

Annex B: LGA response to the Department for Culture, Media & Sport consultation paper: A New Government Strategy for Sport

About the LGA

1. The LGA is the national voice of local government. We work with councils to support, promote and improve local government. We are a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of 350 English councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.

Key Messages

2. Councils and their local partners are well placed to lead a step-change in sport participation rates that will improve the nation's physical and mental wellbeing. Not only are councils the biggest public sector investor in sport and physical activity, spending almost £1.4 billion per year (excluding capital spend)¹, but their understanding of communities enables them to target opportunities and encourage mass participation. Councils also have an important leadership role to play, bringing schools, voluntary sports clubs, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), health, and the private sector together to forge partnerships, unblock barriers to participation and make the local sports system deliver better.
3. However, with statutory services like adult social care, children's services and waste management soaking up an ever bigger proportion of council funding, the money available for other local services, including sport, will potentially shrink by 35 per cent by 2020². Given these financial constraints, and the strong track record of locally-led interventions, the LGA is calling for Government and Sport England to re-balance funding away from national bodies and towards locally- led approaches.
4. Sports funding is currently fragmented across multiple government departments and agencies. Government should bring these funds together in order to reduce bureaucracy and strip out duplication. Councils and partners will be freed up to lead more innovative approaches to meet local need and maximise the funding that reaches the front line.
5. Demand for costly health and social care interventions could be reduced by a locally-led approach that leads to higher participation rates, maximising the wider benefits from investing in sport. Since the transfer of public health from the NHS

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398741/RO_Final_Outturn_2013-14_Statistical_Release.pdf

²<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11531/Future+Funding+Outlook+interim/39ad19fb-e5d8-4a2b-81a8-bf139497782d>

to councils in 2013, councils have seized the opportunity to integrate physical activity into public health policy as part of a shift from a system that treats ill-health to one that promotes wellbeing. This approach could be further strengthened if the rules around spending the public health grant were relaxed to allow councils to use the grant as part of wider integration of local services, such as leisure and social care.

Participation and physical activity

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

6. The reasons why people do not play sport are multiple and complex. They include cost, transport, poor facilities, time, the environment and people's perceptions. Barriers vary between places, and between communities within places, and therefore need to be addressed locally so that interventions can be targeted to different people's needs. Councils and their partners, including Sport England, seek to have the local understanding and intelligence to identify barriers to participation and lead collaborative action to overcome them so that people are connected to opportunities.
7. The latest Active People Survey results (2015) showed that 36 per cent of the population aged 16 and over participated in sport at least once a week, a drop of over 200,000 people compared to the previous survey (October 2014). There are also significant variations in participation rates between gender, age, disability, where people live and socio-economic status³.
8. Councils and their local partners are well placed to lead a step-change in sport participation rates that will improve the nation's physical and mental wellbeing. Councils have the assets and along with their partners, the insight and the partnerships to boost participation, especially when it comes to reaching people who play sport informally or who want to start playing sport. This includes in partnership with voluntary organisations such as Streetgames.
9. Sport England has developed a series of valued tools to help local partners identify and address barriers to participation, such as the 'Active People Interactive Tool'. Their very successful "This Girl Can Campaign" showed the value of national insight being activated locally. Councils, sports clubs and County Sports Partnerships could adapt marketing materials to reflect the needs and aspirations of their communities. The LGA is keen to explore how we can build upon existing insight tools to re-double our focus on groups of people and places that are currently the most inactive, including rural areas, whilst ensuring that those who are active remain active.
10. The majority of grassroots participation occurs in the swimming pools, leisure centres, parks and open spaces owned or managed by councils. As a result, councils are the biggest public sector investor in sport and physical activity,

³ Sport England Active People Survey (APS 8, Q3 – APS 9, Q2)

spending £1.4 billion per year (excluding capital spend), which makes councils key players in any initiatives to drive up participation rates. As well as physical assets, councils are well placed to harness the many other assets that are found in communities, such as people's willingness to volunteer, informal networks and the contribution of the wider voluntary sector.

11. Councils also have an important leadership role to play, bringing schools, communities, voluntary sports clubs, NGBs, health, and the private sector together to forge partnerships and unblock barriers to participation and ensure that the right physical activity opportunities are offered to as many people as possible.
12. As a result of insight and wider leadership of place, councils and local partners have a strong record of leading effective and efficient interventions to boost participation. The case studies below highlight some examples.

Council Case Study: Birmingham Be Active

'Be Active' is Birmingham City Council's scheme to provide free leisure services to its residents. Participants register and are given a card which allows them to use a range of facilities, from swimming pools to gyms and badminton courts, for free during certain times. Over 400,000 people have got involved since the scheme was launched in 2008. Independent research showed that 74% of users were not previously members of sports facilities and half were overweight or obese. For every £1 spent on the scheme £21.30 is estimated to have been recouped in health benefits. The latest APS results have shown an increase in participation rates from 29.9% to 34.9%.

Council Case Study: London Borough of Camden

Camden is the 15th most deprived borough in London and recorded the second highest sports participation rate (49.4%) in the country⁴. The council plays a key role in driving up participation through its sport and physical activity team that facilitates and delivers sports programmes across the borough. Camden's sport facilities and programmes attracted 2.5 million visits last year and currently there are 36,000 members of its 'sports membership card' scheme. Much of the borough's success in participation rates is due to the 'Pro-active Camden' group which is ensuring that sports providers in the borough, including the council, share resources and expertise across sports programmes coupled with the use of local insight knowledge which enables the council to determine where gaps exist in participation and to take necessary steps to address these. An example of this has been the Sport England funded Community Sport Activation Fund scheme 'Active all areas' which is placing local activators in low participant neighbourhoods to encourage more inactive people to be active.

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

13. The LGA welcomes the decision to review the Government's investment in sport. The current model has not brought about the increases in participation that the

⁴ Sport England Active People Survey (APS 8, Q3 to APS 9, Q2).

Government and Sport England had hoped for and a radical re-think is needed in the way sports participation interventions are funded.

14. Between 2013 and 2017, Sport England will invest almost £500 million into 46 NGB Whole Sport Plans that aim to increase participation. This represents around half of Sport England's total grant funding, with the remaining funding split between facilities and local investment (for example, County Sports Partnerships, coaching and volunteering). A new 'payment by results' model was introduced in 2013 to clawback funding from NGBs who failed to meet their participation targets. Out of the 46 NGBs, only six have so far shown a significant increase in participation rates⁵.
15. Where NGBs have increased participation, this is largely due to working much more closely with councils and local partners, and embracing more informal mass participation opportunities that rely much more heavily upon local infrastructure. For example, over 100,000 more people ride bikes at least once a week than in 2012, bringing the total number of regular adult cyclists to two million. British Cycling credits partnerships with councils as one of the reasons for their success, in particular council support for recreational programmes such as "Sky Ride Local"; free, local rides led by a trained cyclist. More recently, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has been keen to make better use of local tennis courts which are often council owned through initiatives such as "Tennis Tuesdays" and "Tennis in the Park", which offer affordable (sometimes free) opportunities to play tennis in an informal environment with access to coaching support. Through these and other schemes, the LTA has reversed the recent decline in participation rates, with over 420,000 people now participating once a week⁶.
16. There is, therefore, a strong case for the re-balancing of funding through Sport England and Government away from national interventions and towards locally-led approaches that can harness the contribution of NGBs and others to meet local need. This would be in line with the Government's devolutionary approach as expressed in the Conservative Party Manifesto. As we have already set out, councils and local partners have a proven track record of leading interventions that encourage more people to get active and deliver wider health benefits. In particular, securing the breadth of participation that is beyond the reach of most national interventions.

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

17. In the 21st century, a huge part of the burden of ill health is avoidable. About a third of all deaths are classed as premature – that is they could have been prevented by lifestyle changes undertaken at an earlier time of life. £5 billion is spent each year on problems associated with obesity, a huge pressure the

⁵ Sport England Active People Survey (APS 8, Q3 to APS 9, Q2).

⁶ Sport England Active People Survey (APS 8, Q3 to APS 9, Q2).

country cannot afford’.

18. The 2013 transfer of public health from the NHS to local government ushered in a new locally-led health system and the opportunity to integrate physical activity into public health policy as part of shifting from a system that treats ill-health to one that promotes wellbeing. Councils have seized this opportunity and nearly all Health and Wellbeing Boards have identified increasing sport and physical activity participation as a priority to help tackle ill-health and mental health problems. Health and social care providers are increasingly commissioning leisure services to deliver physical activity interventions that help to keep people active and independent.
19. Demand for costly health and social care interventions could be reduced by a locally-led approach that leads to higher participation rates, maximising the wider benefits from investing in sport. This approach could be further strengthened if the rules around spending the public health grant were relaxed to allow councils to use the grant as part of wider integration of local services, such as leisure and social care.
20. Greater Manchester has highlighted that the greatest and fastest health improvement from devolution will not just come from integration but prevention. Their Public Health Programme will develop a project based upon increasing participation in physical activity and sport and bringing in partners from Greater Manchester and national bodies.
21. There needs to be greater recognition that locally-led sport and physical activity interventions are preventing ill-health and saving the NHS money. To ensure the future viability of care and health services we need to move spending from expensive acute care to primary care and prevention in communities, including sport and physical activity interventions, so that demand on acute services is reduced.

Council case study: East Riding of Yorkshire

The council’s exercise on prescription scheme called the ‘Live Well Programme’ had over 1000 GP referrals last year. The programme recently introduced a new IT booking system that enables GP’s to book inductions at sports centres for patients being referred onto the programme. The IT system allows GP’s to see ‘live time’ induction slots available to book and once the patient is booked onto the system, they are contacted by staff from the sports centre to confirm their visit. This on-line booking system has improved the uptake of the programme from 40% to 92% and has resulted in a programme completion rate of 84%. Feedback from patients has also improved with:

- * 88% saying they felt healthier
- * 62% saying they felt better about themselves
- * 44% saying that the programme had helped with their medical condition

Council case study: Leeds

The Leeds Let’s Get Active programme, which is part funded by the Sport England

⁷ <http://100days.local.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Tackling-the-causes-and-effects-of-obesity.pdf>

'Get Healthy Get Active Fund' is engaging 500 previously inactive people every week and there have been 64,000 sign ups in total. Over 30,000 people have attended at least one session. The data sets are incredibly valuable and are helping the council to work with their local universities to understand behaviour change.

Council case study: Blackburn with Darwen

The council's 're-fresh' programme started in 2005 and is a partnership between leisure and health, offering people the opportunity to access a huge range of free or subsidised community leisure, health and wellbeing activities, and health and dietary advice. Key achievements included 96 per cent of clients reporting a positive change in their general health and as a result more people are accessing more paid activities.

Council case study: Derby

The council's leisure and cultural development service was commissioned by the local health service to run a pilot healthy lifestyles programme to reduce health inequalities. The pilot promoted physical activity and healthy eating through a network of "b-You" Advisors. The key findings from the initial evaluation was:

- * 91 per cent retention rate (one of the highest in UK for referral schemes)
- * 6 per cent average weight loss (against an NHS target of 5 per cent)
- * 93 per cent reported improved health and wellbeing
- * 97 per cent of participants attending a sports centre for the first time.

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

22. With councils responsible for the public health of its population, with appropriate resources, there are significant opportunities to communicate the benefits of physical activity through, for example; health trainers, children's centres and health visitors. The LGA would also welcome further opportunities to work with the Government and its delivery organisations to increase awareness of this message. Using the learning from the 'This Girl Can' campaign may provide further opportunities to achieve greater awareness amongst the population.

Council case study: Suffolk County Council

The Most Active County (MAC) programme was launched in February 2012 and is Suffolk's key legacy programme from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is a collaboration of key agencies that have come together to make a positive impact on physical inactivity levels in the county. Accountable to the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board, MAC is the key network for the development and commissioning of sport and physical activity in Suffolk. Since it was launched the number of adults achieving Chief Medical Officer recommended guidelines on physical activity has risen from 56.4% to 59.4% and increases in the amount and frequency of walking (78% to 81%) and cycling (13% to 15%) have also been recorded. Core to the place based partnership approach adopted by MAC has been the leadership of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board, a number of key strategic developments including the first walking, cycling and disability sport and physical activity strategies for the county and the inclusion of physical activity in

the new Public Health Lifestyle tender specification for the first time. Ultimately the long-term ambition of the programme is for Suffolk to become the most active county in England.

Children and young people

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

23. Active children and young people are more likely to have higher educational attainment, better mental wellbeing and stay active throughout their lives. Schools own approximately 39 per cent of all sports facilities⁸. The buildings offer conveniently located physical assets and approximately two-thirds are now open to communities. While there are safeguarding issues to address, school sports facilities are a valuable community resource for increasing participation, especially given the strain on council budgets.
24. Councils have an overview of all sports provision within their area, as well as understanding the reasons why young people do not play sport. This means councils are in a unique position to broker collaborative working between schools, voluntary groups, local sports clubs and businesses to ensure that appropriate physical activity opportunities are offered to as many young people as possible. In particular, leading a strategic approach to facilities that consider the supply alongside demand to ensure that people can access the opportunities they want in the places where they want to play sport.
25. The LGA would welcome working with Government and educational bodies to explore how we can incentivise even more schools to make their facilities available to the community and what funding models might best support this and ensure that the opportunities meet local need. For example, the PE and Sport Premium for primary schools has had a positive impact in improving sports activity within schools and there are opportunities for councils to help coordinate best practice in this area and deliver better links with the health and wellbeing of children and young people, especially those who are overweight or obese.
26. 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 allows councils to take more innovative approaches to meet local need. The LGA would welcome a conversation on future funding models.

Council case study: Manchester and Warrington

Manchester and Warrington councils have worked with commercial providers such as BikeRight! on a range of cycling initiatives such as Bikeability cycle training for children, cycling development initiatives as well as equipment procurement and

⁸ Sport England Active Places data (relates to sports halls, swimming pools and pitches)

bike fleet management and Instructor training (Bikeability, National Standards, Ride Leader). In the last few years, 3,725 Manchester schoolchildren have been trained to level 1, 2 and 3 of Bikeability, these from 120 schools across the city and 2,357 young people from schools in Warrington.

Financial sustainability

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

27. In the context of public sector budget pressures, it is right that the Government encourages organisations such as the Premier League, who generated £5 billion from the sale of domestic TV rights alone earlier this year to ensure a fair proportion of profit is re-invested in the grassroots game. The £230 million that will be spent on a masterplan for “football hubs” across 30 cities over five years is roughly what top tier clubs have spent on agents’ fees in the past two seasons.⁹
28. The LGA has led a media campaign calling on the Premier League to re-invest more of its TV income into grassroots provision. With councils hit by 40 per cent cuts and facing challenges to provide essential services such as caring for the elderly, collecting bins and fixing roads, investment in the council owned pitches and parks where the majority of grassroots football is played will come under increasing strain, which is in contrast to the increase of 71% in revenue that the Premier League has received¹⁰.
29. While there are examples of councils working with their local football club to support the grassroots game which could be replicated in other places, the budget pressures facing councils are such that there is real concern about the future quality of pitches upon which the grassroots game relies. The LGA would welcome the opportunity to work with Government and relevant professional sports bodies to explore how more investment can be directed at grassroots provision, building upon existing good work.

Coaching, workforce and good governance

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

30. Council staff and an army of volunteers are crucial to the provision and maintenance of facilities and activities so that people who are inspired to play sport can do so. This does not just mean formal coaching, but might be about making sure that council-owned pools, parks, gyms, schools and other facilities are as welcoming and accessible as possible to new participants inspired to get active. Digital technology is becoming increasingly important as people expect to be able to find out about opportunities and book and pay for classes or facilities

⁹ http://www.local.gov.uk/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/7049111/NEWS

¹⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-31379128>

through high quality websites that match other leisure experiences such as visiting the cinema.

Council case studies: Digital technology

The Leisure Database company has been working with councils and their delivery partners to improve how customers can view 'live time' data at council leisure facilities through the use of two sports apps; Speedo Fit (formerly Splashpath) and GymJam. The links below provide some examples:

- * Places for People (86 UK Centres) - www.placesforpeopleleisure.org/centres/arena-leisure-centre/workout-classes
- * Wigan Leisure Trust (11 centres) beta page - <http://dev.the-narrow-escape.co.uk/wlct/index.html> (Pool Now & Studio now ticker at top of page)
- * Wave Leisure (7 centres) - www.waveleisure.co.uk/swimming-timetable/
- * Alive Leisure (4 centres) - www.aliveleisure.co.uk/alive-downham/timetables
- * Preston City Council – www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/sport-and-leisure-centres/swimming/swimming-timetable/ and www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/sport-and-leisure-centres/exercise-classes/exercise-classes-timetable/

31. 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 sport¹¹. Councils are among the largest employers of sports staff and support thousands of volunteers through training, advice and sporting opportunities. However, since 2010, 350,000 full-time council staff has been lost in order to reduce costs¹². Inevitably this has impacted upon councils' ability to provide some services, particularly discretionary ones such as sport, and has reduced professional leadership capacity. These wider changes have also encouraged new and more efficient ways of working and the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMPSA) was established in 2011 to support professional development. Councils welcome the opportunity to work more with organisations such as CIMSPA to bring about a step change in continuous workforce development.
32. Effective local political leadership is also vital. Councillors need to be compelling advocates for sport and physical activity, able to articulate the wider social and economic benefits that sport brings to an area, present an evidence based case to health and social care commissioners and lead transformational change of leisure services. The LGA has a very positive partnership with Sport England to develop local political leadership. Our 12 Sport Leadership Essentials Programmes have supported over 150 councillors to re-think how they deliver sport locally and better understand the commissioning landscape and how sport services can better contribute to health, adult social care and children and young people outcomes.

¹¹ Sport England 'Economic value of sport' factsheet

¹² http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/L15-359+Smarter+Spending_02.pdf/7d5e2993-9495-46dc-be67-873e8606e57b

Infrastructure

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

33. In the face of unprecedented budget pressures, councils are being creative in how they manage leisure services and sporting assets, which are hugely valued by communities. Councils are joining with each other to share services, negotiating contracts to get the most out of every pound, sourcing external funding and working with voluntary groups, local sports clubs and businesses to keep costs down and keep services going.
34. Councils own the majority of sports facilities within most localities, be they sports centres, swimming pools or outdoor pitches. Around 30 per cent of facilities are now managed by a not-for-profit leisure or culture trust on behalf of the council (many of whom are members of Sporta), covering some 1,800 leisure, cultural and outdoor facilities, employing 38,000 staff and over 200 million customers every year¹³. The remaining 70 per cent of facilities are still under the direct responsibility of councils.
35. Councils have a proven record of managing public sector infrastructure efficiently and co-locating services. The LGA has called for more devolution of decision making and funding to local areas, which would help to improve sports connectivity and avoid duplication of facility and service provision by giving local partners more ability to influence the totality of investment in a place. As conversations continue across the country about how to spend more smartly, we are encouraging sport to be included.
36. Councils will continue to work with the commercial and voluntary sector to develop the best and most effective solutions to run their sports facilities. Sport England already works directly with councils to support their investment strategies and has produced a number of tools to support councils design new or re-furbish facilities. Long term capital investment requirements, especially in swimming pools and ageing facilities, remains a huge challenge and we would welcome exploring and sharing funding models that can best support this.

Council case study: Leeds City Council

The council's Adult Social Care and Sport & Active Lifestyles Service worked in partnership to co-locate ten services for disabled people and older people within the council's leisure facilities. This targeted work has seen over 100 people regularly attending these sessions, many of whom had not previously been using these facilities.

¹³ Information provided by Sporta, 2015 (www.sporta.org) which is the national association of leisure and cultural trusts

Fairness and equality

How to ensure the culture of sport allows everyone to flourish, and addresses all forms of intolerance, whether as a result of active discrimination, or unconscious bias

37. Local government has been at the forefront of work to eliminate discrimination over many years and indeed were the first sector to introduce an equality standard in 2003. Subsequently, the UK Sports Councils have developed an equality standard for sports organisations based on similar principles to the local government standard.
38. The LGA's equality standard called the 'Equality Framework for local government' is still available to councils to adopt and each year and the LGA undertakes peer assessment of councils against various levels of the Framework for those councils who request it.
39. The LGA would welcome similar levels of support that Government offers sports organisations to implement equality standards for councils and their delivery partners.

International

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

40. A large part of the success of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic 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 in planning, event management, licencing, business engagement and volunteer involvement. Councils are either responsible for these areas or have good links and therefore create the platform for making the events successful.
41. For example, hosting the opening stages of the 2014 Tour de France generated more than £128 million of economic benefit for the host areas overall, with £102 million for Yorkshire and £30 million for Cambridgeshire, Essex and London with £19.5 million for London. The positive experience inspired the first Tour de Tour Yorkshire, held in May 2015, which attracted more than 1.2 million people¹⁴.
42. Councils across the country are also capitalising on the 2015 Rugby World Cup, the third biggest sporting event in the world, to attract visitors and boost tourism. For example, in the London Borough of Richmond, local businesses are being encouraged to persuade international spectators to spend in their stores after the council expanded its residents' card to include visitors giving them access to offers and discounts.

¹⁴<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/news/pages/-Evaluation-report-reveals-%C2%A3130million-Le-Tour-boost.aspx>

43. Hosting sporting and cultural events are an increasingly important part of councils' role to grow the local economy. For example, Staffordshire County Council's new strategic approach to sport, "Sportshire", aims to create a compelling sporting offer which generates visitors, jobs and prosperity for the county. Central to the success of Sportshire is the delivery of a major events calendar. The council successfully bid to host Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 and the 2015 UK Corporate Games. These events will attract an estimated 14,000 visitors into the area, creating a projected economic impact of 7.2 million pounds.