

BUSINESS PLAN

2018/2019

A banner for Active 4 Today featuring a collage of people in a gym setting. The word 'ACTIVE' is written in large, stylized orange letters with a purple outline. Below it, the tagline 'Leisure Sport Wellbeing' is written in a smaller, purple font. The background shows people exercising, including a woman lifting weights and a group of people in a fitness class.

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THE BUSINESS

Active4Today Ltd was launched on 1st June 2015 and will be entering its fourth financial year of operation on 1st April 2018. It is an independent company registered with Companies House, with Newark and Sherwood District Council being the single shareholder.

The business consists of three leisure centres, a sports development section and a headquarters, which collects and manages the finance of the business, including the in-house direct debits. In addition to these services, Active4Today Ltd provides administrative and management support to the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust and operates additional wetside and dryside provision out of South Forest Complex, Newark Academy and Bishop Alexander LEAD Academy, through service level agreements.

The company is estimating a usage to the end of 2017/2018 of 1,500,000 visits, over its whole business. In addition, it has a direct debit membership base on 30th November 2017, of 12,382 with an estimated final figure of 12,600 including Southwell (both adult and junior).

The aim of the business is to focus on 3 distinct areas:

- Healthy and active lifestyles
- Accessible facilities
- Financial viability

The company's unique selling point (USP) is that of a fully accessible service, which is family friendly and offers a wide range of activities to attract users from all age groups and all socio-economic backgrounds. The work of the company, although complimentary, is split into three areas. These are:

- Leisure facilities
- Outreach work
- Club development

Leisure Facilities

Within these facilities, the leisure centres provide activities to various groups covering, children, adults, 50 plus, affiliated clubs and schools. These are then split into three categories of pay and play, block bookings and direct debit memberships.

The leisure facilities are provided in Blidworth and Ollerton and also in Newark, with a partnership arrangement with the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust and their facility in Southwell. During 2017/2018, additional partnerships have been formed with South Forest Complex, Newark Academy and Bishop Alexander LEAD Academy Trust in a bid to expand the offer of the company and improve health and fitness of the communities of Newark and Sherwood. The offer is very different at each site, ranging from a new wet and dry facility in Newark and dry only facilities at Blidworth and Ollerton; wetside provision in the west is being provided through an agreement with the South Forest Complex. In addition wet and dryside facilities are provided in partnership with the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust. Finally, additional dryside facilities are provided within Newark in partnership with Newark Academy and Bishop Alexander LEAD

Academy Trust. These have increased additional resources to the company to provide increased activity opportunities for the community.

Outreach Work

Predominantly, this area of work is provided through the sports development section, either through direct provision or through partners providing the service on our behalf.

The sports development team during 2017 has supported clubs and schools to access Sportivate funding from Sport England via Sport Nottinghamshire. This initiative has provided much needed funding of between £300 and £1000 and has enabled clubs to develop their offer and broaden their activities to provide sessions for young people targeting the age group of 11-25 years old.

The aim for 2018 is to develop the activities to a sustainable level, which will allow the sessions to continue into 2019, when the funding has been used. This will then allow the team to move into other areas of need that are identified within the activity plan.

Club Development

The local sports forums are supported by the sports development team on a quarterly basis throughout the year, providing much need secretariat, advice and support to volunteers and clubs through these meetings. Additional training and workshops are also co-ordinated to both maintain and improve quality of community sports provision.

The VISPA volunteering scheme is a crucial tool to recruit new volunteers into sports activities both in clubs and leisure centres. This is particularly focussed on the 14+ age group, encouraging young people to get involved in volunteering in their community and gaining valuable experience and qualifications to potentially secure a job in the sports and leisure industry. To 30th November 2017, there are 62 VISPA volunteers operating within the district and supported by Active4Today Ltd.

The sports development team works closely with national governing bodies and Sport Nottinghamshire to co-ordinate an annual programme of courses and workshops according to the needs of the volunteers and coaches. This has further been developed in 2017 and co-ordinated by working partnership with a number of local authority areas in Nottinghamshire. These courses have included emergency first aid, mentoring and recruiting volunteers and safeguarding.

The team are also involved in planning for the future, particularly around demonstrating the demand for facility developments, the review of policy documents i.e. Playing Pitch Strategy and linking to the research and insight available from the Sport England Active People Survey.

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

As part of the business plan, outcomes have been identified, which focus on key parts of the business. Objectives have been identified to support the key outcomes of the business and form part of the day to day operations.

In addition to the financial aim of the company, which is to maintain a service to the customer at a nil management fee to the Council, the company is committed to increasing participation in sections of the community who may not traditionally engage in physical activity.

Finally, the company is committed to the provision of high quality services that provide value for money to the customer. This will be achieved through continuous improvement to the facilities.

The suggested objectives for the 2018/2019 are set out below and are linked to the overall outcomes of the company.

OUTCOME	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
Healthy and active lifestyles	Assist the district to develop options for provision of leisure in the west of the district	Work with the district council to develop a business plan for facilities within the west. Assist with the feasibility work which is currently taking place and understand the impact of the South Forest provision.
	Develop the Insight software to understand participation in sport and physical activity and grow activity programmes to meet the needs of the customer	Work with XN Leisure and other providers to develop the Insight software to identify gaps in provision and develop further opportunities for activity development within the district. Use the software to target specific groups i.e. outreach, over 60's, community development, and disability groups.
	Develop a digital marketing strategy to target specific groups increasing participation in sport, identified from Insight data.	Develop a digital marketing strategy which will support the current traditional advertising and marketing campaigns which currently take place. Deliver 7 digitalised campaigns within the year targeting customers and ensure the software which is being developed is being used to its fullest to increase awareness and participation in sport and physical activity.
	Develop a digital communication platform for clubs and community organisations	Develop with the clubs and community organisations a platform for their usage to assist current and prospective customers to understand what is available for them within the district. This will be facilitated by A4T and allow clubs and community organisations to share information and best practice in a bid to develop their offer to ultimately improve participation. Currently there are over 250 clubs within the district which are known, however, this platform will not only support these clubs, but work to support the unaffiliated clubs which currently there is little known about them.
	Develop the outreach programme to deliver more activities in identified areas – Provide 1 new activity/event per area. These sessions can run as 'one off' events or weekly sessions all year round depending on the participants	Develop activities in Clipstone, Ollerton, Blidworth, Hawtonville and Bridge wards of Newark to increase activity to 1 x 30 minutes per week. Provide a FREE 7 day pass to each postcode identified as, in an area of deprivation. Develop 5 new events and or sessions throughout the year for the target group.
Accessible facilities	Undertake access audits at	Undertake physical audits at all sites to

	each site and priorities the areas identified in order to develop activities to meet requirements. In turn, developed improved access through contactless hardware and customer user software	understand the journey of a person with disabilities through our facilities. This includes engagement with the website, social media, print etc, before the actual engagement with the facility. Look at the audits and develop a list of possible improvements which will improve the journey for a person with a disability. Training all front of house staff if required through e-learning or facilitated training sessions. Approximately 50+ employees.
	Further develop the activities on offer for key target groups including under 16's, over 60's, disabled groups and females. Provide 1 new activity per target group, with sessions running as 'one off' events or as weekly sessions all year round depending on the group	Specifically look at developing daytime usage for the 60+ market at both Newark and Dukeries LCs. Continue to build on the successful XP Junior membership schemes and add additional classes within Dukeries LC. Develop a partnership with the Nottinghamshire Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Board, in a bid to replicate the success which has taken place at Newark, at the Dukeries. Provide 6 new sessions specifically designed for the target audience.
Financial viability	Explore other partnership opportunities within the district for increasing provision and capture customer data. Distribute 3,000 further active cards to partner organisations.	Develop further partnerships with organisations within the district (similar to the current arrangement with Newark Academy), to increase opportunities for customers and increase the critical mass of users throughout the district. Develop further Active Card opportunities with these organisations to improve data capture in a bid to understanding the 'customer'.
	Continue to work with the Newark Academy to develop the partnership further to improve and expand upon sports provision within the district.	Work with Newark Academy to increase the opportunities at the site for the customers of district. Look at increasing available time at the site and the type of activity available. This will in turn increase awareness of A4T and the brand across the district.
	To understand the current arrangements with the South Forest complex and look to explore further opportunities for partnership working with them	Continue to monitor the progress at South Forest and understand the usage at the site. Work with the South Forest Complex and the district to understand the provision within the West of the district and how this facility may support this overall offer. Asses the financial viability of the site with the information, which can be assessed since operating from the site in July.

Fig 1: proposed outcomes/objectives and actions for 2018/2019

CUSTOMERS

The business is made up of customers who access the services in many ways:

- Free of charge

- Pay and play
- Direct debit
- Club block bookings

Customers are put at the heart of the business and current analysis developed using postcode information plots our customers as set out below. This information is only available however, when customers access the facilities using the Active Card. The aim of the company during 2018/2019 is to continue to increase Active Card take up.

Active Card Customer Map

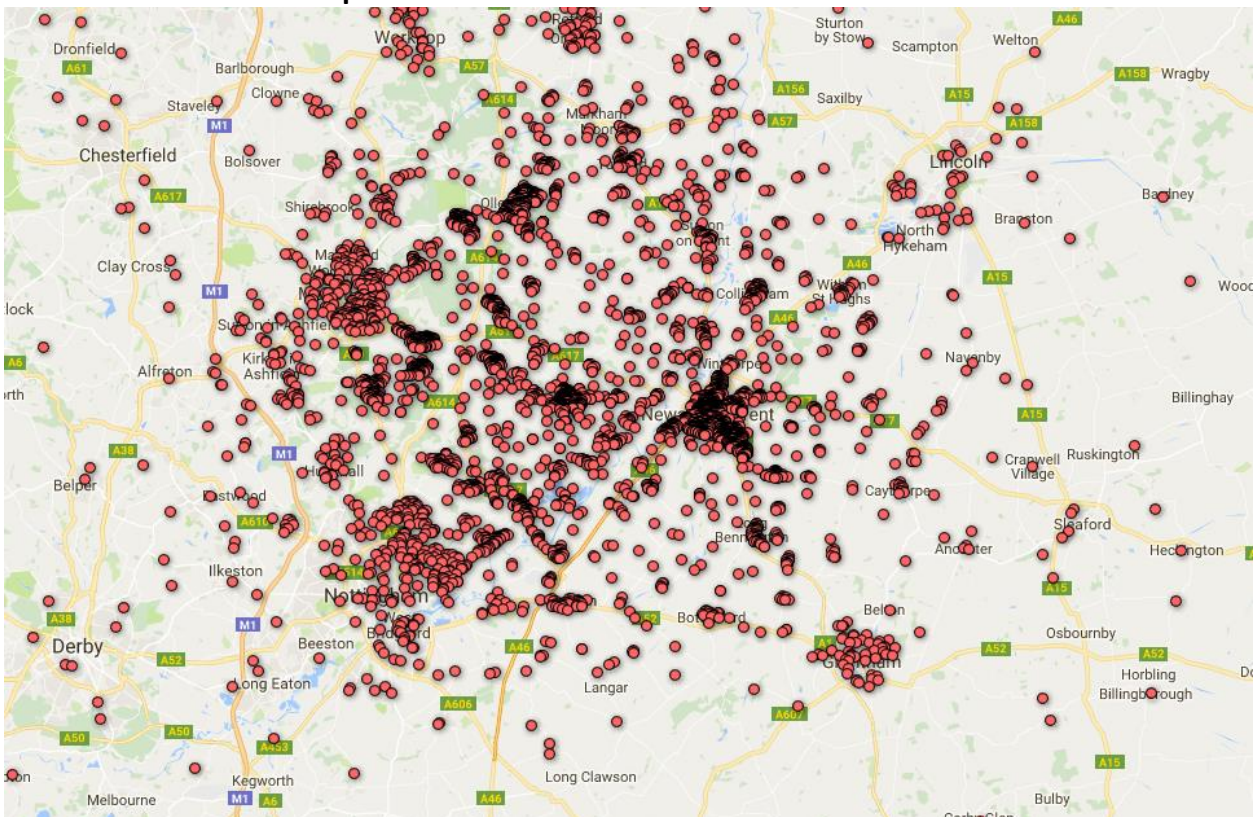


Fig 2: Mapping of customers using NSFC, DLC, BLC and SLC

SERVICES

The services are split into two areas which are indoor provision; provided by the leisure facilities and external provision; provided by the sports development section of the business. Within the leisure centres, the services are divided up into distinct areas, wetside provision and dryside provision. These are once more sub divided into fitness suites, sports hall hire, squash courts, club bookings and swimming.

In addition to the provision of leisure facilities, the company also sells related saleable goods, which consist of hot/cold drinks, snacks, goggles, towels and other related leisure products. These items are referred to as secondary spend. Prices for both primary and secondary items are determined through either a percentage increase based on the cost of purchase or through an assessment of the competition, affordability and the socio economics of the district and the residents who use the facilities.

The company monitors competitor prices to ensure its pricing remains competitive and continues to provide value for money for the customer. For the 2018/2019 budget setting process, competitors and other Nottinghamshire authorities have been compared where possible. However, as the vast majority of competitors are privately operated facilities and several authorities are operated by commercial companies, this information is not openly available to Active4Today. As a result, the information used for this process has been developed on prices as of January 2018. The table below sets out the prices of the local authorities bordering Newark and Sherwood and several comparative competitors operating within the district:

Price Comparison Table of local authorities bordering Newark and Sherwood and private comparative competitors, operating within the district:

Area/Organisation and Provider	Direct Debit price per month	Range of services
Newark and Sherwood District Council: Active4Today Ltd	£29.00 - Adult £19.00 – Child	Fitness suite, swimming, classes, weekend racket sports Weekly swimming lesson
Rushcliffe Borough Council: Parkwood Leisure	£37.50 – Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes
Gedling Borough Council: In-house	£32.00 - Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes
Mansfield District Council: Serco Leisure	£25.95 - Adult £20.50 – Child	Fitness suite, swimming and classes Weekly swim lesson
North Kesteven District Council South Kesteven District Council: 1Life	£29.00 – Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes
Bassetlaw District Council: Barnsley Premier Leisure (BPL)	£29.95 - Adult £22.00 – Child	Fitness suite, swimming and classes Weekly swim lesson
Pure gym – Mansfield	£9.99 – Adult	Fitness suite and classes
Anytime Fitness – Newark, Grantham & Mansfield	£32.95 – Adult	Fitness suite and classes
Sports Direct Fitness – Newark, Lincoln, Grantham	£24.99 – Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes
Bannatyne Health Club - Mansfield	£44.00 - Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes
Area Health & Fitness – Newark	£22.00 – Adult	Fitness suite
DW Sports Fitness – Mansfield	£23.00 – Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes
Fitness Flex – Mansfield	£32.95 – Adult	Fitness suite, swimming and classes

Fig 3: Price comparison table

For 2018/2019, Active4Today have reviewed its current prices and below have proposed the following:

Activity	Active Card holder Adult		Non Active Card Holder Adult	
	Current Price	Proposed Price	Current Price	Proposed Price
	2017/2018	2018/2019	2017/2018	2018/2019
Adult Membership	£29.00	£29.00	N/A	N/A
Badminton	£8.00	£8.40	£8.00	£10.00
Swimming	£3.90	£4.00	£4.70	£5.00
Squash	£6.50	£7.00	£6.50	£8.50
Fitness Suite	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00
Fitness Suite Classes	£5.50	£6.00	£5.50	£6.00

Activity	Active Card Holder Junior		Non Active Card Holder Junior	
	Current Price	Proposed Price	Current Price	Proposed Price
	2017/2018	2018/2019	2017/2018	2018/2019
XP 1 Membership	£19.00	£19.00	N/A	N/A
XP Energy (changing to XP 2)	£22.00	£23.00	N/A	N/A
XP Max (changing to XP 3)	£25.00	£27.00	N/A	N/A
Student XP Membership	£17.00	£17.00	N/A	N/A
Badminton	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£6.00
Swimming	£2.70	£3.00	£3.30	£3.50
Squash	£4.00	£4.00	£4.00	£5.00
Fitness Suite	£2.50	£3.00	£2.50	£3.00
Fitness Suite Classes	£2.50	£3.00	£2.50	£3.00

The Company is proposing minor increases in pay and play prices and in turn has introduced non active card holder charges, which will seek to encourage pay and play users to become members of the centre. Encouraging pay and play users to become members, allows the company to gain data from these users, which will ultimately influence the programmes and classes which are provided within the facilities. In addition, it assists Company to understand the usage patterns of pay and play users and where possible ensure they are receiving the best value for money option available to them, which is applicable to their usage.

In addition to the above, the Company is proposing minor increases in membership prices for two junior categories. These increases will be for new members only with existing members being re-aligned at key points within the year, which traditionally takes place during December. As a result of junior memberships being fully instructed packages (with the exception of free swimming); the price increases have been suggested to address the increases in expenditure around the coaching element of the programme.

KEY COMPETITORS

The business has many competitors across the whole of the district, either as a direct competitor e.g. a private leisure centre or fitness suite, or one which is a diversionary activity to our customers e.g. cinema, bowling, bars and restaurants.

Whilst in the main the competition affects the leisure centre delivery directly, as this is where the income generation activities take place, the company has to be mindful that although competition for the sports development section may not be direct, it may mean that available

funding from organisations is less available and this will affect the work of the sports development section.

MARKETING

The 'Active' brand and series of new marketing and promotional material have been developed in order to highlight the different management arrangements in place. To assist with the sustainability and growth of the business, the company currently markets and advertises extensively to attract and retain its customers.



Improvements in retention are provided through targeted advertising for existing customers, reminding them of their original goals and why they joined the facilities, through the newly acquired 'TRP' software package. In addition, A4T needs to ensure the "journey" which the customer experiences, is supportive and that the commitment that was made by A4T, is also delivered on.

A4T's approach to advertising and marketing has improved significantly. This is due to developments with data capture, market segmentation and target marketing and the media in which customers are reached in the form the customer requests. Currently the technological marketing and advertising for the company consists of:

The company's website is used to promote and market the full range of services and during 2017/2018 the company has linked the website with the front of house leisure bookings system. This will improve accessibility as well as enabling the customer to view and book activities online.

The website currently attracts an average of 50,000 hits per month. There are also approximately 5,000 bookings made on our online booking system every month for classes, allowing customers to access our services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week without having to call the centre. This is set to increase during 2018/2019.

The company has a part time Communications Officer in post and this person is tasked with promoting and leading on the digital marketing strategy and supporting the traditional advertising including newspapers, press releases and editorials.

The sports development team also work extremely closely with Radio Newark and in particular on the Newark and Sherwood Sports Awards. This assists to help raise the profile of the company and add gravitas to the annual events.

DEVELOPMENTS

ICT developments which are currently taking place and will continue throughout 2018/2019 include:

- Insight
- LF Connect

- OnCourse

The software applications identified above will assist the company to understand and retain its customers through greater knowledge of their usage and trends.

Insight:

This is a 'Cloud' based performance management system, which is used nationally across the sector and understand and extrapolates data from our front of house software. As this is a national system, our data will be able to be mapped to the Office of National Statistics data, in order A4T will be able to understand our customers and their usage and bench mark these against other providers both regionally and nationally to understand how we are performing.

This will be used to develop activities, programmes and courses which meet local need, based on customer profiling.

LF Connect:

This is an 'Open Platform' system, provided by the Company for the customer. Customers will develop their own training profile, which will consist of activities, which take place both inside and outside of our facilities. The software can speak to several other devices including Tom Tom, Garmin, Apple, Strava and will allow all this data to be saved and used from one central point. The data is owned and retained by the customer; however, our fitness staff can use this software to communicate with the customer on new training techniques, special offers and master classes in a bid to provide the customer with an enhanced experience, which will hopefully extend the customer stay.

OnCourse:

This software has been developed to support the junior memberships within the Company. The software allows parents and guardians to monitor the progress of the child and communicate with the instructor through a web based application. The software plots the child's progress against a pre-set national development pathway and allows the parent and guardian to understand how their child is progressing. This includes the awards they have taken and the ones which are coming up. This improved communication allows takes place in real time and can be accessed through devices such as smart phones, PC and iPads.

STAFFING

To undertake the work, the company has a team of dedicated individuals, led by a committed and passionate management team. The team has several years of practical experience within the leisure industry and this is supported by a sound academic base to ensure the practical knowledge is underpinned by professional qualifications. This ethos is carried on through to all levels of the company and in the region of £22,000 is invested annually into training, continuing professional development (CPD) and maintaining staff qualifications.

This is identified through the annual performance review, which all staff members are encouraged to engage with. The investment in training is rewarded through the good retention of staff and ultimately a good experience is received by the customer.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The company is committed to ensure the performance of a variety of areas is achieved, aligning our resources, systems and employees to the strategic objectives identified earlier. Outcome based performance monitoring is now widely used and within that is the opportunity to provide narrative based performance evidence.

The performance indicators are linked to the council’s strategic outcomes and have been developed with Members of the Leisure and Environment Committee, in order to build a performance framework. The performance framework is split into three areas:

- Healthy and active lifestyles
- Accessible facilities
- Financial viability

FINANCE

As part of the business planning process, the company is undertaking extensive work in producing budgets for the 2018/2019. Detailed work is currently taking place on direct debit income, pay and play income, external funding and club usage.

As set out during previous reports, the company is making provision to develop company reserves of £750K. This level of reserve will ensure resilience for the organisation, which supports the company and council to ensure the company remains in a financially sustainable position.

As members will be aware, the company currently operates on a management fee paid by Newark and Sherwood District Council. Below is the proposed management fee for 2018/2019.

2018-2019 NSDC –Management Fee Requirements

NSDC Management Fee	Amount - Full Year
Sports Development Management Fee	£121,220
Southwell Leisure Centre Management Fee	£ 95,850
Total fee to be paid to Active4Today Ltd	£217,070

Fig 4: Financial Arrangements for 2018/2019