

# Cross Party Group for Sport - Rio 2016: An Olympic and Paralympic Review

Minutes from 14th March 2017 2016 17.30-19.30

Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament

| PRESENT             |                               |                        |                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cllr. Brian Topping | Aberdeenshire Council         | Roger Scrutton         | Scottish Orienteering               |
| Gordon Hunter       | Active Scotland               | Kim Atkinson           | SSA                                 |
| Ian White           | Canalside C.S.H               | Louise McIntyre        | SSA                                 |
| Leigh Robinson      | CGS                           | Ally White             | Scottish Swimming                   |
| Malcolm Cannon      | Cricket Scotland              | Jim McIntosh           | Scottish Target Shooting            |
| Garry Quigley       | Gavin Newlands MP Office      | Andy Salmon            | Snowsport Scotland                  |
| Fiona Reid          | Glasgow Caledonian University | Campbell Roy           | Sported                             |
| Karen Nichol        | Live Active Leisure           | Roddy Mackenzie        | SportsAid Scotland                  |
| Alison Johnstone    | MSP                           | Ronnie Sloan           | SportsAid Scotland                  |
| Liz Smith           | MSP                           | Malcolm Dingwall Smith | Sportscotland                       |
| Brian Whittle       | MSP                           | Mike Whittingham       | sportscotland                       |
| Jim Moyes           | N/A                           | Ronald Sutherland      | T.L.J Track Club & Gala Rugby C.S.H |
| Charlie Raeburn     | N/A                           | Carole Sutherland      | T.L.J Track Club & Gala Rugby C.S.H |
| Geoff Platt         | N/A                           | Fiona Lothian          | Triathlon Scotland                  |
| Chris Sellar        | Oriam                         | Liz Nicoll             | UK Sport                            |
| Heather Duff        | SAMH                          | Sharon Clough          | University of Edinburgh             |
| Ian Baettie         | Scottish Athletics            | Grant Jarvie           | University of Edinburgh             |
| Gary Coltman        | Scottish Cycling              | Davies Banda           | University of Edinburgh             |
| Steve Paige         | Scottish Gymnastics           | Ali Gordon             | University of Edinburgh             |
|                     |                               | Chris Oliver           | University of Edinburgh PAHRC       |

| APOLOGIES          |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Dougi Bryce        | Judo Scotland         |
| Alex Cole Hamilton | MSP                   |
| Cllr. Jim Harte    | Renfrewshire Council  |
| John Hamilton      | SAAF                  |
| Gail Prince        | SALSC                 |
| Keith Hogg         | Scotland Rugby League |
| Richard Yule       | Table Tennis Scotland |

## **Introduction to Cross Party Group on Sport**

Liz Smith MSP welcomed all attendees and speakers to the meeting.

Apologies were noted and those in the room were reminded to mark their attendance on the register being passed round. Due to time constraints the agenda order was changed to have the presentations before general business.

## **Presentations & Discussion**

### **Liz Nicholl – CEO UK Sport**

Liz began by highlighting the important relationship between UK Sport and the Home Countries and how critical it is to the success of the nation as a whole. Summarising the work of UK Sport as being focused on supporting athletes to succeed, they are determined to maintain that one vision, and aim for more medals at the next Olympic Games. She broke down exactly where they spend their money: 88% sports investment, 4% events/hosting and bidding, 1% international influencing, 1% governance and 6% securing resources.

The system has strengthened significantly over recent years and Team GB & Para GB out performed expectations at Rio in 2016. The journey from finishing 36<sup>th</sup> in the medal table in 1996 to 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2016 has been wholly down to the decision from the UK Government to make a specific investment in performance sport.

Unfortunately it isn't possible to fund everyone though and they have a clear way of assessing medal potential using a meritocratic investment method. There is a 'one team' focus to Team GB Team GB & Para GB and regular meetings with sports and the different home nations is key to success. The regional pathways developed over recent years have seen the UK become one of the most united systems in the world. UK sport does a lot of forensic profiling and a lot of auditing to make sure everyone is working together and Scotland offers a lot more than you'd expect from a smaller nation, with 10% of funded athletes being Scottish.

There is a strong partnership with Event Scotland in getting major events to the country, and a great international relations strategy working behind the scenes, tactically supporting those at influencing on the world stage. They have an International Leadership Programme (16 people in Scotland) which offers a great opportunity to help develop future influencers.

Going forward to Tokyo, they are doing a lot more research, analytics, field observations, diagnostics etc. working closely with the British Olympic Association and British Paralympic Association. The teams behind the athletes really deserve a lot of recognition for their hard work. Unfortunately lottery funding is only two thirds what it used to be and they are now a 50/50 lottery/government funding split, so a lot needs to be done to promote the National Lottery.

The Tokyo ambition is for more medals and recognising that medals only come if there are strong organisations, with good governance and development pathways.

### **Mike Whittingham – Director of High Performance, sportscotland**

Mike began by saying this was a time to celebrate success and the impact of high performance sport on communities is fantastic. It's been a long journey since 1996 but two big projects have transformed the way sport is delivered in Scotland; the establishment of the National Lottery and the founding of the Scottish Institute of Sport, this has very much been a 20 year vision.

2016 was an historic year with regard to medal success and saw the highest number of athletes from Scotland compete at an Olympic & Para games, 51 athletes, 48% based in Scotland and 72% of para athletes based here. It has all been about working together, alignment, integration and collaboration; we now have a winning mind-set.

We couldn't have had this level of success without a solid system in place and we have been able to build on medal successes seen at previous summer and winter, and Olympic and Paralympic games, it truly is phenomenal what has been built over the past 20 years. It's difficult to fund every sport and they have to target certain sports whilst still offering support to others and like UK Sport have to look at a significant amount of data to help inform investment decisions.

Athletes now have a high level of support that didn't exist back in the late 90's, it is now one of the most important features. We have to protect Scottish athletes and sportscotland are able to put a support package around athletes in smaller governing bodies who don't have the support systems in place.

We can't be complacent after recent success and need to push forward, sportscotland have a new strategy working on new projects around always developing the ways they do things and the services they can offer in order to become a world class sporting system.

There are challenges in getting there and sportscotland are embracing digital innovation and working with academics in order to better understand how the human brain works and the impact on performance sport. We need to take risks if we are to innovate and despite a cut to public funding they are doing the best with what is available to them.

### **Key Discussion Points**

- It was raised that a high proportion of these athletes come from middle/upper class backgrounds and questioned where high performance sport fitted in with development pathways. Liz Nicholl responded by saying that 1300 supported athletes gave back 20,000 volunteering days, inspiring and encouraging communities. They are always looking at ways to partner with agencies that support grassroots sport and where there may have been a clear selection route, they are looking at more innovative ways of finding talent in different places.

A new initiative called 'Champions in Scotland' sees 600 athletes as role models going to schools and deprived areas trying to inspire children. There is a lot of great anecdotal evidence that doesn't get reported.

- There has been a decline in lottery spending due to the introduction of other lotteries; fortunately the UK Government has covered the shortfall for now but more needs to be done to regulate other lotteries and encourage spend on the National Lottery.
- It was asked how high performance sport can have a positive impact on the health of the nation. Mike responded by saying that performance sport is only 0.14% of the health budget and although it can offer inspiration, sportscotland is not responsible for the health of the nation, yet they do play a part. There are lot of different silos that need to come together to really make the changes needed on a national scale. High performance is the 'shop window' and we need to make sure investment stays in sport so that people see its importance, whilst tied in with messages of the overall benefits of sport. There needs to be a behaviour change at a national level, being physically active should be embedded at an early age, perhaps put pressure on the education sector to take responsibility for physical activity/literacy.
- More needs to be done to increase access to activity, The Daily Mile is a good example and we just need to look at the French, German, Danes etc. to see that that they have dedicated part of their day to sport and make better use of facilities out with school hours. The same could be done here by opening up the school estate for wider public access.
- Liz and Mike rounded up by saying that if it's working well let's keep up the investment instead of cutting the sport budget. We will need to be clever with where it is allocated and be sensible with how it is spent.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016 meeting were accepted.

### **Matters Arising**

### Queen's Honours

Liz Smith MSP offered the congratulations of the CPG to those who were recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours List for their contribution to sport: <http://www.thesa.org.uk/details/79/39/Services-to-sport-and-recreation-recognised-in-Queens-s-New-Years-Honours-List>

### Special Thanks

Special thanks was given to Jim McIntosh (Scottish Target Shooting). This was his last meeting after many years' service to the Group.

### AOCB

- Date of next meeting was TBC – later agreed it would be 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017
- Liz Smith MSP thanked everyone for their input and brought the meeting to a close.

*The Cross Party Group on Sport is co-convened by Alison Johnstone MSP & Liz Smith MSP.  
It is jointly administered by the offices of these MSPs and the Scottish Sports Association.*