

**REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD - 14 JUNE 2007
ITEM FOR DECISION****NEW SUB-REGION****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Board with a list of benefits for a new sub region if one is to be set up in the northern part of the region.

PROPOSED ACTION

That the Board considers the list of benefits and decides whether to continue to pursue the proposal.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. At its meeting held on 5 December 2006, the Board made a decision to instruct Oxfordshire and North Buckinghamshire ASA (ONB) and Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire ASA (BSB) to form a new organisation.
2. The RD met with the Secretary of ONB and BSB on 11 January 2007 and discussed the Board's recommendation. Both Secretaries requested a list of benefits and rationale for the Board's decision.
3. A list of benefits has been produced with input from the Regional Team. The working group is yet to provide feedback. Please see the list of perceived benefits below:

**PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING A NEW SUB-REGION TO COVER THE
AREA OF BSB AND ONB**

This document outlines the benefits to Oxfordshire and North Buckinghamshire ASA and Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire ASA that would arise from establishing a new sub-region.

1. FOCUS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AQUATICS

The new sub-region will only deal with the development of aquatics and will leave the organisation of the county championships to ONB and BSB. The new sub-region would, therefore, deal with:

- Athlete Development
- Club Development
- Workforce Development including coaches / teachers / officials and administrators

Why focus on development? – *to offer improved opportunities for the athletes, coaches, teachers, officials and administrators*

The focus on development will ultimately lead to better opportunities for the athletes to reach their full potential. The region is putting into place a new talent development pathway for speed swimming and other disciplines to increase the performance standard of all athletes. In order for this to happen, BSB and ONB should provide development opportunities for swimmers so that a smooth pathway can be established from a club, county to regional level.

By investing in development such as additional training opportunities, the new sub-region would provide the best opportunities for the swimmers, coaches, teachers, officials and administrators to further develop their abilities and knowledge.

2. ACCESS TO ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Where sub-regions focus on development, additional funding can be unlocked for a Partnership Swimming Development Officer (PSDO) post that in turn helps volunteers to access other sources of funding.

PSDOs can unlock additional funding, as they are able to work with clubs on a more local basis, therefore have a better understanding of what funding is available locally, regionally and nationally. For example, the current PSDO in Buckinghamshire has been able to secure additional funding of £15,000 for Aquatic Sports as well as spending the County Sports Partnership (CSP) Active Sports Budget of £14,000 equalling a total of £29,000 spent on Aquatic Sports in 2006 – 2007. If this post no longer existed then this significant additional funding would not be available to the clubs in Buckinghamshire.

The current development groups within BSB and ONB could also provide an opportunity to share best practice, including applying for additional funding for clubs.

In the areas where County Sports Partnership focused on the development of swimming during the time when Active Sports Funding was available, there has been a significant difference in the support offered to clubs, for examples:

- Additional funding for Aquatic Sports
- 1:1 support to assist clubs through Swim 21
- Athlete Camps to provide additional opportunities for swimmers and coaches
- Received significantly subsidised or free access to NGB courses
- Received significant subsidy or free access to Sports Coach UK courses
- Promotion of links between learn to swim schemes and swimming clubs
- Increased links between schools and clubs
- Increased understanding between facilities and swimming clubs
- Facilitation of District Action Groups, with local swimming clubs, facility providers and local sports development officers to address local issues.

Even without the Active Sports Funding, which is now coming to an end, these benefits can still be co-ordinated and delivered by a local PSDO as funding can be sourced from other organisations.

3. POOLING OF RESOURCES TO CONTINUE WITH PSDO POSTS

Currently, there are 1.5 PSDOs working in the area of Oxfordshire CSP (50% of a full-time officer is allocated to swimming) and Buckinghamshire CSP (full-time position). These posts are funded from the Active Sport Programme, which in effect has come to an end and any future support for these post would have to be sourced from other areas.

The possibility of losing all PSDOs in BSB and ONB is a reality as seen in Berkshire CSP, where the post has already been made redundant due to lack of funding. The region worked with Berkshire CSP and BSB to identify funding to continue the post but unfortunately, there was not enough partnership funding coming from the BSB and other local partners.

Where there is significant local funding the region has shown its commitment to a network of PSDOs by provided partnership funding. For instance, in Kent where partnership funding has been provided by the Kent County ASA (£5000), the Kent County Council and other Local Authorities (£9,000), the region has been able to secure PESSCL funding (£5,000) and regional funding (£10,000) to establish a new PSDO post.

Both, BSB and ONB are relatively small counties on their own. As a result, trying to secure funding for three posts i.e. to cover each CSP area is proving to be very difficult. Pooling of resources of BSB and ONB as well as CSPs would be the way forward to ensure the continuation of PSDO support for the north end of the South East Region.

By pooling resources, the ONB / BSB and the region would be in a much stronger position to secure funding for the continuation of PSDO posts to cover the counties as has been proved to be the case in the Hampshire County ASA and Kent County ASA.

4. ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS

New volunteers would have to be identified to run the new sub-region. As a result of development work done by volunteers in partnership with PSDOs, there are volunteers who have an interest in development, for instance, those who already sit on Swimming Action Groups but may not have an interest in either current county executive committee structure or county competitions. These and other individuals should be approached to gauge their willingness in supporting the new Sub-Regional body.

ALSO - It is suggested that this document should also give:

- a case study of a club, preferably from ONB / BSB that talks about the benefit of development and what the development has done for them. **Action: NC**
- a case study of a county that has recently embraced development such as Kent County ASA (as it cover two ASA counties) and how their members have benefited form it. **Action: AM**