

**LONGTON R.U.F.C.**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2005 – 2010**  
**(REVIEWED JUNE 2006)**

*A five year plan contributing towards the development of rugby union in the city of Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire*

*In accord with:*

*Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan*

*Staffordshire Rugby Union 'Strategic Business Plan*

*Sport across Staffordshire Active Sports Development Plan for Rugby*

*North Staffordshire Rugby Development Group 'Development Plan'*

*City of Stoke on Trent 'Sport and Recreation Strategy*



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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Longton RUFC was founded in 1952 and was originally known as Old Longtonian RUFC in accord with its association with Longton High School former pupils at the time. After a varied nomadic existence a committed group of members had the vision to move the club forward in the early 1970 s. This led to the current premises being purchased and upgraded to enable rugby to be played at Roughcote. Further progress was made in the 1990 s with the purchase of further land for pitches and a change of name to Longton RUFC in an attempt to identify more closely with the local community.

Longton R.U.F.C. has thrived since the introduction of leagues in rugby union, and after several excellent seasons and promotions we have now reached and successfully consolidated a position at the level of Midlands 1. In fact we won Midlands One in 2002/3 and enjoyed a brief spell in National North 3. In addition we have achieved a top 3 finish on three occasions and are the current Staffordshire Cup holders. This is in sharp contrast to virtually all other clubs in Staffordshire, who have largely experienced a downturn in fortunes and have suffered relegation in many cases.

Unlike the majority of other clubs playing at our level Longton RUFC remains firmly an amateur organisation where players pay to play rather than the reverse. An enthusiastic and dedicated committee lead the club showing prudent management of modest financial resources, including an increasing level of commercial sponsorship. This enables the club to operate in Midlands 1 together with three other senior sides that play each week. The revived junior section currently run teams at U12, U15 and U17 level. Most of the practical jobs at the club such as maintenance and painting continue to be carried out on a voluntary basis by club members.

Rugby represents a powerful agent for good in the lives of the young people lucky enough to be exposed to it. The club s culture brings many benefits through an improvement in self-esteem, personal standards, fitness and self-confidence. These factors are vitally important, particularly in area that is as socially deprived as the Longton and Blurton areas of Stoke-on-Trent, particularly in an area where drugs, alcoholism and violence pose an everyday and growing threat.

Rugby Football nationally has seen a significant drop in the number of people regularly playing the game in the last ten years. Longton s membership continues to be drawn mainly from the communities of Longton, Meir and Blurton all of which suffer from many aspects of social deprivation (see appendices – ward analysis). These areas all lie within the City of Stoke on Trent, although the 1<sup>st</sup> XV s success has attracted some players from further afield.

Rugby football is virtually non-existent within the schools of Stoke-on-Trent. This is reflected in the lack of rugby clubs within the boundary of a city with a population of approximately ¼ million people. Similar sized cities in the UK boast several rugby clubs. For rugby to grow in the area a dedicated effort from clubs, the Rugby Football Union, the North Staffordshire Rugby Development group, schools and the Local Authority over a number of years will be required.

As the officers of the City of Stoke on Trent astutely note,

***“The type of opportunities that are provided for people to participate in sport and recreation activities, where they take place, and how accessible they are, will clearly have an impact on levels of participation.”***

City of Stoke on Trent Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002 -2007 section 2.15

## **1.2 Forming the strategic plan**

In preparing this plan the committee of Longton RUFC have looked in depth at the current situation in the local community, in local schools, (see appendices –questionnaire) at the club; our progress, our facilities, our members, our partners, competitors, and governing bodies and decided that we should take a strategic review of the club and prepare a co-ordinated plan for the development of Rugby within our local community. We seek to harness the positive influence that rugby can have and see the club continuing to flourish by improving and increasing its facilities through relocating within the City of Stoke-on-Trent, thus enabling it to offer the benefits to more people. The plan is intended to dovetail with the „development plan 2003 – 2008 being produced by the North Staffordshire Rugby Development Group, which in turn reflects National, County and City aims and objectives.

To this end a small sub committee was formed to investigate and prepare plans for the relocation of Longton R.U.F.C to a „brown fields site called Trentham Lakes within the City of Stoke on Trent.

## **1.3 Roles and responsibilities of the planning group**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ROLE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
Martin Hamer	ExClub President	Strategic direction, design, costing, liaison with external partners
Sid Goodman	Staffordshire RFU representative, ex chairman	Liaison with local community, senior clubs, junior clubs, Staffs RFU
Michael Wheat	Deputy president	Sale of current assets
David Watt	Junior Rugby Co-ordinator	School liaison. Awards for All
Geoff Grainger	Ex Head of rugby	Policy advisor, development plan documentation
Alan Miller	Junior Chairman	Development plan communication / production. NSRDG liaison

## **1.4 Our plan in context**

This plan is fully compatible with, and contributes substantially to the Staffordshire R.F.U „Strategic Business Plan , Sport Across Staffordshire Active Sports Development Plan for Rugby Union , the City of Stoke on Trent „s „Sport and Recreation Strategy , and the North Staffordshire Development Group s „Development Plan .

For example, The Stoke on Trent Sport and Recreation Strategy identifies under the main issues and priorities to be taken forward for rugby (p116) to be,

- “1. Completion and implementation of a rugby development plan for Stoke on Trent to address existing development gaps, and***
- 2. that improved club standard facilities are to be sought.”***

The proposed relocation of Longton RUFC to Trentham lakes in the city of Stoke on Trent would bring a successful, fully operational rugby club into the heart of its community. In partnership with local primary and secondary schools, and tertiary education we would aim to provide not only a focal point which would provide opportunity for all, but also a centre for the development of excellence across the age groups.

## **2.0 Who we are and what we do (where are we now)**

### **2.1 What we do**

Currently the leading rugby club, in league status, in Staffordshire we provide a focus for the playing and development of rugby in the area. We support:

- Four competitive men s senior teams competing in league or merit tables
- Occasional veterans team
- Junior rugby with competitive teams at U17 and U15 competing in league competition.
- An U14 team operating in local schools and occasionally at the club
- An U12 development team from September 2006
- Qualified coaching in three local high schools in curriculum and extra curricula time
- Qualified coaching, refereeing, and physiotherapy at the club
- A ladies aerobics section
- Weight training and fitness facilities
- Over forty volunteers in various roles.

### **2.2 Rules and membership**

We are a voluntary organisation affiliated to the Rugby Football Union. Our rules define our current objectives as being „*to provide for its members the opportunities for the playing of the game of rugby, associated sports and other related sport activities and the provision and maintenance of clubhouse facilities for the enjoyment of its members.* In order to reflect our plans these rules were amended at the A.G.M. in June 2003.

We currently have over 150 senior members and 70+ junior members.

Our rules allow us to pay staff and currently pay expenses to 1stXV coach, Club physiotherapist plus regular wages to bar and cleaning staff. Longton RUFC does not, and does not intend to pay players to play the game of rugby.

### **2.3 Clubhouse and grounds**

The club s current location is geographically isolated and outside the City of Stoke on Trent boundary. The area is not on a bus route so anybody using the club requires private means of transportation. The current facilities, wholly owned by the club, are split between two sites. The club s main base at Roughcote consists of one pitch and converted farm buildings which provide a clubroom, function room, six changing rooms and shower and toilet facilities. On the other site, more than a mile away at Malthouse, there are merely two poor quality rugby pitches with no other facilities at all.

Whilst an exciting development almost 30 years ago and despite careful and prudent management, the location of these facilities and their limitations now prevent the club from developing the game of rugby as intended in the area. Youngsters from the local communities find transport to the club difficult; there are no changing or showering facilities at the 2 pitch site which means the main pitch is heavily over used; without proper floodlighting it is not possible to organise junior events throughout the season; without separate changing facilities for females it is not possible to organise events for girls or ladies, and the general fabric of the buildings requires increasing expense to maintain a reasonable and safe standard of accommodation.

## **2.4 User profile**

The survey completed for the RFU club questionnaire in 2002 indicated that there were currently:

150 senior members 18+  
20 female members (none playing)  
80 members 18+ playing (all male)  
70 Junior members 13 – 18

On demographic analysis the vast majority of members come from within the City of Stoke on Trent boundary, mainly Longton South and Meir park wards. Both of these wards have high levels of deprivation ( within the most deprived 9% and 14% nationally – see attached ward profiles for the City of Stoke on Trent).

Our junior members come mainly from our three partner high schools – Edensor H.S., St.Thomas More Catholic College, and Blurton H.S. These high schools catchments areas are adjacent wards to Trentham fields, our proposed new location. (See attached location map – junior members). These include Blurton, Berryhill, and Great Fenton where the deprivation index is again amongst the most deprived nationally 8%, 12% and 10% respectively.

## **2.5 Finances**

By prudent financial management the club ensures that it operates within the annual revenue available. This currently facilitates an annual expenditure of just over £100,000 p.a. Full copies of the audited accounts are available on request. Revenue mainly consists of membership fees, match fees, bar receipts, sponsorship and fund raising. Main expenditure items are catering and match expenses, repair and pitch maintenance, rates and utility bills, depreciation of assets.

## **2.6 Current situation**

Longton R.U.F.C. has thrived since the introduction of leagues in rugby union, and after several excellent seasons and promotions we have now reached and successfully

consolidated a position at the level of Midlands 1. In fact we won Midlands One in 2002/3 and enjoyed a brief spell in National North 3. In addition we have achieved a top 3 finish on three occasions and are the current Staffordshire Cup holders. This is in sharp contrast to virtually all other clubs in Staffordshire, who have largely experienced a downturn in fortunes and have suffered relegation in many cases.

The junior section has been revitalised in the last few years. and several of the current crop are making their presence felt in the senior teams, with three or four breaking through to the first team. The club were successful in gaining „Awards for All „funding (see appendices) which provided equipment and enabled coaching to take place in local high schools during curriculum and extra curricular time by members of the club. From this development an U13 squad was formed at the club. The club is planning to provide girls coaching sessions on a similar basis during the current season with a view to developing an U15/16 girl s team.

This year we were successful in achieving Sportmatch funding to the value of £10,000 which is targeted at development of U12 and U13 rugby within the club.

## **2.7 Schools liaison**

The club has established strong ties with four local high schools and the pupils and teachers from each school have made a significant contribution to the development of the club. The schools in question are Blurton High, Edensor High, Mitchell High and St Thomas More Catholic College.

All of these schools are within one of Sport England s priority areas. The Blurton ward and the Stoke South ward suffer from some of the highest levels of social deprivation nationally. These high schools catchments areas are adjacent wards to Trentham Lakes, our proposed new location. (See attached location map – junior members). These include Blurton, Berryhill, and Great Fenton where the deprivation index is again amongst the most deprived nationally 8%, 12% and 10% respectively. (Appendices – ward information).

An adjacent ward, Berryhill (within most deprived 12% nationally) is currently subject to a Neighbourhood Renewal scheme

A group of four teachers representing each school co-ordinate extra-curricular training sessions, including joint training sessions at each school, as well as training at the club to establish teams at U12 and U16. The members of this group are:

Mr. A Miller	Snr Assistant Headteacher	St Thomas More Catholic College
Mr. S Line	PE Teacher	Blurton High
Mr. D Watt	Head of Year/PE Teacher	Edensor High
Mr. K Jadzak	PE teacher	Mitchell High

The group meets regularly every term to establish training session s times and reviews current issues relating to the development of rugby in these schools and the role the club may have in developing rugby in curriculum and extra-curricular time.

The current location of the club is severely hampering the development of rugby in various age groups, as the club is some distance beyond of the catchments area of these schools, being some 5 miles away. Many youngsters have limited parental support due to various socio-economic factors. This severely limits their opportunities to play rugby, as they cannot get to the club. The current lack of pitches and suitable training facilities limits the number of teams the club run. It is planned that a successful move onto the proposed site would mean that teams could run from U12 all the way through to U19 and that players could get to the club more easily as the club would be on their "doorstep". Our ultimate goal is to involve as many youngsters as possible in playing the game but we cannot do that with the present totally inadequate and inaccessible facilities. Trentham Fields has the added advantage of being on an established bus route and has excellent cycle and footpath access from local centres of population.

Facilities in these schools are not conducive to teaching rugby with sub-standard pitches that are often water-logged and lack specialist equipment e.g., rucking pads and tackle bags that are too expensive for a department to buy in relation to the other sports equipment that is required for teaching the National Curriculum.

## **3.0 The Future: Where we want to be and how we plan to get there.**

### **3.1 Our Mission**

The Club sees itself as continuing its role as a local community club, but with an increased emphasis on youth and community development through a commitment to excellence in rugby football and the provision of rugby opportunities for all.

To further develop the game of Rugby Union Football, for both girls and boys, within Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire area by encouraging more school children to play the game and so open the way for creating more participation by the target groups in rugby clubs, both playing and non playing within the local communities.

### **3.2 Our aims**

We have attempted to align our broad aims to the aims set out in the North Staffs Development Group's Development Plan and feel that our aims fully complement this plan. These aims themselves are derived from the RFU's „Strategic Plan“ for the development of rugby nationally.

- 1. To secure a home ground with first class facilities with security of tenure in order to provide a sound basis for rugby development.**
- 2. To develop effective and constructive links with local schools and colleges in order to give young people of all backgrounds the opportunity to participate in rugby in and out of the education environment.**
- 3. To develop an effective junior committee and section for the club in order to provide junior coaching and competitive opportunities for young people.**
- 4. to become an effective partner in the Rugby Development Group, and the Sport across Staffordshire Rugby Action Group, working with other clubs, local council and the RFU to ensure young players are retained in the game through to adult participation.**
- 5. To encourage the participation in rugby both on and off the field by people from the following target groups:**
  - a) Women and girls**
  - b) Black and ethnic minorities**
  - c) People with disabilities**
  - d) People from locally deprived communities i.e. Longton, Blurton, and Fenton.**
- 6. to recruit more coaches, referees and volunteers with particular emphasis on Encouraging those from the target groups mentioned above.**

**AIM 1: To secure a home ground with first class facilities and with Security of tenure in order to provide a sound basis for rugby development**

**KEY ISSUES:**

A three-tier plan to develop rugby in the City of Stoke-on-Trent would be possible with new facilities at Trentham Fields as the centre piece.

- A. Develop rugby in Blurton High, Edensor High, Mitchell High and St Thomas More high schools in curricular and extra-curricular lessons for both boys and girls.

School	In Curriculum	Ex Curriculum
Blurton High	At new centre	At new centre
Edensor High	At School Site	At new centre
St. Thomas More	At School Site	At new centre
Mitchell High	At school site	At new centre

- B. Form links with the three Sixth Form colleges, Keele and Staffordshire Universities so that students from these institutions can participate in rugby and colleges could use the clubs facilities to play games. It would be anticipated that some of the students would graduate to play for the club in age group and senior club teams.
- C. Development of rugby in Primary schools as a number of the Feeder schools to the three named High schools are located near to the proposed club and again club members may be able to assist in the teaching of skills to pupils in these schools.

**Number of Teams**

These projected figures are based on the premise of Longton RFC relocating its activities to a site with more and better pitches, separate training facilities with floodlighting and adequate changing facilities to suit. The anticipated growth in playing activities is expected over a five-year period, after obtaining the facilities, to grow from a total of 5 teams playing regularly to 17.

Timescale	No. of Teams	Senior Men s	Senior Women s	Junior Men s	Junior Women s
Present	7	4	0	3	0
Year 1	8	4	0	4	0
Year 2	11	4	0	6	1
Year 3	14	4	0	8	2
Year 4	16	5	0	8	3
Year 5	18	6	1	8	3

**Pitch Requirements**

The number of teams playing regularly would increase from 5 to 17, or more than treble. The club presently owns three pitches of poor quality and no separate floodlit training area. Training is usually carried out on the main club pitch, which is the only one with any form of lighting. Clearly, as well as needing more pitches, we need better quality pitches which can take more than one game per week. Separate training facilities are needed to protect the playing pitches from the heavier workload and these need to be floodlit. One pitch with floodlighting is needed for full-scale practice facilities as well as floodlit games. A balance of home and away games is planned for, and in any week we plan to cater for 50% of games to be played at home.

Current pitches can only stand one game per week, and the first team pitch takes the heaviest wear, because it is the only one at Roughcote and the only one with lighting. The pitches needed to match the team growth are as follows.

Timescale	No. of Teams	Home Games	Pitches Needed Present Quality	Pitches Available (Present)	Shortage	New Pitch Needs	Pitch needs new quality
Present	7	4	3	3	1	0	3
Year 1	8	4	3	3	1	0	3
Year 2	11	5	6	3	3	3	3
Year 3	14	7	7	3	4	2	4
Year 4	16	8	8	3	5	1	5
Year 5	18	9	9	3	6	1	5

From the above we can see that we would need six additional pitches at the existing quality, with a total of nine. Based on the club's needs, therefore a total of five pitches capable of accommodating two games per week would be needed at a new site. It is envisaged that use of the new pitches would also be available to the following outside bodies.

- Blurton High School, St. Thomas More Catholic College, Edensor H.S. – see *School Liaison*
- Staffordshire University
- Stoke on Trent College
- Rugby Union and County
  - Representative games
  - Festivals
  - Inter schools competitions
  - Junior Academy
  - Possible training facility if Britannia Stadium is selected as world cup venue in 2007

This would increase the pitch utilisation significantly.

### **Changing Facilities**

The need for an increase in the number of pitches to 5 of good quality and capable of being played on at least twice per week then leads to the question of number of changing rooms, and associated showers, toilets etc. The current proposals are based on Sport England recommendations for at least 20 sq. metres per team and shower and toilets to be en suite. Changing facilities for referees and first aid need to be provided for separately. The anticipated weekend use of the facilities at the peak in five years from

completion of work will be based on senior men s and colts being played on Saturdays and juniors and women s senior on Sundays. The changing facilities needed for home games are therefore as follows:

SATURDAY			SUNDAY HOME GAMES		
Teams at Home	No. of Teams	Changing Rooms Needed	Teams at Home	No. of Teams	Changing Rooms Needed
Senior Men	3x2	6	Junior Men	4x2	8
Colts	1x2	2	Junior & Senior Women	3x2	6
Total Changing Rooms needed		8	Total Changing Rooms needed		8

Men s juniors play on Sunday morning and the Women s section will play in the afternoon. This is the reason that a total of 8 changing rooms are adequate.

**OBJECTIVES:**



**AIM 2: To develop effective and constructive links with local schools and colleges in order to give young people of all backgrounds the opportunity to participate in rugby in and out of the education environment.**

## **KEY ISSUES:**

### ***More People Playing Rugby***

Longton want more people playing rugby in North Staffordshire in the medium and long term. The primary way of doing this in the first instance will be by increasing the interest of boys and girls in secondary and tertiary education, and ultimately by working with children from key stage 2 onwards.

Initially we will start in a modest way by working with our three targeted schools before expanding our activities into other schools.

It is not proposed to go into an expansion programme in isolation, but seek and encourage other clubs to utilise their resources through the North Staffordshire Rugby Development Group. Following a meeting with Stoke on Trent RUFC an agreement was reached where the two clubs would work in partnership in order to expand provision of rugby within the city boundary (appendix ). This partnership is reflected in the North Staffordshire Rugby Development Plan section 8.

***“These two projects represent the most exciting developments for the game of rugby union that North Staffordshire will have experienced for many years. Two of the major Staffordshire clubs, both of whom operate successful junior sections, will move from relatively inaccessible locations to new sites surrounded by densely populated areas of Stoke on Trent and Newcastle u Lyme, serviced by excellent transport links.”***

### ***Schools Liaison***

A centrally located rugby club would enhance both facilities and specialist equipment that would be available to these schools. The proposed number of pitches would enhance the teaching and development of this sport and allow schools to play more games. A specialization in rugby is not guaranteed by all P.E. teachers and coaching sessions led by members of the club would increase pupil and teacher understanding of the key aspects of the game. The named schools are keen to get the extra support that the club could provide.

Blurton High would be the greatest beneficiary due to its close proximity to the proposed ground and the PE department would be able to timetable the use of the pitches and specialist equipment as part of their programmes of study in rugby. Specialist coaching would also be needed, as the department currently has no major specialism in this sport.

Edensor High and St Thomas More will be able to timetable lessons at the club when Blurton High is not using the facility. This will allow for the development of more school games within the city and mean that these schools can play games at "home" instead of traveling to other schools to play fixtures.

This in turn would lead to the development of school leagues, regional tournaments, festivals and representative teams for the City. The Stoke South Schools Sports Association, which organizes competitive sport for school pupils in the area, is prepared to further develop fixtures and competitions in rugby as and when new facilities and coaching becomes available.

Each school needs the assistance of specialist coaching in this sport and the club will become a focus for providing coaching expertise once the schools programmes of study are established. Those pupils participating in extra-curricular lessons would be coached at the club, by coaches and players who would enhance the skills of those taking part. . Floodlit evening sessions would be particularly beneficial due to the demand on school children s, and players time at weekends.

The four high schools would be encouraged to register with Staffordshire Schools RFU and participate in the „emerging schools competitions.

Even with its current modest facilities the club has gone a long way to establishing links with the four main schools situated in the Longton area. An Award for all grant for almost £5000 enabled the regular coaching of U13 s in the four schools with Edensor and St Thomas More being involved in joint coaching sessions organised by the club for U 16 s. Several club members have already taken the first steps along the coaching qualification route and coaches have been identified to continue this process. Youngsters from \these four schools are also encouraged to take part in the regular holiday time coaching courses organised by our R.D.O. under the auspices of the N.S.R.D.G.

### **Primary Schools**

We consider it imperative to lay some foundation at primary school level, and introduce rugby to pupils to prepare the ground for the programme being put into effect in the secondary schools.

Initially the feeder schools to our priority secondary schools will be targeted. In cooperation with the RDO and other agencies we intend to introduce taster-coaching sessions. And utilise as such games as tag or touch rugby, rugby basketball/netball and rugby rounders.

Particular emphasis will be placed on the final term, in the final year where we will institute an inter schools tag rugby competition for our targeted schools, together with any others schools other clubs are working with, especially under the Active Sports programme.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**AIM 3: To develop an effective junior committee and section for the club in order to provide junior coaching and competitive opportunities for young people**

**KEY ISSUES:**

To build upon the development outlined under school liaison the intention is to provide the opportunity for young people to enhance their rugby experience through participation at club level. This will require a substantial support infrastructure in terms of personnel. We see the establishment of a junior committee to lead and manage the junior section of the club. The structure would be an integral part of the clubs main committee. This will entail a year on year expansion of the number of adult volunteers working with young people. The training needs of these volunteers will be met by providing appropriate courses in administration, coaching, refereeing and child protection.

**OBJECTIVES:**

**AIM 4: To become an effective partner in the North Staffordshire Rugby Development Group, and the Sport Across Staffordshire Rugby Action Group, working with other clubs, local council and the RFU to ensure young players are retained in the game through to adult participation.**

## **KEY ISSUES:**

### ***North Staffordshire Development Group***

This group has recently produced a development plan for rugby in North Staffordshire, setting clear aims and objectives for the development of rugby in the area,

***„to provide a clear local infrastructure to co-ordinate the opportunities for players to progress along a development pathway from grassroots participation through to excellence in rugby***

It provides a blueprint for local clubs to contribute to with their own developments, and Longton RUFC provides the chairman of this group.

### ***Active Sports Partnership***

The Active Sports Partnership for North Staffordshire has specified 4 key sports for development; one of which is Rugby. They have identified a clear need to recruit and train more coaches, referees and officials, and Trentham Fields would be ideally suited for such activity by the CB. The work the club is currently undertaking with our three partner schools is a major part of the „active sports development in the south of the city. Stoke on Trent rugby club is involved with other schools, mainly primary, as is Linley rugby club in the north of the city. The work undertaken by these three clubs is complementary and contributes to the overall „performance pathway 6 -18 plan for North Staffordshire.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

**AIM 5: To encourage the participation in rugby both on and off the field by people from the following target groups:**

- a) Women and girls**
- b) Black and ethnic minorities**
- c) People with disabilities**
- d) People from locally deprived communities i.e. Longton, Blurton, Fenton.**

**KEY ISSUES:**

Girls and Women s rugby is growing across the county, especially in schools. Only 3 Staffordshire clubs provide girls only coaching and none of these are in the city of Stoke on Trent. At present no girls or women participate in the game of rugby at LongtonRUFC. One of our three partner schools, St Thomas More, teaches the fundamentals of the game to all girls at KS3. This is a rich source of potential participants in the future, and one which the club intend to engage with when facilities and access are more welcoming.

In the City of Stoke on Trent at least „6% of the total population and at least 10% of the school population are from ethnic minority groups, with the largest group being of Pakistani origin. The ethnic minority groups were found to be those least likely to participate regularly in sport. (*Stoke on Trent Sport and Recreation Strategy* ). National research has identified a small number of young male players from ethnic minority backgrounds playing within schools. With regards to clubs, the recent RFU club questionnaire provided evidence to suggest that a very low proportion of players originate from ethnic minority groups.

At present Longton RUFC has one Afro-Caribbean member, and two junior Asian members. We see our expanded junior section as the primary route for the encouragement of ethnic minorities into club rugby; and its prime source of these groups will be via the contact we make with pupils at the schools we work closely with. The plan is to treat them exactly the same as everyone else, as this is the way to true and successful integration. Their personal circumstances will be very similar to other deprived socio-economic groups in that they will have little or no parental support and there will be a problem with transport.

There has traditionally been little effort given to encouraging young people with disabilities to play the game of rugby. This is particularly true for those with physical difficulties. The game of wheelchair rugby has experienced growth over the last five years, but only really as an adult game. It would not be possible to develop this at Longton RUFC unless a purpose built indoor area was created. This form of rugby is not currently included in the framework for Active Sports. However, „*The decision has been made centrally from RFU/RFUW to work proactively with young people with learning / behavioural difficulties, i.e. those currently in “m o d e r a t e l e a r n i n g d i f f i c u l t i e s” s c h o o l s ( M L D ) .* ( Staffordshire RFU Strategic Business Plan )

With expanded facilities and increased personnel involved with the club Longton RUFC could contribute to this aim by forging links with the Coppice School and Abbey Hill School both MLD schools. It may also be possible to link with the Moves Project, run by the charity NACRO, which, „ *encourages young people who are excluded from school or who have particular family problems to get involved in a range of sport and recreation activities as part of their life skills programme.* (Stoke on Trent Sport and Recreation Strategy).

As mentioned earlier in this plan, the vast majority of the members of Longton RUFC come from within the City of Stoke on Trent boundary, mainly Longton South and Meir park wards. Both of these wards have high levels of deprivation ( within the most deprived 9% and 14% nationally – see attached ward profiles for the City of Stoke on Trent).

Our junior members come mainly from our four partner high schools – Edensor H.S., St.Thomas More Catholic College, Mitchell and Blurton H.S. These high schools catchments areas are adjacent wards to Trentham fields, our proposed new location. (See attached location map – junior members). These include Blurton, Berryhill, and Great Fenton where the deprivation index is again amongst the most deprived nationally 8%,12% and 10%.

We feel that as a club we have come a long way to dispelling the image as a middle class sport. We recognised some time ago that rugby clubs need to produce their own players and therefore changed our name to become more inclusive by losing „the old boys tag . The grate majority of players that we have introduced to the game come from the deprived southern end of the city and they in their turn have helped us to develop as a family club. Concerted efforts have been made with a minority of members who might otherwise have trodden a different path and it is fair to say that all have benefited with improved fitness, health, and self esteem being the most obvious outcomes of the club s input.

A recurrent RFU theme „is social inclusion and this something we whole-heartedly agree with and support.

We have also actively supported Stoke on Trent s bid for Sport Action Zone status. This can only benefit the citizens of Stoke on Trent and one in which we intend to play an important part following the delivery of our improved facilities at Trentham Fields.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

## **AIM 6: To recruit more coaches, referees and volunteers with particular emphasis on encouraging those from the target groups**

### **KEY ISSUES:**

#### **Volunteers – “The Golden Resource”**

We are very conscious, when we arrive at our new home, we will require an increase in the number of volunteers participating in the club's increased activity.

We intend to make use of Sport England's Volunteer Investment Programme with the aim of:

- **Raising the profile of Volunteers working in Sport locally**
- **Recruit more Volunteers more efficiently**
- **Reward volunteers appropriately**
- **Identify and implement best practice in volunteer management**

This will entail the appointment of a Volunteer Coordinator/Manager appointed to the management committee, and the development of a sub-committee that deals solely with the sustainability of volunteers, coaches and administrators.

This will happen as soon as we get final approval for the move.

With our envisaged expansion from 5 -17 teams over the five year period the need to provide qualified coaches becomes imperative. The club will therefore need to identify potential coaches from within its existing pool of players and ex - players initially. By maintaining close links with the Active Sports programme , NSRDG and the Staffordshire RFU the club will select suitable coaching course for individuals to attend. The aim would be to create a pyramid structure of coaches with various levels of ascending qualifications. The new ground would be an invaluable resource to host such coaching courses for the benefit of all the clubs and schools in the area.

Refereeing to ensure player safety is essential in. this sport and a number of club members are already starting referees courses. A knowledge of how the game is played and how the Laws of the game need to be applied would also be of benefit to the schools. The club would be able to provide a venue for referees courses and provide referees for all age group games and assist teachers in developing their knowledge of the Laws and how they can be applied in the game situation. It could assist those pupils who wish to referee by guiding them to appropriate courses.

### **OBJECTIVES:**







***Rugby Development Action Plan***

