

# refresh

consulting: sport, leisure and culture newsletter issue 4

northolt leisure centre  
think tanks 2008  
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national sports conference



# capita symonds consulting: making a splash with a new leisure centre in west London

In this issue, you can read about our work in supporting Ealing Council to deliver Northolt Leisure Centre, an innovative community hub. We have also been busy in bringing the sector together to discuss and explore new approaches through our Think Tank series of workshops. You can read about our Culture and BSF Think Tanks and access our full reports on the debate and some of the latest thinking by contacting us direct. The National Sports Conference held in late September at Leisure Industry Week was a huge success, partly down to the dynamic education programme developed by our very own Associate, Tim Cattle-Jones.

We are delighted to congratulate Warrington Borough Council on the Council's decision to develop the Orford Park Community Sports Hub project in Warrington. We have been proudly supporting the project for two years, working closely with Sport England, Football Foundation and the Northwest Development Agency.



Building on our success in the Northwest, working with clients such as Salford MBC, Warrington BC and Blackburn with Darwen BC, our northern team will be moving to Manchester. From 1 January, we will be joining our multidisciplinary colleagues in Capita Symonds Manchester office in Quay Street. Telephone number: 0161 834 6399.

*Duncan Wood-Allum, Director*



**Work has started on an innovative project to develop a new community hub in west London. When it opens in early 2010, the £10 million+ leisure and community centre in the Northolt area of Ealing will feature new sport, cultural and community facilities.**

The project - developed by Ealing Council with support from Capita Symonds - will feature:

- Enhanced swimming facilities including a 25m eight-lane swimming pool and teaching pool
- 100+ station fitness suite
- Library
- Community centre
- Café and exhibition space
- Metropolitan Police 'Safer Neighbourhoods' ward base.

Built on the site of the recently demolished 'Northolt Swimarama' - a popular but ageing swimming pool and small fitness suite - the centre is designed to appeal to audiences across the Borough and is part of a wider investment programme by Ealing Council in sports, community and cultural facilities.

A Capita Symonds team - led by Senior

Consultant Richard Grady - has been working closely with S&P Architects on the scheme for the last three years (Richard was responsible for the inception of the project whilst working for the Council in 2004).

The project - one of a number of swimming pool schemes which Capita Symonds has developed with the Council - has included multidisciplinary input from Capita Symonds. Commissions have included business planning, catchment mapping, design team appointment, design advice, transport assessment, a noise and vibration study, and air quality assessment.

Councillor Phil Taylor, Cabinet Member for Customer and Community Services, said: "This will be a spectacular centre and a much-needed replacement for Swimarama. Northolt Leisure Centre will offer so much more and I'm confident that the extensive range of facilities will attract many more people to come and make full use of it."

Capita Symonds will be working with the Council on a number of other sport and leisure projects over the coming months.

*For further information please contact Richard Grady on 07825 061667 or at richard.grady@capita.co.uk*

# thinktank

Capita Symonds Consulting presented its first Culture sector Think Tank at the British Library in October. The topic was 'Sustainable futures for culture sector developments'. In the same month, the team also hosted a first Think Tank on 'Leisure Strategy for Building Schools for the Future'. The outcomes of both Think Tanks are discussed here.

We will be holding another series of Think Tanks in 2009. These will cover Leisure Procurement, Building Schools for the Future, and Culture sector issues. To register your interest, please contact Ita Shaughnessy on 020 7421 1489 or email [ita.shaughnessy@capita.co.uk](mailto:ita.shaughnessy@capita.co.uk).



## a sustainable future for culture sector attractions

Capita Symonds Consulting hosted its first Culture sector Think Tank at the British Library on 15 October. The aim was to explore how a sustainable future could be ensured for culture sector developments such as museums, libraries, heritage and other attractions.

The event brought together a number of industry experts from leading organisations in the sector, including:

- Department of Culture, Media & Sport
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Museums Association
- Arts and Business, and
- a range of local authorities.

Renata Drinkwater, the Director who chaired the session, said: "Our topics were developed in advance with Think Tank participants. They felt that the culture sector tends to lag behind others in the robustness of its approaches to project development and business planning".

Indeed, as one senior industry figure noted during the session, "there are plenty of reasons why public money should be invested in culture sector

projects, but we have to be much more hard-headed about demonstrating the public value of such investment."

Participants explored the Capita Symonds team's four point approach to project development (have a clear project vision and concept, undertake a robust needs analysis, identify all the options for development and then carry out a thorough options appraisal). The issue of business planning was also discussed, using a museum development case study. It was agreed that the lack of benchmark data for this kind of scheme has been a big problem, something that Capita Symonds hopes to address via its recent creation of its own database and bespoke culture sector business plan model.

So, what's next? Development and refinement of the culture sector project approach and business planning model will continue. The team has also undertaken to raise this (and related issues) further with the relevant industry bodies, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that more robust information is made available to the sector to allow sustainable investment decisions to be made in the future.

## BSF leaders come together for Capita Symonds Think Tank on leisure strategy

Capita Symonds Consulting hosted another successful Think Tank in London on 23 October, focusing on how to make the most of leisure opportunities within the Building Schools for the Future schemes. The day brought together leading figures in the leisure and BSF community, including Partnerships for Schools, Sport England, S&P Architects and representatives from local authority BSF teams.

Chris Marriott, Senior Consultant at Capita Symonds commented, "The purpose of the session was to share advice, issues and challenges with those local authorities who had, relatively speaking, just started their BSF journeys. There is plenty of opportunity for leisure to add real value to BSF, but, to date, only a handful of schemes have realised their potential. This is just starting to change."

One of the key messages from the Think Tank was that local authorities should be establishing their vision for leisure well in advance of launching their BSF schemes. For it to form an integral part of their plans, the vision should be clear, well-articulated, evidence-based and have buy-in at the highest level of the Council. We should not forget that a majority of the community leisure stock in this country is in need of improvement and replacement. BSF therefore cannot operate in a silo, delivering schemes and facilities independently of the needs for new public-access community leisure facilities.

Chris continued, "Once this leisure vision has been agreed, it should form a key part of the BSF business case. This will provide the bidding consortia with a strong steer of

what the local authority actually wants to achieve. It really does need to be linked together at the top to provide an overarching objective for everyone to work towards. Also, looking at it commercially, leisure provides one of the few opportunities to bring in additional revenue and capital to BSF."

Capita Symonds Consulting will be hosting a second BSF & Leisure Think Tank in the new year in the Northwest. It is hoped to combine this with a tour of some completed BSF schools, using real examples to provoke debate, inspire, and help the next wave of BSF teams to continue learning lessons and share best practice. The session will benefit from guidance from headteachers, bidders and Local Education Partnerships.

## team profiles



**Clare Madden**  
Business Co-ordinator

Clare has joined the team as business co-ordinator, a role in which she will support the delivery of external and internal projects. Clare has a Masters in Sport Studies and has worked within the sports and leisure industry for the past six years. Clare will be providing personal and administrative support to the team.



**Matt James**  
Consultant

Matt brings four years of specialist sport and leisure consultancy experience gained as a Consultant at Continuum Sport and Leisure Ltd. Previous roles in facility management, community sport delivery and capital funding applications have provided Matt with a well-grounded knowledge of many key sectors of the leisure industry.

In leading and supporting numerous facility and sports development projects, Matt has developed high quality research and consultation skills with particular expertise in facility strategy and feasibility alongside a good understanding of the Building Schools for the Future programme. Matt said "I have been impressed by the diversity of the portfolio at Capita Symonds Consulting and look forward to contributing my skills and experience to some major projects."

# inaugural national sports conference - a huge success

**Leisure Industry Week (LIW) 2008 was the largest in over a decade and provided the industry with its biggest and most important business-improvement event of the year. In conjunction with the event, Capita Symonds Consulting delivered a successful programme of keynote and workshop speakers for the inaugural National Sports Conference, a key element of Sports Development Week.**

With the theme of 'Meeting the 2012 Challenge', the first National Sports Conference took place across the whole three days of the LIW show from 23rd-25th September. Sports Development Week is the definitive event for people from the sports industry and this conference provided delegates with presentations, workshops and debate on the latest strategic thinking in the industry.

The Capita Symonds Consulting team was led by Associate Director Tim Cattle-Jones in his role of Conference Director. The team had been working with the event organisers CMPi since March 2008 to develop the



programme of keynote speakers and workshops. The work included an exhaustive amount of consultation with industry leaders to ascertain the key issues for the industry. This enabled the consultant team to shape a conference programme that reflected the needs and interests of delegates.

The team attracted a range of high profile contributors to the programme, which drew in almost 300 industry attendees across the three days. The highlights included Olympian Roger Black and key representatives from organisations such as Skills Active, Partnerships for Schools and Sport England. The programme mirrored the core themes of the Sports Development Week - participation, infrastructure, performance and the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

The conference also provided Capita Symonds Consulting with the opportunity to raise awareness of its positive work in the sector, with Director Duncan Wood-Allum presenting alongside client Warrington Borough Council, and Tim Cattle-Jones involved throughout the 3-day programme.

Jonny Sullens, Show Director from CMPi, said, "It was a pleasure working with Capita Symonds and I would be keen to find a way to extend the relationship for our 2009 event." Additionally, Jonathan Monks, Event Manager, added, "Thank you for all your efforts in bringing together the inaugural National Sports Conference. The programming of the conference successfully met our objectives. I am confident that we have laid the foundations for a National Sports Conference that can grow in stature for 2009 and beyond."

Early delegate feedback from the conference has been hugely positive with the Capita Symonds team fully committed to ensuring that the 2009 National Sports Conference is even bigger and better than this year.

## CAPITA SYMONDS

[www.capitasymonds.co.uk/consulting](http://www.capitasymonds.co.uk/consulting)

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