

## CROSS PARTY GROUP (CPG) ON SCOTLAND'S UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

12.45-14.00 on 9 October 2014, Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament

### Note of Meeting

#### Present:

Ms Elizabeth Smith MSP	Convenor of the CPG on Scotland's Universities and Colleges
Mr Hanzala Malik MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ms Lani Baird	NUS Scotland
Mr Conor Bond	University of Edinburgh Sports Union
Ms Julie Campbell	Glasgow Caledonian University
Ms Roisin-Alana Di Giacomo	Glasgow Caledonian University
Dr Morag Ferguson	Glasgow Caledonian University
Mr Stew Fowlie	Scottish Student Sport
Mr Matt Groves	West Highland College UHI
Ms Jennifer Harrison	University of Stirling
Ms Frances Harrower	Colleges Scotland
Prof Grant Jarvie	University of Edinburgh
Ms Eve Lewis	Sparqs
Mr Finlay MacCorquodale	Edinburgh Napier University
Prof Matthew McIvor	University of the Highlands and Islands
Prof Gerry McCormac	University of Stirling
Prof David McGillivray	University of the West of Scotland
Prof Gayle McPherson	University of the West of Scotland
Ms Theresa Merrick	University of Aberdeen
Mr Grant Ritchie	Dundee and Angus College
Dr Andre Reibig	Scottish Funding Council
Mr Lee Cousins	Scottish Sports Association
Ms Heather Sloan	Universities Scotland
Ms Catherine Thomas	Skills Development Scotland
Mr James Wilson	Universities Scotland
Mr Jonathan Wilson	Scottish Enterprise

#### Apologies:

Mr Terry Brotherstone	
Ms Joanne Buchan	Colleges Scotland
Dr Gianna Cassidy	Glasgow Caledonian University
Ms Kezia Dugdale MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ms Susannah Lane	Universities Scotland
Mr Stewart Maxwell MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ms Helliate Rushwaya	Creative Loop
Jane Scott	Queen Margaret University
Mr Alastair Sim	Universities Scotland

Ms Shona Struthers  
Mr Rob Wallen

Colleges Scotland  
North East Scotland College

## **1. Welcome and introduction from the Convenor**

The Convenor, Ms Elizabeth Smith MSP, welcomed everyone to the seventeenth meeting of the Cross Party Group on the topic of The Contributions of Scotland's Colleges and Universities to the Success of the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Thanks were given to Alastair Sim and Universities Scotland for sponsoring the lunch for the meeting.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

## **3. Introduction to the topic of The Contributions of Scotland's Colleges and Universities to the Success of the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow**

The Convenor praised the Game Changer Awards; noting in particular the Scottish Funding Council's support for the project; the tremendously positive feedback heard about the Awards and the programmes and projects recognised by the Awards; and the great example of collaboration between Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland.

The Convenor explained introduced the speakers, noting that Professor McCormac would give an overview of the Game Changer Awards and the sectors' contributions in his capacity as Chair of the Universities Scotland University Games Group and that the remaining four speakers were to talk about their Game Changer Award-winning projects.

### **Professor Gerry McCormac, University of Stirling and Universities Scotland**

Professor McCormac explained that the idea for the [Game Changer Awards](#) came from the sector-level group he convened and that was set-up by Universities Scotland. It was an excellent example of what could be achieved by universities and colleges working closely together. The Game Changer Awards was a one-off event to recognise and celebrate the broad and varied contribution of Scotland's colleges and universities to the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. They showcased the many excellent contributions from both sectors to politicians and the media and rewarded the efforts of staff and students. Professor McCormac told the Group that over 120 applications were received from colleges and universities across Scotland. There were six different award categories to recognise the huge breadth of contribution colleges and higher education institutions made to the Games and their legacy in terms of culture or research or internationalisation.

Professor McCormac told the Group about the college and university contribution to Team Scotland, and explained that a Universities Scotland analysis had found that 133 out of 310 Team Scotland

athletes have links to Scotland's colleges and universities as current students or graduates, some 43% of the Team. Professor McCormac said that the 114 athletes who have a Scottish higher education background have pursued an interesting range of academic subjects including accountancy, medicine, sport and recreation management, chemistry and broadcast production; and the twenty-five athletes with a further education background have studied an equally broad range of subjects including HND sports coaching with development of sport and HNC sport and recreation. The Group heard that 35% of Team Scotland's medals were won by college and university students and graduates (nine Gold, nine Silver and six Bronze). Professor McCormac explained that one of Team Scotland's medal winners was University of Stirling student Ross Murdoch, who won Gold in the 200 metre breaststroke and was a fraction of a second away from beating the world record. Ross continues to train using the facilities at the University of Stirling.

Professor McCormac told the Group about the national sports scholarship programme for Scotland's student athletes called Winning Students. The programme, managed by the University of Stirling and funded by the Scottish Funding Council, supports more than 160 high performance student athletes in member colleges and universities across the country with scholarships of up to £5,500 each year.

The Group heard that during Games time, Universities Scotland and Scottish Enterprise hosted an event at Scotland House to promote research to an international audience. More than nine Commonwealth countries were represented at the event – the highest representation achieved at any Scotland House event – and attendees heard from the Education Secretary, Michael Russell as well as speakers from a number of higher education institutions. One of the speakers at the event, Jonathan Boyd from the Glasgow School of Art, led the team that designed and produced the medals for the Commonwealth Games, and is a great example of the how colleges and universities contributed beyond just sporting prowess to the Games and their legacy.

#### **Dr Morag Ferguson, Glasgow Caledonian University**

Dr Ferguson presented on Glasgow Caledonian University's Gaming for Glasgow project, which supported the development of digital skills in Glasgow Schools. The project won a [Silver Game Changer Award in the Learning & Skills category](#).

Dr Ferguson told the Group that the Gaming for Glasgow project involved 200 students at GCU working with school pupils in Glasgow's East End to design computer games with a Commonwealth Games theme. School teachers also benefited from Gaming for Glasgow as the project provided a CPD opportunity to develop new skills. Celtic FC Foundation provided support for the project, including transport for the school children. Gaming for Glasgow was inclusive, with the importance of the role of user-centred design as a means of challenging accessibility issues for children with special educational needs a strand of the project. GCU students studying towards a number of degrees were involved in the project as it involved a number of stages, such as design and coding, for different aspects of the games being created. A huge range of computer games were designed as a result of the project. The process involved one GCU student from each team to lead the project in schools, working with pupils to plan all stages of the project. School pupils also visited the University as part of the project. Teams had to pitch their final game and creation process, with prizes awarded for the best games.

The University held a showcase event at its Saltire Centre in order to present prizes and bring together the staff, students, pupils and teachers in one place to recognise the teams' achievements. School pupils talked about how proud they were at what they had created during the project and teachers reported on how engaged pupils had been in the activity. Teachers said that they were excited that pupils got such a great opportunity that would otherwise not have been possible due to their own time and skills constraints.

Dr Ferguson explained to the Group that as Gaming for Glasgow was aligned to the University's strategy for learning, it had a number of benefits for the students involved, including; giving a sense of citizenship; encouraging entrepreneurialism; real world experience; and increased employability as it increased students' understanding of target markets for the work they had undertaken.

Dr Ferguson said that a number of outcomes had been achieved by the Gaming for Glasgow project, including; inspired students who reported increased motivation for the activity and the hope to build capacity to be active contributors to our society; and turning the activity into a long-term collaboration with a new project engaging with 10 learning communities in Glasgow's East End, to co-create mobile phone applications with the theme of music for wellbeing. This project will involve collaborations with RSNO and Celtic FC Foundation as well as businesses from across Glasgow. The University believes the legacy of the project will continue and view it as a beginning and not an end to its work.

#### **Mr Matt Groves, West Highland College UHI**

Mr Groves presented a few minutes' of video footage from the West Highland Adventure Trail (WHAT). The video is available online here: [INSERT URL](#). The West Highland Adventure Trail won a [Silver Game Changer Award in the Student Achievement category](#).

Mr Groves told the Group that WHAT gives a flavour of the region, from Kinlochleven at its most southerly point to Ullapool in the North. The Group heard that the region faces many challenges; its dispersed communication means it has different social and economic challenges to more densely populated areas in Scotland.

The concept behind the baton used as part of WHAT was that it can link communities, thus making physical geography a tool rather than a hindrance as it allows the journey to happen. The baton splits into three separate pieces, with the words 'adventure', 'commitment' and 'exploration' engraved on the pieces which become individual batons in their own right. The baton itself is a legacy and will continue to be used on trips around Scotland and overseas.

WHAT encouraged engagement across the region and received submissions from many schools and community centres throughout the region. The students involved had to plan the trail's journey very accurately, learning new skills throughout the process.

Opportunities were opened up for local people to try new activities, such as canoeing, as part of WHAT; most of whom will not have had such opportunities before. The profile of adventure tourism and its importance to the local and national economy was also raised by WHAT.

**Professor Gayle McPherson and Professor David McGillivray, University of the West of Scotland**

Professor McPherson and Professor McGillivray presented on their research into Leveraging Paraspport Events for Sustainable Community Participation, which won a [Gold Game Changer Award in the Research Impact category](#).

Professor McGillivray explained that the research work is ongoing and is part-funded by Canadian colleagues. The research considers the barriers for those with disabilities, such as transport-related issues, and their impact on opportunities for community participation.

The research aims to contrast two types of large-scale sporting events: integrated events, such as Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, where able bodied athletes and athletes with a disability compete in the same tournament but in separate sporting events; and non-integrated events which have a distinct tournament for athletes with a disability, usually separated by time but occurring in the same or similar location, for example the 2012 London Olympics and the 2015 Pan/Para-Pan American Games to take place in Toronto Canada.

Professor McGillivray explained that major sporting events can help to lever in extra resources, raise the profile of the needs of athletes and spectators with a disability, and extra services, such as coaching and volunteering.

The research methodology considered the interventions around the Glasgow 2014 Games, including documents and other plans for a legacy framework; media reports and coverage for the perception of the parasport element; and interviews with all the key stakeholders both before and after the Games in order to compare what happened as opposed to what people hoped would happen.

Professor McPherson shared some headline figures with the Group to come out of the research so far: the Games achieved 1.5 times the International Paralympic Committee's benchmark for participation; there was an expectation that the audience would be knowledgeable about the integrated Games time, but organisers did provide a number of visual and audio subtitles to improve understanding; and permanent improvements to some of the venue, although security made access to some venues more difficult – though there is a legacy lesson to be learnt from this.

Professor McPherson said that part of the challenge after Glasgow 2014 wraps up is to understand how lessons learned feeds back to the Scottish Government and Scottish Disability Sport. Although the Scottish Government put a lot of money into facilities, there is still a need to know more about engagement at a community level. There is also a question around knowledge transfer; of how knowledge transfers back into organisations who put forward employees on secondment to Glasgow 2014.

Professor McPherson explained that the next steps for the research include further survey work, including questions in the Glasgow Household Survey, as well as the same study being conducted in Toronto in 2015 at the Pan/Para-Pan American Games.

## **Mr Grant Ritchie, Dundee and Angus College**

Mr Ritchie presented to the Group on the Host Broadcaster Training Initiative, a project which won a [Gold Game Changer Award in the Learning & Skills category](#).

Mr Ritchie explained to the Group that it was important to ensure learning and student opportunities were part of the operation of the scale of the television coverage of Glasgow 2014.

Sunset and Vine and Global TV were the main broadcasters for Glasgow 2014; broadcasting to 1.5 billion people around the world. The project aimed to work alongside those broadcasters in order for students to get a full range of experiences. The idea was to create a training plan that would be the legacy of the project.

The Group heard that there was a pre-training programme to upskill staff and students with Creative Loop the medium for this programme. There was an express interest in developing the relationship between colleges and universities and the broadcast industry. Several colleges and universities were involved in HBTI. The training was designed to ensure students were useful during Games time.

All BBC ALBA broadcasts of live Scottish football involved five students gaining work experience across a range of broadcast activities. This was a huge exercise in terms of logistics. A recognised SQA training qualification was developed as part of the experience. This industry-assured qualification was gained by university students signing in to a college; possibly a unique articulation from university to college. HBTI had a great deal of interest from the Scottish Government, including from Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond who worked with HBTI on a number of occasions. A safety management training qualification was gained by staff and students during HBTI involvement. The initial target was to involve 120 students in HBTI; the final number was 208.

Industry was positive about HBTI, noting that it was better than previous such projects and the students involved were extremely reliable. Employers were keen to highlight how impressed they were by the knowledge and skills that students brought with them.

Mr Ritchie said that further training and employment opportunities exist when we consider that 1,400 people were employed by Sunset and Vine as part of Glasgow 2014, only 13% of whom were from Scotland with the rest flown in to plug an apparent skills gap. Next steps include looking at all of the upcoming sporting events in Scotland and ensuring that there are more opportunities for students as part of these.

## **4. Discussion**

### One-off event: Game Changer Awards

The Convenor asked Professor McCormac if the Game Changer Awards would be a one-off event. Professor McCormac confirmed that was the case, but that its legacy will continue. Professor McCormac said the key message is that the Scottish Government has invested in sport, in elite sport, but so many projects, and contributions in so many ways, shows further investment in sport in the

future is so important as it delivers much more than just medals; it delivers increased wellbeing and education.

#### Broadcasting qualifications

Mr Cousins asked Mr Ritchie if there is enough televised content to match ambitions for the Host Broadcaster Training Initiative legacy ambitions. Mr Ritchie said that there is, and that the education legacy requires one university to run a Master's degree and two or three colleges running specialist courses too. Mr Ritchie said Scotland could be a world leader if it could have a network that worked together to deliver content and develop infrastructure. Asked if a range of qualifications would be possible, Mr Ritchie agreed and said that discussions were ongoing with Skills Development Scotland on a potential Modern Apprenticeship course.

#### Regional participation

Professor Mclvor welcomed the refreshing agenda for the seventeenth meeting of the Cross Party Group. Professor Mclvor praised the West Highland Adventure Trail project and noted that it is a part of the world with little representation in the country's national teams, with the few sporting stars to come to international prowess doing so not through any organised or structured way, and asked how we might set up such a structure or education system to allow young talent come through to the international level. Mr Groves said that his own personal perspective is that this is an issue not unique to Scotland. Issues need to be tackled such as the fact that often locations where people can get involved in activities can be difficult to reach for some communities; and another issue for the West Highlands is that few local born and bred young people want to stay in the region to study and work.

### **5. Date of next meeting**

The Convenor thanked all speakers and attendees. The Convenor noted that the next meeting of the Group in 2014 will take place on Thursday 27 November from 12.30 – 2.00pm.

The Group agreed with a proposal from Universities Scotland to discuss a new devolution settlement for Scotland in relation to further and higher education, in the context of the ongoing work of the Scotland Devolution Commission (Smith Commission), at the 27 November meeting.

**Meeting closed.**