

**NORTH WEST  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
SPORT BUSINESS CLUSTER**

**Strategy and Action Plan**

**Executive Summary**

**Strategic Leisure Limited**

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## The NW Region - Current Situation

- Recognition as a 'Sporting Region' – due mainly to Professional Sport
- A good baseline of sporting infrastructure but...
- Fragmented Industry
- Minimal cross-sector and cross-cluster linkages and intervention resulting in:
  - Missed Opportunities
  - Uncertain prospects for growth
  - No real competitive advantage
  - Little differentiation
  - Under-achievement of economic impact
  - Low external awareness of NW expertise and capacity
  - Poor communication and awareness

Strategic Vision for Development of the NW Sports Cluster

**'To build on the unique heritage and success of sport in the NW, to create sustained economic benefit to the Region'**

Implementation

## 'Post Strategy'

- **Building on the heritage and success of Sport in the NW region**
- **An integrated sports industry ...leading to:**
  - Enhanced facilities, services and opportunities
  - Securing new events and business opportunities
  - Economic 'added value' and sustainable growth
  - Competitive advantage in national and international markets
  - High profile image
  - Skill and business development
  - Communication and networking
- Virtual circle of continuous improvement
- 'Springboard' for further growth and development



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## Sport as an Economic Entity

Sport has long been a significant part of North West (NW) popular culture. Manchester United, Liverpool Football Club, the Grand National, rugby league, the Open Golf Championships at Birkdale, Lytham and Liverpool and Lancashire County Cricket Club are all synonymous with the region, and have an important influence on lifestyles and local identities. More recently the acclaimed hosting of the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester cemented the region as the home of sport. Contributing a value of £1.1bn in annual value-added in the region (*Source: Sport England, The Value of Sport 2003*), and with an international sporting image, sport has a unique significance in the NW.

People are passionate about sport but it is more than just a job or a hobby, it is a mainstay of the regional economy and a vibrant element of the wider 'lifestyle' economy. Sport has the power to make people and a region 'feel good'. It is a driving force in attracting people to live and work in a specific area, and it can support the physical regeneration of a community as in East Manchester, with the Commonwealth Games. High profile sport already drives business and economic activity at regional level, through, for example, construction, employment, marketing, the media and event management. Critically, such attributes reflect the key drivers of the Regional Economic Strategy. (*Source: RES 2003*)

There are many facets to NW sport as an economic entity;

- Professional Sports Clubs and Venues (e.g. Premier and Nationwide League Soccer Clubs, Rugby League, Cricket, Horse Racing, Motorsports, Speedway etc)
- Other Commercial Sports-based organisations (e.g. Outdoor Pursuits Centres)
- Private Member Sports Clubs (e.g. Royal Birkdale Golf Club, local sports clubs)
- Local Authority Sports Provision (e.g. Sports Centres, Swimming Pools Football Pitches etc)

In terms of the provision of opportunities to watch or participate in sport, the above list represents the tip of a large iceberg. It does however illustrate the fact that it is a multi-billion pound industry (*Source: £3bn Cambridge Econometrics 2003*). Underpinning these providers is a myriad of other organisations supplying goods and services as illustrated below. Collectively the providers and suppliers make up the Sport Business Cluster;

- Facility/venue development (Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Engineers, Building Contractors, Material Suppliers, Project Managers, Business Advisors etc)
- Other Professional Services (Accountants, Lawyers, Insurance, Facilities Management and Maintenance)
- Education, Research and Development (Universities, Colleges, Sports Science, Sports Coaching, Ergonomics, Materials etc)
- Performance Development and Rehabilitation (Physiotherapy, Psychology, Nutrition etc)
- Manufacturing and Retail (Footwear, Clothing, Equipment)
- Gaming and Gambling
- Media and Marketing
- Hospitality, Accommodation, Food and Beverage and Conferences
- Events-based services (Security, Ticketing, Printing etc)

The list identifies the wide range of organisations involved in sport business, some directly and some more peripherally. The industry has grown incrementally and links between the providers and suppliers are often tangential and transitory. The challenge for cluster development in this case is to get the industry to accept its inherent fragmentation and diversity, and to optimise this through brokering linkages where they will be beneficial. This is not helped by the fact that many businesses see themselves as competing rather than complementary. It is exciting to envisage a situation whereby through key interventions, the economic activity generated by the sport business sector is greater than the sum of the parts.

## Economic Impact of Sport in the NW:

- 49,500 people are employed in sport in the NW (1.75% of all employment in the region, as compared with 2% in England as a whole) (*Source: Cambridge Econometrics 2003*).

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- Sport generates £675m in household incomes; commercial non-sport business (which supports the sports business eg security, legal, accountancy, public and voluntary sectors 12,500), accounts for 22,400 jobs, commercial sport 16,800 (the four main areas of which are 6,000 in spectator sport, 4,000 in retailing, 4,000 in participation sports activities and 700 in sports related suppliers, others 2,100). Further disaggregation by employment sector has not been possible due to the confidential nature of the data for some regions at this level of detail (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics 2003*).
  - A further 9,900 people are employed in the NW in other sports related sectors eg golf, sports marketing and promotion, sports gambling, media
  - 3.53 million people in the NW take part in at least one sporting or recreational activity at least once a month. (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics, 2003*).
  - 706,000 people participate in organised sports clubs with an estimated turnover of £425m. (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics, 2003*).
  - Sport generates £3bn in annual turnover, and £1.1bn in annual value-added in the region (1.4% of the region's economy, compared with 1.5% for England as a whole). (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics, 2003*).
  - Households in the NW spend 45% more money on attending sports events than the UK average. (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics, 2003*)
  - Households in the NW spend £1.56bn annually on sports related goods and services (around 3% of Household Spending, mostly on sports footwear and clothing, subscriptions and gambling). This is the same as for England as a whole (3%). (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics, 2003*). High profile sports events and other sports related activities attract 275,000 people and £22m into the region from elsewhere per annum (*Source:Cambridge Econometrics, 2003*).
- Specific major events have a significant and sustained impact:**
- The 2002 Commonwealth Games helped Manchester secure more than £600million of public and private investment. The target for ticket sales for the games was £10.6m, this figure was exceeded, the final total being £13.7m.
  - Initial assessments of the long-term impact of the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester demonstrate that 6,300 FTE jobs have been created, and £22m has been pumped into the City economy through new business opportunities. On the back of this, it is anticipated that an additional 300,000 tourists will visit Manchester annually, spending up to £18m in the local economy. A survey of residents in East Manchester reports that perceptions of the area have dramatically improved, with 59% satisfied with their local area.
  - A simple estimate of the 2003 Champions' League Final put the benefit to the region at over £7.5m. (*Source:Chamber Business Enterprises*).

### Sporting Infrastructure:

- The NW has over 200 sports centres, 150 swimming pools, 100 synthetic turf pitches, 18 indoor tennis centres and 12,000 playing pitches.
- The NW boasts the National 'football' museum at Preston, Lancashire.
- The NW provides more higher education sports courses than any other region.
- Five of the UK's racecourses are located in the NW.
- The NW is home to 30% of the football clubs in the Premier League.
- Manchester hosts part of the English Institute of Sport (EIS) at Sport City, Manchester, which is home to a number of National Governing Bodies (NGBs).

### Sport Business:

- All the "Big 3" sporting goods firms, Nike, Adidas and Reebok are represented in the NW.
- Three of the UK's top retail chains are based in the NW: J.J.B, JD Sports and Allsports.
- Liverpool John Moores University and Manchester Metropolitan University both have 5\* research ratings in sport, indicating internationally recognised expertise.
- Manchester United is one of the world's largest and most successful football club businesses, with a turnover in 2002/2003 of £148m, and a 13-year sponsorship deal with Nike of £303m.

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- Links with China and Asia continue to develop through inter club contact and most recently the transfer of a young Chinese player to Manchester United. Merchandising and media coverage for Manchester United in China will be obvious benefits.

### Sport Events/Initiatives:

- The NW has hosted many major sporting events such as the 2002 Commonwealth Games, 2003 Champions' League Final, The UK Open Golf Championships, (Royal Birkdale – 1998, Royal Lytham and St. Annes – 2001) Cricket Test Matches and Racing at Aintree – including the Grand National, viewed by over 60,000 spectators at the course and 600 million people world wide. (Source: *Arena Travel*).
- Sport has provided the impetus for initiatives such as Transatlantic Express, which seeks to build on such links between the cultural, creative and sporting industries in Manchester and New York.
- Manchester United is to open a soccer school at Disneyland Paris in spring 2004, in partnership with Nike.

### The NW Sport Business Cluster

A NW Sport Business Cluster has been identified, evidenced by the analysis undertaken by historic studies (Source: *MIDA (2001), SIC Code analysis 2003s, and Cambridge Econometrics 2003*) and this study. This has two significant 'sub clusters':

- Professional Sport (professional clubs, professional services and goods and services supporting spectating)
- Sport Participation (including outdoor activities and facilities/services supporting participation)

### Sub Cluster Professional Sport

The existence of a professional sports cluster in the NW can be proven empirically given the higher than average levels of activity in this sector. This includes professional sports clubs in football, rugby league and union, cricket etc. These clubs are economic entities in themselves. Manchester United for example is the most valuable sports club in the world (Turnover of £148m in 2002/2003). An economic infrastructure is built around these clubs in terms of venue development, event management, merchandising, catering and hospitality etc. There are also links with other clusters such as tourism, cultural industries etc.

The development of a sport cluster has the potential to create a virtuous circle of economic activity. For example, the existing facilities' infrastructure is state of the art and gives the region the competitive advantage of being able to bid for and to host major sport events. Another example is the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and the volunteer infrastructure, which can help to stage future events professionally and cost effectively. The hosting of sport events can have positive economic impacts as well as positive place marketing effects.

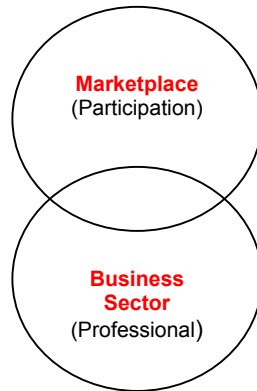
### Sub Cluster Sport Participation

One of the major spin-offs of success and pre-eminence in terms of professional sport is the impact that it has on people's lifestyle. This brings into play the second sub-cluster based on individual participation. People taking part in sport need venues, equipment, support services, clothing and footwear etc.

### The Relationship between the Sub Clusters

In simple terms, the relationship between the two sub-sectors of the cluster is illustrated below:

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The **Marketplace** relates to the events/activity in which people participate as individuals (actively or as a spectator), as part of their lifestyle, and for which they require equipment, clothing, tickets, transport, security, catering, support services etc.

The **Business Sector** relates to the professional businesses eg professional sports clubs, professional support services, media, manufacturers, construction companies, developers etc, which either drive opportunities to increase participation eg professional sports clubs, facility construction, or benefit from increased participation eg clothing and equipment manufacturers.

The two sub-clusters therefore have a symbiotic relationship and enhancing one should result in increased economic activity associated with the other ie if participation (active or spectating eg major events) increases, then there will be increased demand for support services, clothing, footwear, equipment, etc.

The following SWOT analysis of the Sports Cluster reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the two sub clusters, and identifies the potential for cluster development through capitalising on the strength and opportunities, and addressing the weaknesses and threats.

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## SWOT of the NW Sport Business Sector

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional pre-eminence - number, size and success of businesses involved in sport</li> <li>• Regional profile as a sporting area</li> <li>• Abundant natural resources and built infrastructure required for sports activities e.g. coastline, lakes, hills, stadia, sports clubs etc.</li> <li>• High concentration of sports venues exploiting this e.g. golf courses and outdoor pursuits centres. This world-class infrastructure creates a unique opportunity for the region.</li> <li>• Expertise and human capital across the sports sector</li> <li>• Existing networks and initiatives to bring the sector together e.g. business club, volunteers etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented nature of the sport business industry</li> <li>• The sport industry lacks the coherence and identity of more established and mainstream industries</li> <li>• Levels of economic activity per capita are low</li> <li>• Inherent competition between parts of the industry makes collaboration more difficult</li> <li>• Shear number of organisations involved and the peripheral nature of sport to some of these, complicates cluster development activity</li> </ul>
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on a small number of key interventions that can result in maximum gain</li> <li>• Building on the existing state of the art facilities' infrastructure which gives the region competitive advantage in bidding and hosting major sport events</li> <li>• Cross-Cluster links especially with tourism and the creative industries</li> <li>• Cross regional collaboration in sport, e.g. with SEEDA over the developing Olympic bid</li> <li>• Further initiatives to improve the integration of the sector like e.g. Business Clubs, to develop and establish networks (real and virtual) where information can be found on the industry as a whole and its component parts.</li> <li>• Fundamental business development through specific resources allocated to the NW Sports Business Cluster.</li> <li>• A great source of 'added value' is in the design and innovation stages of the product lifecycle. The NW is home to head offices of major sports clothing and equipment retailers</li> <li>• Sport industry long-term growth path (exceeds the rate of growth in the economy as a whole) provides further rationale for sport cluster development and the opportunity to exploit this growth potential through a suitably skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of the sport industry.</li> <li>• Linking key interventions to other related initiatives such as the regional sports strategy, events strategy etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading cluster development resources too thinly</li> <li>• 'Treading on the toes of' and duplicating existing organisations, networks and initiatives</li> <li>• Attempting to coerce organisations into activities and collaborations where no synergy exists thus undermining the concept of cluster development and alienating key partners</li> </ul>



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## Developing the Sports Cluster

It is critical to recognise the intangibility of the sport business cluster. Its fragmented and disparate nature means that it has 'soft edges' and very few traditional supply chains. Little attempt has ever been made to harness the collective power of its different elements in a cohesive way. The NW sport business cluster whilst larger in scale and potential than other regions starts from a very low base in terms of being an integrated economic force.

The key limitation at present is a lack of linkages and synergies between various components of the sub-clusters and furthermore a lack of cross-cluster links. It is in this area that intervention by agencies such as the NWDA can have the greatest impact.

Sport already delivers direct and indirect economic benefits for the region and has the potential to deliver more through integrated business support for cluster development, which focuses on increasing participation (active and spectating) to drive the supply chains in the professional sectors of the industry.

Focussing on the NW Sports Business Sector is not just about producing more jobs or high economic activity. Development of the NW Sports Business Cluster is also about reinforcing the image and perceptions of the NW, through sport. It is about networking to raise the profile, capacity and expertise of the NW Sports Businesses. Sport can be used as a catalyst and spearhead for economic development in other sectors e.g. tourism by capturing the imagination of the national and international markets.

This is the challenge of further developing a sport business cluster. Getting it right will not only be a unique achievement but more importantly would result in direct benefits including job creation, inward investment, increased GDP per capita, etc. Indirect spin-offs include economic boosts to related industries such as the attraction of more tourists, etc.

Growing the marketplace e.g. through the RES, appropriate regional organisations and Sport England Regional Plan objectives, will benefit the region's sports businesses, and maximise supply chain activity. Attraction of new sports events to the Region, and an increased number of export-ready sports businesses will also impact positively on the marketplace

## Key Challenges for NW Sport Cluster Development

This study has highlighted the fragmented nature of the sport business industry and the fact that many sports organisations operate in isolation. The strategy for developing the sports cluster must do two things; score some early goals (to use a sporting term) to gain some credibility and buy in, and secondly to focus on a few key interventions where maximum economic impact can be derived from cost effective investment of resources, to achieve an integrated approach delivering competitive advantage.

## Strategic Aim

The identified strategic aim for the NW sports cluster development is:

***'To build on the unique heritage and success of sport in the NW, to create sustained economic benefit to the Region'.***

## Strategic Principles/Values

***The identified priorities and objectives for the Strategy and Action Plan are based on the strategic principles, or values, of economic impact and growth within the sports business sector, to ensure sustainability through capacity building and partnership. The development of the 'vision' for, and of, the sports business cluster through innovation, enterprise and differentiation will ensure added value in terms of the region's economy, potential for inward investment and image development. This will deliver outcomes, which benefit the individual and components of the cluster, the region's national and international profile for expertise in sports business, and underpin the NW as the UK's Region for Sport.***

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## Themes for the Strategy

The cluster mapping, consultation and strategic review have identified the key themes for the strategy. These are:

### Marketplace Development (Participation Sub Cluster)

- Sports Tourism
- Sports Events
- Cumbria Adrenaline Sports
- Golf
- Joint Venture Initiatives
- Football

### Business Opportunity Response (Professional Sub Cluster)

- Sports Tourism
- Sports Events
- Cumbria Adrenaline Sports
- Golf
- Joint Venture Initiatives
- Football

## Priorities for Action

The development of a sports cluster is an exciting opportunity that could have a significant positive impact on the region's economic prosperity, self-perception and external image. There are some key challenges to overcome:

- **Fragmented industry**
- **Starting from a low base**
- **Proliferation of organisations, agencies, networks**

Key priorities have been identified which reflect the industry view of where intervention would benefit the cluster, facilitate economic growth, and contribute to the NWDA priorities for the Region. It is important to stress that these priorities have been identified in consultation with the industry itself and partner organisations and are not solely ideas put forward by the consultants. Some further prioritisation will be required to ensure a focussed and results-orientated approach to cluster development.

These priorities are set out in the following Cluster Strategy Framework .

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### NWDA Sports Business Cluster Strategy Framework Initial Activities

This framework focuses on the initial activities for the NW Sports Business Cluster in the first two years of development activity.

		NW Region	UK	International
<b>Marketplace development</b>	<b>PRIORITY HIGH GROWTH AREAS</b>			
	<b>Sports Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise Opportunities through NW Tourism Sub Regional Boards</li> <li>Develop opportunities linked to existing sports activities e.g. Premiership Football Match and a day of outdoor pursuits</li> <li>Develop Regional Sports Tourism Strategy on the basis of the priorities emerging from the Destination Sub Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of the NW as the UK region for sports tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link NW Sports Tourism to priority international activity e.g. UK Trade Missions</li> </ul>
	<b>Sports Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise the sports business opportunities presented through the Regional Events Strategy i.e. in attracting new sports events to the Region</li> <li>Develop further benefits for regional sports businesses from existing sports events in the Region (Regional Events Strategy – Organic Excellence)</li> <li>Work with key Regional partners e.g. MIDAS, UKTI, TMP, Sport England to exploit the sports business potential of one-off sports events e.g. European Cup-Finals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the NW gains maximum benefit from the 2012 Olympic bid, both pre and post games, in terms of the involvement/contribution of NW Sports Businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that NW sports businesses have access to opportunities linked to major sports events</li> </ul>
	<b>Cumbria Adrenaline Sports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a working forum for all Cumbria adrenaline sports, to identify and develop a regional brand, and shared marketing opportunities</li> <li>Ensure links are made between local sports businesses and the Regional Tourism strategy to initiate the supply chain e.g. accommodation, to support development of the adrenaline sports market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure promotion of the NW Region adrenaline sports at UK level, through both sports and tourism promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link promotion of the NW Region's Adrenaline Sports to tourism, international trade initiatives and missions, involving NW sports businesses</li> </ul>
	<b>Golf</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise the opportunities and benefits of the 'Golf Coast' to sports businesses</li> <li>Ensure NW sports businesses benefit from national promotion of the 'Golf Coast'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify major national golf events over the next 5 years, and how the NW can tap into these to benefit the NW Sports Business Sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure NW sports businesses are represented in international promotion of the Golf Coast, through joint working with The Regional Tourism Strategy, UKTI, relevant and established regional organisations</li> </ul>
	<b>Joint Venture Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop mini sports businesses consortia to bid for/support events related construction, marketing and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop better recognition of the NW Region's sport businesses, their experience, expertise and capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build increased international awareness of the NW Region's sports businesses, their experience, achievements and contribution to major events</li> </ul>
	<b>Football</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalise on the pre-eminence of NW Football Clubs to provide a catalyst for international trade, national and international events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop closer links between NW professional football clubs and sports businesses, to ensure promotion of the Region in participative and professional areas of the industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure maximum benefit and exposure for NW sports businesses through exploiting international promotion, media and events linked to professional football</li> </ul>
<b>Business Opportunity Response</b>	<b>Sports Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop appropriate levels of sport business support to facilitate growth in sports tourism e.g. accommodation, equipment manufacture, design and hire, clothing design and manufacture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore potential for growing linked NW sports businesses at UK level, through the mini consortia approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure NW sports businesses are aware of international opportunities for trade and growth</li> </ul>
	<b>Sports Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure NW sports businesses are aware of events, and attracted to the region</li> <li>Maximise the involvement of NW sports businesses in sports events eg through the mini consortia approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote opportunities for NW sports businesses to be involved in bidding for/ supporting national events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote opportunities for NW sports businesses to become involved in bidding for/staging international events</li> </ul>
	<b>Adrenaline Sports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the sports businesses who are currently delivering/supporting adrenaline sports, and provide appropriate business support to enable their growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support growth of NW adrenaline sport linked sports business at national level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support identified sports businesses to become 'export-ready'</li> </ul>
	<b>Golf</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the sports businesses who are currently delivering/supporting golf, and provide appropriate business support to enable their growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support growth of NW golf linked sports business at national level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support identified sports business to become 'export-ready'</li> </ul>
	<b>Joint Venture Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage membership of The Business Club from NW Sports Businesses</li> <li>Work with relevant and established regional organisations to increase and expand opportunities for NW Sports Businesses to work collaboratively for competitive advantage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with relevant and established regional organisations to increase and expand opportunities for NW Sports Businesses to work collaboratively for competitive advantage at national level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support development of international opportunities for NW Sports Businesses to trade, and work in partnership. E.g. events, trade mission support key sport businesses to become export ready</li> </ul>
	<b>Football</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify existing level of NW Sports business activity in NW Professional football</li> <li>Identify opportunities for business growth and development for these sports businesses, and facilitate appropriate support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote NW sports businesses involved in NW professional football, to encourage business growth at national level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise the opportunities for NW sports businesses to gain from international football links, events and media coverage</li> </ul>

Underpinning this framework are the two generic areas of:

- Skills
- Promotion

Both of these areas require development within the Sports Business Cluster, to support the key priority high growth areas. The specific actions to be addressed under these areas are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Skills</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with ASP to drive, facilitate and encourage the development of appropriate skills for the sports business sector</li> <li>Work more closely with education to capitalise on links between sport courses and business, R&amp;D, and the new Manchester University</li> <li>Develop specific generic skills relevant to the current industry</li> <li>Extend knowledge base and transfer to NW sport business industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Promotion</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise the profile and image of the NW through sport</li> <li>Utilise the existing advantages of the NW in sport, e.g. Premiership Football, to expand and increase international awareness of sporting opportunities e.g. link to tourism, and destination management approach</li> <li>Develop sports role in the NW popular culture through linking sport with fashion and music, in international trade opportunities, cultural exchanges and networking initiatives</li> <li>Develop a consistent 'brand' for marketing sport, and sport business in the NW, to build external awareness</li> <li>Focus on differentiation e.g. adrenaline sports in Cumbria, the 'golf coast' etc</li> <li>Improve awareness of 'Corporate well-being' through sport</li> </ul>
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Development of the cluster, and implementation of the strategy will be achieved through the resources of an experienced industry executive. Priority actions for year one of the NW Sports Business Cluster Development are:

- Appointment of Sports Industry Champion
- Organisation of inaugural Sports Cluster Conference
- Establishment of Sports Cluster Forum/Advisory Group (cross-sector representation)
- Creation of web-based information database



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## Delivery of the Strategy

Delivery of the strategy will require additional resources, provided through the NWDA and partnership working with other agencies and the industry as a whole, to facilitate the intervention (key priorities), and take the overall role in cluster support and development. The priorities set out in the Strategy Framework will need to be refined further in consultation with the industry. It is recognised that it is not possible to make headway on all these initiatives at once.

## Role of NWDA

The role of the NWDA in developing the Sport Cluster is:

- be the catalyst through the employment of a an experienced sports industry executive; a 'Sports Industry Champion'
- to support the sector,
- to co-ordinate the input of other agencies and ultimately to hand over the responsibility to the industry.

## Role of Other Agencies

A number of other agencies have been identified as being key to the delivery of this strategy. One of the main tasks of the 'Sports Industry Champion' will be to engage partners in the direct intervention activity and to ensure that sport contributes to initiatives being championed by partners. Much of the role therefore will be about co-ordination and advocacy. Partners include;

- Sport England
- NW Sports Board
- Tourist Boards/Destination Management Organisations (DMO)
- MIDAS
- TMP
- UKTI
- Learning & Skills Council (LSC)
- Marketing Manchester/Liverpool
- HE/FE
- Central & Regional Government
- Sports Business Club
- Health Partnerships
- Regeneration Partnerships
- Chamber Enterprises
- Sports Services
- Facility Providers
- Creative Industries
- NWDA Events Team

## Establishment of a Cluster Forum/Advisory Group

The establishment of a Cluster Forum/Advisory Group with cross-sector representation is also a key priority. This Group (Sports Industry NW) will support the 'Sports Industry Champion' to implement the Strategy Framework, and work closely with established regional partner organisations to implement cluster development for the sports business sector.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **The Strategy Action Plan**

A 10-year Action Plan for the development of the NW Sport Business Cluster has been prepared and is included in the main report. It represents the focus for the work of the 'Sports Industry Champion' and the strategy partners.

Given the nature of the sports business cluster in the NW and the evident diversity of actions that are required to contribute to its development, the appointment of the sports cluster manager ('Sports Industry Champion') is critical. The key priority for the development of the cluster's identity is coordinated action, resulting in the sports cluster's growth, through internal infrastructure development, cross-cluster working and external recognition.

The fragmented nature of the professional sport and 'sports participation' sub-cluster will only change through strategic and concerted action to integrate, coordinate and raise awareness of the NW Sports Businesses, to give them a regional, national and international 'voice'. The appointment of a 'Sports Industry Champion' and the implementation of the tasks identified in the action plan will be the catalyst for the development of the NW Sports Business Cluster.

Sport in the NW is already an important social, cultural and economic force for good. This has happened because of its inherent and long lasting appeal rather than a concerted attempt to capture its potential. There is no doubt that the development of the sport business cluster through a balance of strategic direct intervention and enabling activity delivered in partnership with other agencies and the industry itself will raise the profile of the NW as the sporting region and more importantly produce real and sustainable economic competitive advantage.