategy for Sport in Essex; 'Identifying, brokering and strengthening strategic links', that sets the marker for enabling

effective partnership working through the creation of a family of 'Community Sports Networks'.

The 'Creating an **active**alliance' Conference provided an opportunity for local stakeholders to come together for the first time as representatives of the Essex Community Sports Network family, to positively influence the direction of the county partnership framework.

This 'Creating an **active**alliance' Report provides a record of delegate feedback and identified outcomes that will steer the short term impact and long term development of the partnership framework in Essex.

# Creating an activealliance

## → “Building a winning future together in Essex”

**Date:** Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007

**Venue:** The Brentwood Centre,  
Doddinghurst Road, CM15 9NN

sportsex invites you to attend the very first **activealliance** Conference as a representative of one of fourteen Community Sport Network localities in Essex.

The Conference will bring together local stakeholders for sport and physical activity across the county, providing a framework for supporting and sustaining the achievements of the Essex CSN family.

This is an opportunity for you to positively influence the partnership and to steer the direction of the **activealliance** through a series of themed feedback workshops.

Please complete the attached registration form confirming your place and return via email to the address provided by **22<sup>nd</sup> June**. All bookings will receive confirmation.

### Conference Timetable

- 09.30 **Arrival and Registration**
- 10.00 **Intro and Conference Format**
- 10.15 **Sport England Address**
- 10.30 **sportsex Address**
- 10.45 **Morning Workshops**
- Improving and expanding the sport and physical activity infrastructure
  - Increasing opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity
  - Improving the methods and effectiveness of marketing and communications
- 12.15 **Lunch**
- 13.15 **Afternoon Workshops**
- Improving and increasing the workforce capacity
  - Providing an effective method of impact measurement
  - Influencing the Regional Sports Strategy
- 14.45 **Creating an activealliance; Building a winning future together in Essex**
- 15.45 **Conclusion and Close**

Name:

Organisation:

E-mail:

Job Title:

Office Phone:

Do you have any special accessibility or dietary requirements?

Mobile Phone:

CSN Representation:

For bookings and further information please email [anne.furse@sportsex.org.uk](mailto:anne.furse@sportsex.org.uk) or call 01245

# Delegate attendance

Adam	Rigarlsford	Sport England
Adrian	Matthews	Castle Point BC
Angela	Littlewood	sportessex
Anne	Furse	sportessex
Alistair	McRichie	Brentwood Leisure Trust
Alistair	Russell	sportessx
Antony	Bensley	Chelmsford BC
Aruna	Sharma	Womens Sports Foundation and Menter
Becky	Pheasey	Fitter Futures
Brendan	Walshe	Nacro Braintree Community Sports Project
Chris	Taylor	Colchester Blackwater SSP
Chris	Purvis	Harlow BC
Chris	Holmes	Tendring DC
Chris	French	North East Essex PCT
Chris	Atkins	Disability Essex
Cllr	Cox	Southend BC
Craig	Ringer	British Judo
Dave	Letch	Essex County Cricket
David	Archer	Harlow Education Consortium
Dawn	Catley	Canvey Schools Partnership
Diane	Boyd	NACRO
Glen	Head	Healthy Living/Mid Essex PCT
Gregory	Cooper	sportessex
Hayley	Thorn	West Essex PCT
Helen	Dear	West Essex PCT
Howard	Nicholls	Colne School Sports Partnership
Ingrid	Carter	sportessex
James	Carstairs	Epping Forest DC
		Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary
Jo	Mcpherson	Service
John	Mason	Essex Inclusive Sports Enterprise
Josh	Leeke	Maldon DC
Karen	Barden	sportessex
Karen	French	British Judo
Kathryn	Berry	sportessex
Kate	Williams	sportessex
Kelly	Stevens	Thurrock SSP
Kevin	Read	Rochford DC
Mark	Aldous	Braintree DC
Martin	Beaver	Colchester BC
Matt	Harwood-White	Southend on Sea BC
Neil	Frost	South East Essex PCT
Nick	Perchard	Essex FA
Paul	Brace	Basildon BC
Paul	Tufnell	Essex County Council
Paul	Murphy	Maldon and District CVS
Perry	Williams	Harlow Youth Council
Peter	Tanner	Colchester and Tendring Athletics Club

Rachel	Marek	sportessex
Ryan	Armes	British Blind Sport
Sharan	Allsopp	Canvey Schools Partnership
Steve	Goodsell	Southend United Community Sports Trust
Stuart	Rutland	Thurrock BC
Stuart	Kirk	Disability Essex
Tracey	Davies	Basildon BC
Trevor	Clements	Southend on Sea Sports Council

# Workshop 1 → Improving and expanding the sport and physical activity infrastructure

Karen Barden



This workshop illustrated the positive impact of clubs within the sport and physical activity infrastructure, investigated the role of clubs within local CSN's and asked how these networks could work together to maximise the benefit of clubs.

<b>Task One</b>
What do clubs bring to the sport and physical activity infrastructure in Essex?

- Increase participation through membership
- Community spirit
- Social inclusion/access for all
- Community wellbeing contributions – health improvement/crime reduction
- A safe environment - especially for children and vulnerable adults
- Childhood to adult participation links
- Employment, volunteering and skills opportunities
- Development and performance pathways
- Quality coaching
- Competition
- Facilities and equipment
- Continuity and motivation
- Partnerships
- Opportunity

Feedback highlighted the benefits that the club environment brings to the sports infrastructure. Delegates felt that clubs had an invaluable and often irreplaceable role within the community.

## Task Two

How can CSN's work effectively with sports clubs?

- CSNs should be aware of the clubs in their area and 'reach out' to them
- Club representation on the CSN
- Sports clubs and their members could be part of the consultation process
- CSNs to target clubs via their launch
- Sports clubs need to be committed to the delivery of the action plans
- Club outreach – opportunity to establish links to schools, workplaces
- Networking - effective communication
- Network clubs so those who are accredited can mentor those who are not
- Share knowledge/awareness/resources/coaching/facility/expertise
- Clubs meeting CSN targets
- Professional clubs with active organisation could participate in 'expansion' projects. Amateur clubs could provide links to facilities to assist expansion.
- Organised events
- Acquiring funding/signpost funding opportunities
- CSNs could carry out club mapping and be responsive to local needs

Ideas for partnership working with clubs focused particularly on the CSN offer and highlighted the need for communication of ideas and resources. It was agreed that clubs should be represented within CSNs, with the majority feeling that clubs are best placed to support activity delivery. Many felt that it may be an idea to work with accredited clubs only, due to their organisational structure.

## Task Three

How can CSN's work together to maximise club benefits?

- By sharing best practice e.g. through the website
- Where clubs cross boundaries, more than one CSN could benefit from their resource
- Shared marketing and promotion
- Break down barriers to assist the creation of links between clubs
- Creating an inclusive culture
- The CSNs need support from the alliance to support club accreditation
- CSNs could link together; skills are transferable from one CSN to another

Outcomes identified from the workshop;

- Support club development through the sharing of knowledge and resource across geographical boundaries.
- Identify and share best practice across the network – including the provision of a case-study area on sportsex.com.

# Workshop 2 → Increasing opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity

Kathryn Berry



Two group discussions were initiated within this workshop, which investigated the value of alternative activity opportunities and how these might be delivered independently and with the support of the **activealliance**.

## Task One

How will your CSN make the most impact in your local area?

- Bigger projects are more suitable - where facilities and capacity permit
- Increasing publicity by linking communications, e.g. Walk For Life
- 'Piggy-back' national campaigns
- Link into major events
- Activity days open to public - e.g. Active Harlow launch encouraged public to try different physical activities, including disability sports
- Focus on existing clubs or activities
- Small scale projects delivered by partners
- Each CSN has its own vision, making it more difficult to work in collaboration with other partners
- Link with neighbours to maximise geographic and culture links
- Potential for cross boundary projects
- A mix of large and small projects would be the best - based on locality need
- Establish priorities through local consultation
- Work out where we are now, what is important and how we reach the desired outcome - focus on how to reach the 'hard to reach' people/areas
- Launch event to engage key partners
- Share resource and best practice across CSN areas
- Get Back Into projects have proved successful

Open discussion highlighted the potential of working through a number of CSN delivery methods to increase participation opportunities – but also indicated that mass participation activity would most likely make the biggest impact. The common consensus was that sharing effective practice with partners would be a positive means of moving the alliance forward.

## Task Two

1. What mass participation events already take place in the county?
2. What gaps exist in this service?
3. How should mass participation events be delivered?
4. How could these events be coordinated through the alliance?

### Existing mass participation events

- Little Haven's Bike Ride
- Walk and Ride at Ruskin University
- Ride the Rodings
- Halstead Marathon and Fun Run
- Race for Business
- Maldon Mud Race
- Beach Olympics
- Kite Surfing
- Sailing events
- Swimming events – e.g. swimathons
- District Sports from around the County
- Zone Hockey competitions
- Castle Point show
- Summer activity programmes for children and young people
- Harlow Games – Olympics type event

### Events for which need is anticipated

- Family events to encourage 'fun' participation
- Multi-sports
- Volunteering
- Dry Ski Slope Competition
- Cross country running
- Tennis
- Golf

### How mass participation events should be delivered?

- Joint county wide events – linking through the CSN's
- More facilities for free sports
- More sport for hard to reach groups
- Support to local initiatives appropriate for locality
- Targeted challenges of need

### How should these events be coordinated?

- **active**alliance to assist
- Best practice shared across Essex
- sportessex.com
- County promotion of events e.g. local walking event or triathlon
- Advertised under one umbrella
- Delivery should be area specific
- Co-ordinated through CSN's - to signpost and promote

Feedback supported the coordination of an events calendar. This joint promotion of events has the potential to be a very effective tool in helping increase participation and effectiveness of CSN's. **sportessex** coordinated events were welcomed as an efficient means of linking opportunities through the **active**alliance.

### Outcomes identified from the workshop;

- Enable effective communication of local activity through the development and support of the events section on sportessex.com.
- Identify and affect exit routes for each CSN event.

# Workshop 3 → Improving the methods and effectiveness of marketing and communications



This workshop provided an opportunity to explore the key principles and effectiveness of marketing and communication in Essex through a series of group and open floor discussions.

## Task One

How effective are we at promoting sport in Essex?

Delegates discussed the potential impact of effective sports marketing communications and that it was currently being addressed in an ad-hoc way. It was agreed that better promotion of opportunities which already exist in local areas would increase participation in sport.

## Task Two

How can we be more effective at marketing communications?

The key principles behind effective marketing communications were agreed as;

- understand the participant (what appeals to them)
- develop a product which meets the participants need
- develop a clear and engaging product message
- reach out to the participant through a range of communication channels e.g. newspapers, radio or TV.

The workshop was split into three groups, each with their own 'potential participant' profile. The groups were given the task of developing a product/service and key messages that would engage their own participant.

Feedback was creative and emphasised the need to engage the audience with a targeted (rather than 'one size fits all') approach.

### Task Three

How can CSN's best work together to promote sporting opportunities across Essex?

Delegates agreed that we could be more effective at marketing communications through a partnership approach because;

- Unity would have more influence and leverage
- A unified message is a stronger message
- An alliance will provide a platform for sharing good practice

A number of delegates voiced a preference for sportessex to lead on this body of work on behalf of the **activealliance**.

#### Outcomes identified from the workshop;

- Develop a variety of marketing platforms for partners to share.
- Provide a 'one-stop-shop' new media resource for sports professionals and the community.
- Establish a regular grassroots newspaper sports supplement.



## Workshop 4 → Improving and increasing the workforce capacity Rachel Marek

This workshop aimed to raise awareness of the impact of Workforce Development within the sport and physical activity sector while investigating the support mechanisms that exist or have the potential to positively affect this.

### Task One

What mechanisms are currently in place in your areas to support the Workforce?

- Training / coach education
- SSP links/Step into Sport
- NACRO volunteer joint policy
- sportscoach UK
- Sports Leaders in schools
- School Sports Network
- NGB
- VCs – finding volunteer placements
- Leadership Awards
- CPD
- Local coaching courses
- Funding
- FE/HE
- First aid
- Child protection
- Bespoke courses (I.T./club specific?)
- Paid workforce supporting voluntary workforce
- Development officers – NGB'S, SCUUK, sportessex, CUS)

### Task Two

What barriers exist that hinder Workforce Development in Essex?

- Location
- Bureaucracy
- Funding
- Number of volunteers

- Mentoring
- Time
- Lack of skills
- Availability of training
- Big commuter location – time/cost
- Networking between clubs
- Awareness/accessing opportunities
- Information
- Duty of care
- Willingness to give up free time
- Retention of staff
- Customer service

<b>Task Three</b>
How could the <b>activealliance</b> support Workforce Development?

- Funding to support WfD
- Pool resources and run county training programmes
- Identify cross sector training needs
- Training needs for CSN members
- Communication and signposting
- Helping disabled
- Develop workshops for training
- Subsidies for all clubs
- Provide support network
- Mentoring and networking between coaches

Group discussion identified mentoring and networking as potential benefits and priority areas - while time, funding, availability and location were perceived as the most significant barriers to workforce development.

Delegates voiced a preference for sportsex to lead on this body of work on behalf of the **activealliance**.

**Outcomes identified from this workshop;**

- Support Workforce Development within CSN action plans to support a long-term plan to address the barriers identified.

## Workshop 5 → Providing an effective method of impact measurement Kate Williams



This workshop identified monitoring and evaluation information required from activity delivery and the methods by which this could be achieved. A practical task addressed the relevance and meaningfulness of monitoring activity participation and further discussion identified the following support mechanisms;

- Sharing templates and good practice with other CSNs
- Share information - figures to measure against
- Website resource made available
- Templates to include opportunity to record SWOT of activity delivered

Delegates agreed that they would be happy to share monitoring information through the **activealliance**. Suggestions for this included email, internet forums and showcasing. It was agreed that adopting standardised templates would be beneficial to partners. It was also suggested that sharing learned outcomes would be valuable.

### Outcomes identified from workshop;

- Share all monitoring templates and evaluation results across the network.

## Workshop 6 → Influencing the regional plan for community sport Angela Littlewood



A National Plan and 9 Regional Plans will be developed by April 2008. They will be focused on the core business of the delivery system, which is to sustain and increase adult (16+) participation in community sport.

20.5% of the East Region population report that they participate in sport and/or active recreation on 3 occasions per week (for at least 30 minutes). Zero participation in the East, (people reporting that they have participated in no activity in the past 28 days) is slightly lower (50%) than the national figure (50.6%).

The challenge that has been set for the East of England by the existing PSA is to increase adult participation in community sport by 1% per annum to 33,948 per year and 203,688 people by 2012. Based on the census 2001, this sets Essex the annual challenge of 10,164 (60,987 by 2012)

### Task One

What has worked to date in sustaining and increasing adult participation in community sport and what evidence exists to support this?

- Dancing on Ice/Strictly Come Dancing - power of media has had a huge effect on the public in increasing their participation in ice skating and dance.
- Non-facility dependent activities e.g. Fit Steps Walk and Epping Forest Life-Walks

- These have been running in Epping Forest DC for 4/5 years and have received the 3 Hearts Award.
- Participant numbers have been sustained - no age stipulation
- Base has remained the same
- Get Back Into Sport programmes
- NACRO case studies (Braintree)
  - Midnight football sessions are run to encourage young people to participate in sport, get them off the streets and involved in team activities
  - Walking for Wellbeing – participants become leaders/guides
  - Community Street Leagues
- Over 40's womens sport and social groups developed
- Parents of children becoming involved in volunteering, e.g. cricket
- Active for Life
  - Facility based
  - Multi-activities
  - Over 50 age range
  - 50/100 people
  - Social function
  - Pilot for rural community
- Nifty 50's
  - Expanding to seated exercise in sheltered housing
  - Social function
  - Multi-activity
- Health Walks – linking to Primary Care Trusts to target groups
- Over 50's leisure centre
- Activities for children with special needs
- "Back To" programme – getting back into sport and activities with exit routes to clubs
- Multi Sports programmes – social based
- Personal challenges
- Under 21's football leagues
- A key point is flexibility and fitting in with peoples lives.

## Task Two

Looking to the future, what should the delivery system do to sustain and increase adult participation in community sport – and what are the priorities within this?

- Recruiting, selecting and training volunteers and linking these into clubs
- Promotion – volunteers into clubs
- Removing barriers
- Cost, sustainable, appropriate
- Providing needed activities, depending on e.g. demographics
- Marketing – appropriate campaigns to target groups
- Ensuring a network between partners and the delivery system
- Extreme sports – target certain groups
- Aim to attract veterans
- Work with clubs in developing coaches with the skills to work with 16+ age range.
- The hope for clubs to put on events targeted at various age ranges
- Signpost groups to appropriate clubs
- Companies offering staff time off work to volunteer during work hours
- Fit For Business initiative
- Provide attractive, fun and accessible activities for families
- Provide non-facility based activities
- Provide facilities which can be participated in alone
- Travel cards/Leisure cards
- Ensure schools develop programmes to integrate PE and sport
- Promote opportunities that are already available
- Link sports, e.g. keep people involved upon retirement, Rugby – Golf, football – bowls etc.



## Closing Workshop → Building a winning future together in Essex Gregory Cooper

This concluding workshop provided an opportunity for reflection of the outcomes identified within the themed workshops, focusing on the core purpose of the Conference – positively influencing the development of a county partnership framework.

### Task One

What do you consider to be the most important factor in achieving an effective alliance?

- Good networking
- Good communication
- Creating a motivated partnership - willingness to work together
- A common, clear and defined purpose
- Clear objectives
- Influence and leverage
- Sharing of good practice and knowledge
- No duplication
- New partnerships
- Funding
- Data collection - shared achievements
- Influencing county development

Feedback from question one highlighted the need for a common **activealliance** purpose and direction to be established, which would build trust and create a motivated partnership from the outset. Group discussion reinforced the value delegates placed in achieving a positive and active network, with particular emphasis on sharing knowledge and good practice at every level. It was also agreed that the **activealliance** should provide a mechanism to influence the strategic direction of Sport in Essex and regionally.

## Task Two

If the alliance had a vision statement, what would you like this to be?

- Creating a healthier Essex through active participation in sport
- United together to provide quality active opportunities for all
- A strong, effective and equitable alliance working in partnership to increase active participation across Essex
- Getting active together
- Partners in promoting participation
- Collaborative approach
- Increasing opportunity
- One goal
- Active
- United
- Inclusive
- Affordable
- Accessible
- Quality
- Enjoyable

A range of key words were offered for a vision statement, of which it was agreed that sport, physical activity and health were 'must haves'. Providing an equitable offer was also highlighted as a priority for all partners and that this message should be conveyed within the **active**alliance vision. Enjoy was perhaps conspicuous by its absence (only mentioned once), while united, together and partners were suggested as messages that might encapsulate the spirit of the alliance.

## Task Three

Prioritise four areas from the following list (or alternatives) that the **active**alliance should support and describe why?

- Equality and Diversity ✓
- School/community club links ✓
- London 2012 ✓
- Increase physical activity ✓✓✓✓
- Funding support ✓
- Club development ✓✓
- Workforce development ✓✓✓
- Marketing and communications ✓✓✓
- Facility development ✓✓
- Effective Impact Measurement ✓✓✓
- Sustainability ✓

The spread of votes for priority areas represented the diversity of representation at the Conference but also highlights the wide range of skills and support mechanisms that the sport and physical activity sector utilises. The most popular theme was 'increase physical activity' and although only chosen once, delegates re-enforced the message that equality and diversity will be integral to all CSN actions. Similarly Marketing and Communications was not chosen by all groups as it was felt that this is an important requisite within all areas of work.

## Task Four

How can the alliance support your chosen priorities (practically)?

- Influence and leverage
- Joint commissioning – strength in unity
- Sharing good practice
- Effective communication – finding gaps/excess resources
- Who is the active alliance – including NGB's?
- Looking at the bigger picture – CSN/Sport England

- Standardised templates for monitoring and evaluating
- Regular promotion/campaigns – marketing/promoting each others events
- Regular newsletter by email
- Signposting to activities – sportsex website
- Sharing resources, e.g. workforce
- Fill gaps in service
- Champion for each of the priorities
- Creating legacy/sustainability after 2012
- Advice on what funding streams are available
- Generic template production
- Regular information communication; newsletter/website?
- Creating champions

Three potential mechanisms emerged from this task concerning the supportive role of the **active**alliance in achieving shared success, which were; effective marketing and communication, sharing good practice and influencing and negotiating.

<b>Task Five</b>
What existing county networks could support/supplement CSN development?

- SDO forum
- NGB forum
- PDS forum
- ELBF – facility operational group
- Extended schools
- Community Clusters
- Building Schools for the Future
- Obesity alliance
- Essex CVS and Volunteer Centre networks
- Chief Executive Officers Association

It is clear from the number of stakeholder groups outlined – and others that were speculated – that the extent of the sport and physical activity network needs further mapping to clarify exactly what groups exist and the objectives that they support.

Delegates concluded that efficiency could be increased if as suspected, overlapping of objectives and resources was occurring. The value of CSN’s acting as a one-stop-shop for local sport and physical activity strategy and delivery was re-enforced.

It was proposed and agreed by delegates that an **active**alliance Chairs Group, would provide the best vehicle for developing and coordinating the shared objectives of CSN partners.

<b>Task Six</b>
What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the following CSN partnerships? 1. Neighbour (1 local CSN partner) 2. Cluster (3/4 local CSN partners) 3. County (14 county CSN partners) 4. Best match (nearest regional ONS partner)

- Meeting for the sake of meeting
- Lack of time
- Matching up regional e.g. rural/urban demographics
- Cost
- Use the strengths of an alliance as and when needed and not just for the sake of it

Delegates opinionated preferences for each offer and concluded that there is undoubtedly value in partnership working and that utilising the strength of each of these at the right time will be critical to a successful [and effective] **activealliance**.

**Outcomes identified from the workshop;**

- Conduct a sport and physical activity network mapping exercise with a view to aligning existing groups and/or objectives.
- Coordinate an **activealliance** Chairs Group meeting.

# Delegate evaluation

## Question One

Which of the workshops did you find to be the most valuable and why?

Improving and Expanding the Sport and Physical Activity Infrastructure ✓✓

- The most focused on title of workshop
- The most useful as a new CSN

Increasing Opportunities for Participation in Sport and Physical Activity ✓

- Because I learnt a lot about what other areas are doing and what has worked

Improving the Methods and Effectiveness of Marketing and Comms ✓✓✓✓✓

- It was beneficial to hear how we can better market events and projects

Improving and Increasing the Workforce Capacity ✓✓✓

- It demonstrated the need to provide quality support to encourage increased participation

Providing an Effective Method of Impact Measurement ✓✓✓

Influencing the Regional Strategy ✓✓

- Good opportunity to share ideas and good practice

Building a winning future together ✓✓✓

- Highlighted and emphasised the need for sharing information and best practice

All of the Workshops ✓✓✓

- Each workshop offered valuable information and direction. Most importantly they all offered valuable contacts for the future

## Question Two

What additional content could have enhanced the Conference?

- More opportunity to share work, plans and objectives between CSNs
- More NGB and Voluntary Sector input
- Handouts
- Workshops could have been longer and slightly more in depth

- Clarity in the role of the **activealliance** and CSP
- Enhancing project management
- Less sportessex input in agenda
- Equality training

### Question Three

How would you rate the Conference?

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Venue access	1	4	9	7
Venue facilities	1	6	10	7
Pre-event communication	1	4	15	4
Presentations	0	5	15	4
Conference Format	0	6	12	6

### Question Four

Do you have any additional feedback?

- I liked the way the workshops ran, the speed kept my interest
- Each of the workshops could have been slightly longer
- Each class needed to be separated, to avoid excess noise
- Thank you for all the work you put into the Conference
- The event was well organised and the format of the day was good, it was not dragged out and was informative
- Healthier lunch options – fruit!
- Seating in the bar area was very uncomfortable
- A well planned and delivered day
- I think you may have missed out on the disabled
- Need to link with the Race Equality Commission and BME groups

# Summary

The 'creating an **activealliance** Conference' opening address asked how we could support and sustain the achievements of the county sport and physical activity partnership and challenged delegates to positively influence outcomes to the questions; what can we achieve, can we help each other achieve and how can we ensure that our whole equals more than the sum of our parts?

## → What can we achieve?

Ensuring effective links between strategy and delivery [the people behind the people] was identified as critical to achieving the target of increasing active participation 1% year-on-year and building the capacity of the sport and physical activity infrastructure.

Coordinating mass-participation events, piggy-backing on national campaigns and hosting larger cost-free activities were acknowledged as mechanisms for achieving 'participation impact' for the partnership, not least in raising awareness of the sport and physical activity offer – but that participation sustainability must be built-in to all provision to ensure long term success .

Increasing and improving the voluntary workforce was identified as a crucial development area,

where traditional methods of recruitment and retention are struggling to meet a changing culture. Invigorating this offer is a challenge – but one that can better be supported holistically and in a coordinated way.

Ensuring equality of opportunity was a message reinforced throughout the Conference. Identified as a priority, this is perhaps one of several areas of development that is well supported at various levels and by many partnerships across the county – but where strategic development is perhaps still ad-hoc.

Delegates concluded that further mapping identifying relationships and strategic groups behind the sport and physical activity infrastructure would help identify strengths and weaknesses and support an improved equality offer.

## → Can we help each other achieve?

The message from the Conference is that the **activealliance** can - and should - act as a mechanism to support each CSN through the achievement of common goals and sharing of best practice.

## → How can we ensure that our whole equals more than the sum of our parts?

Each workshop reinforced the value that partners place in achieving a positive and active network in the county and identified that sharing knowledge, resource and skills will enable the achievement of shared outcomes.

Particular emphasis was placed on effective marketing and communication, sharing good practice and influencing and negotiating, with suggestions for achieving this including further development of online resources and coordinating a programme of 'learning' opportunities.

It was agreed that the **active**alliance should represent the shared objectives of each local network and influence the strategic direction of Sport in Essex. It was also agreed that CSN Chairs are best placed to represent each network at a strategic level and steer the direction of the **active**alliance.

sportessex agreed to coordinate an **active**alliance Chairs meeting in the first instance, to support the achievement of outcomes identified from the Conference;

- Support club development through the sharing of knowledge and resource across geographical boundaries.
- Identify and share best practice across the network – including the provision of a case-study area on [sportessex.com](http://sportessex.com).
- Enable effective communication of local activity through the development and support of the events section on [sportessex.com](http://sportessex.com).
- Identify and affect exit routes for each CSN event.
- Develop a variety of marketing platforms for partners to share.
- Provide a 'one-stop-shop' new media resource for sports professionals and the community.
- Establish a regular grassroots newspaper sports supplement.
- Support Workforce Development within CSN action plans to support a long-term plan to address the barriers identified.
- Share all monitoring templates and evaluation results across the network.
- Conduct a sport and physical activity network mapping exercise with a view to aligning existing groups and/or objectives.