

A New Government Strategy for Sport: Consultation Paper

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report updates Members on the Government's sport strategy consultation paper and highlights some of the key challenges relevant to local government. It also suggests potential LGA responses.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the key challenges highlighted and the LGA response to these, as set out in paragraph 7 and next steps, as set out in paragraph 8.
2. Agree that CTS Lead Members sign-off the final LGA response on behalf of the Board.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by Members.

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A New Government Strategy for Sport: Consultation Paper

Background

1. On 4 August 2015, the new sports minister, Tracey Crouch MP launched *A New Strategy for Sport: A Consultation Paper*. The Minister felt the previous sport strategy ('Game Plan' published in 2002) was now outdated and in need of renewal. A major driver for this has been the decline in adult participation rates since the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
2. The new [Sports Strategy](#) covers 10 themes:
 - Participation
 - Physical activity
 - Children and young people
 - Financial sustainability
 - Coaching, workforce and good governance
 - Elite and professional sport
 - Infrastructure
 - Fairness and equality
 - Safety and wellbeing
 - International influence and major sporting events
3. The sport strategy has incorporated the 2015 Conservative Party manifesto promises on sport and physical activity, which includes reference to the Government committing to work with local authorities, Football Association and the Premier League to invest in artificial pitches in 30 cities.
4. The consultation closes on **Friday 2 October 2015**. The responses received will inform a new sports strategy that will be published later in 2015.
5. The LGA's submission is an opportunity to position councils and local partners as leading the most effective and value for money whole place approaches to achieving a step-change in participation rates that also maximises the links to better health and wellbeing, economic growth and stronger communities.

Key messages

6. CTS Lead Members may want to highlight the following key messages in the LGA submission:
7. Councils have seized the opportunity to integrate physical activity into public health policy and actively promote health and wellbeing. Not only are councils the biggest public sector investor in physical activity, but they have a deep understanding of their communities that enables them to target physical activity opportunities and encourage participation. Through their wider leadership of place, councils can also harness the contribution of the local public, voluntary and private sectors to ensure that the right

physical activity opportunities are offered to as many people as possible.

8. The funding available for local services, including sport, may shrink by 46 per cent by 2020. Given these financial constraints, councils are working innovatively to share services and keep costs down. There is also a strong case for Sport England to re-balance grassroots sport funding away from national interventions and towards councils and their local partners who have a proven track record of leading effective and efficient approaches to increasing participation in partnership with health, schools, voluntary organisations, National Governing Bodies and the private sector.
9. It is estimated that there are 440,000 full time sports related jobs (2.3 per cent of all jobs) and 20 per cent of all volunteers are involved in sport. Councils are among the largest employers of sports staff and support thousands of volunteers through training, advice and sporting opportunities. Councils should be at the forefront of initiatives aimed at upskilling staff and volunteers to improve governance and coaching available to participants.

Sport strategy themes and potential local government responses

10. Within the 10 themes of the government's sport strategy, there are a number of key challenges that councils can assist in overcoming. The challenges and the suggested headline LGA response are listed below:
11. **How to address the recent decline in the number of people that regularly take part in sport and deliver a long-term sustainable increase in participation**
 - 11.1 Strategy statement - The latest Active People Survey (APS) 9 (April 2014-March 2015) results have shown that 36 per cent of the population aged 16 and over participated in sport at least once a week. This was a decline of over 200,000 people compared to the previous survey. There are variances in participation rates between groups: Men (41 per cent), Women (31 per cent), 16-25 year olds (55 per cent), 26 and over (32 per cent), Ethnic Minority (38 per cent), Disabled people (17 per cent), Socio-Economic groups 1-4 (39 per cent) and Socio-Economic groups 5-8 (26 per cent). Further details at <http://tinyurl.com/pwhnnru>
 - 11.2 Local government response – The majority of grassroots participation occurs on council/local authority owned facilities and council spending on sport and recreation amounts to just under £1 billion per annum, which makes councils key players in any initiatives to drive up participation rates. Councils are signing up to Sport England's 'This Girl Can' campaign and using Sport England's Insight tools such as the 'Active People Interactive Tool', which is enabling councils to identify and address the wider barriers to participation, such as cost, lack of transport or time, poor facilities and staff capacity. The LGA and Sport England support councillors to develop their leadership of change and innovation through a very successful Leadership Essentials Programme, which has supported over 150 councillors.

12. How to ensure that funding goes to those who can best deliver results

12.1 Strategy statement – Government provides a significant amount of funding through Sport England to get more people playing sport. Sport England has its own strategy to direct this funding, with a combination of direct funding to National Governing Bodies (managed through individual Whole Sport Plans) and grants to individual bodies. However, this model has not brought about the long term, sustainable increase in participation that the government and Sport England hoped to see.

12.2 Local government response – Sport England’s latest strategy 2012-17 is investing £1billion in the following areas; sport in educational settings (25 per cent), NGB investment (38 per cent) and local projects (37 per cent). Out of the 46 NGBs funded by Sport England, only five NGBs (Athletics, Boxing, Cycling, Mountaineering and Table Tennis) have shown a statistically significant increase in participation rates between APS 1 (2005/6) and APS 9 (2014/15). The highest participation sports were: Swimming (2.5 million), Athletics (2.2 million), Cycling (2.1 million), Football (1.9 million) and Golf (0.7 million). The increase in cycling participation has shown what is possible when local sports networks – led by councils with County Sport Partnerships and equivalents – are embedded in NGB Whole Sport Delivery Plans in a joined-up ladder of participation. Indeed, there is a strong case for re-balancing Sport England funding towards local projects that are proven and efficient approaches to increasing participation. This would be in line with the Government’s the devolutionary approach. For example, Be Active is a scheme provided free of charge to all Birmingham residents who live within the Birmingham City Council area. It is estimated that Be Active has nearly 140,000 active users per year. Every £1 invested in Be Active generates on average £21.3 in benefits.

13. How to specifically target the different health outcomes that physical activity can deliver, including how they can contribute to preventing or treating diabetes, obesity, dementia and mental health problems

13.1 Strategy statement - Physical inactivity is a hidden killer. It directly contributes to one in six deaths in the UK, the same proportion as smoking. It is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK. Around a quarter of people in England are classed as inactive. Physical activity can help prevent and/or treat a range of physical and mental illnesses, including cancer, heart disease, strokes, dementia, depression, type 2 diabetes and can contribute to weight management.

13.2 Local government response – Councils are leading a whole-place shift away from a system that treats ill-health to one that tackles the root causes and reduces demand for costly health and social care interventions. Since April 2013, the transfer of public health responsibilities to councils continue to offer huge opportunities to further position sport and physical activity within place’s health improvement priorities and help to reduce the increasing costs to the NHS. The LGA is calling for the rules around spending the public health grant to be relaxed to allow councils to use the grant as part of wider integration of local services as well as bidding in the Spending Review submission for a Prevention Transformation Fund. The Fund

could prevent problems arising in the first place, prevent dependency on the health and social care system, or – when targeted at the right groups of people – prevent the escalation of problems which become worse for individuals and more costly to the taxpayer.

14. How to raise awareness of the UK Chief Medical Officers’ guidelines on physical activity (2.5 hours of moderate intensity activity over a week for adults) and ensure interventions enable more people to meet them

14.1 Strategy statement - All four of the UK’s Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) have set out some clear guidelines about how much physical activity is required. Adults should be doing 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week (or 75 minutes of vigorous activity), in bursts of 10 minutes or more. Guidelines are different for older people and children. However, these guidelines are not currently well known or understood by some within the medical profession, let alone the population at large.

14.2 Local government response – With councils responsible for the public health of its population, communication with residents to increase awareness of the amount of physical activity required to achieve health benefits is one of the ways that this can be achieved.

15. How to ensure that schools, community sports clubs, central government and its agencies work together as effectively as possible to maximise opportunities for young people to take part in sport and be physically active

15.1 Strategy statement - School sport policy is owned within Government by the Department for Education. There are also links to be made across national government – most closely with DCMS and Department of Health – as well as local government. The Primary PE and Sport Premium, worth over £150 million a year and paid directly to primary schools, is the only ring-fenced school funding for a curriculum subject.

15.2 Local government response – Councils are often the main sport provider in a locality and therefore have an overview of all sports provision within their area, as well as a deep understanding of young people’s needs. This means councils are in a unique position to broker collaborative working between schools, voluntary groups, local sports clubs and business to ensure that appropriate physical activity opportunities are offered to as many young people as possible.

15.3 It is also the case that funding for tackling physical inactivity is currently fragmented across different government departments and agencies, each with its own application and monitoring requirements. Government should consider streamlining the funding streams for a more efficient system that maximises the amount of resources that reach the frontline.

16. How to ensure that the significant amounts of money at the top level of some sports, primarily generated from the sale of TV rights, also benefit grassroots

sport

16.1 Strategy statement - There are a number of sports that have benefited from lucrative TV deals in recent years. While Premier League football is the prime example, it is by no means the only one. Government would welcome views on the role of those benefiting from lucrative TV rights sales in ensuring that a portion of that income is distributed to support grassroots sport.

16.2 Local government response – The majority of grassroots football is played on council owned pitches. The CTS Board has recently called on government and football lead bodies to re-invest more of their TV income into grassroots provision and further support good practice between councils and football clubs to increase participation rates.

17. How to ensure that the sports workforce has the skills it needs, including soft skills as well as technical ones, to address the challenges set out in the sport strategy

17.1 Strategy statement - The Government has committed to 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020 and the sport and leisure sector can play a huge part in delivering this. It is the whole front-line workforce that plays a role in creating the right environment for individuals to feel that sport and activity are for them. It is therefore crucial that all staff in a role promoting physical activity, including those in direct contact with the public, have the skills and the continuous professional development they need.

17.2 Local government response – Councils are among the largest employers in the sports sector and can assist the government in getting more apprenticeships within the sport sector, as well as improving the skill levels of the sport workforce through full devolution of employment and skills funding.

18. How government can work with Local Authorities to ensure that where they jointly invest in sporting infrastructure already this can be as effective and efficient as possible

18.1 Strategy statement - Government is committed to decentralisation and empowering local communities and local authorities to make the best and most suitable decisions to reflect local need. Sport England have worked very successfully with a number of local authorities to co-fund new infrastructure projects, including many that have sought to house a number of different services within the same facility. Government would welcome views on how it can most effectively and efficiently align its infrastructure investment with that of local authorities.

18.2 Local government response –The LGA has called for more devolvement of decision making and funding to local areas, which would improve sports connectivity and avoid duplication of facility and service provision. Councils have a proven record of managing public sector infrastructure more efficiently and co-locating services (for

example, councils such as Leeds have co-located leisure and social care services).

19. How to ensure an appropriate legacy for the UK from the hosting of major sporting events including how they can boost the economy and volunteering as well as participation

19.1 Strategy statement - Since London 2012, the UK has continued to be a global home for major sporting events. To date, over 70 Major sporting events have been secured for the UK. The government want to ensure that major sporting events are set up to drive the maximum possible legacy benefits in terms of sport participation and also economic and community (including volunteering and culture) benefits.

19.2 Local government response – A large part of the success of the London 2012 Games and more recently the ‘Tour de France’ cycling stages held in the UK was as a result of local government playing a significant role with partners to organise, promote and inspire community involvement, which boosted economic growth through increased tourist visits. They are therefore an important part in securing the legacy from these events.

Next steps

20. The following activity will be undertaken to develop the LGA response to the strategy consultation:

20.1 Continue to liaise with councils, CLOA, other partners and LGA colleagues to develop our key messages and response to the challenges highlighted in the consultation document. We also understand that DCMS is keen to hear practical and specific proposals about how the removal of central barriers could help councils and partners do even more to encourage activity (September).

20.2 Amend submission in the light of CTS Board discussion and send to CTS Lead Members for clearance (21 September).

20.3 Submit final LGA response to DCMS (2 October).