

Minute of Meeting held at the Scottish Parliament

PRESENT

Margo MacDonald MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP, James Kelly MSP, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Mark Griffin MSP, Derek Mackay MSP, Clare Adamson MSP, Peter Warren, Alan Miller, Brian Robinson, Lachlan Bruce, Diane Cameron, Bob Aitken, Mary Allison, Kim Atkinson, Oliver Barsby, Campbell Bell, Tom Bishop, Lachlan Bruce, David Carey, Sharon Clough, Lee Cousins, Ian Crawford, Stuart Gallagher, Daniel Gray, Hugh Hall, Jane Harvey, Lorriane Kerr, Bruce Kerr, Walter Macadam, Sharon MacDonald, Derek Mackay, David McColgan, Jim McIntosh, Joanna McLaughlin, Charlie Raeburn, Helen Todd, Cammy Watt, Hayley Wotherspoon, Chas Booth, Johnny Gailey, Alasdair McKinlay, Ruth Wilson and Jane Harvey,.

APOLOGIES

Dougi Bryce, Liza Baillie, Sarah Boyack MSP, Craig Burn, Jane Campbell Morrison, John Clayton, Peter Faassen de Heer, Ian Findlay, Margaret Ann Fleming, Doug Folan, Stew Fowlie, Dr John Gillies, Jim Gunn, Duncan Hamilton, Ian Hooper, Rick Kenney, John Lamont MSP, Jenni Lloyd, Gavin MacLeod, David Martin, Julie Mason, Judith McFarlane, Mark McGeachie, Sarah Mills, Jacky Moss, Jim Moyes, Alan Murray, Neil Park, Colin Rennie, Tavish Scott MSP, Ronnie Sloan, Drew Smith MSP, Stuart Smith, Kenny Stewart, James Stuart, Ron Sutherland, Simon Turner, Brian Walker, Humza Yousaf MSP, Paul Zealey and David Carey.

Introduction to AGM

Margo MacDonald MSP ran through the CPG on Sport's successes over the past year and thanked both James Kelly MSP and Paul Wheelhouse MSP for supporting the chairing of meetings over the year. The number of Group members, overall attendees and MSP attendees had all increased significantly as the CPG moved from strength to strength. The new format – of overall, cross-sport issues rather than individual sport focus – had worked very well. Margo shared her pride in the Group's development then ran through the wide range of topics covered, from opening up the school estate to 2014 Legacy. Margo thanked Peter Warren and Kim Atkinson for their support as the joint-secretariat to the Group over the past year and invited comment on the format/structure/running of the Group, of which there was none.

Previous Minute

The minutes from the September 2011 AGM were approved as an accurate record (proposed by James Kelly MSP and seconded by Diane Cameron).

Cross Party Group Convenor

Margo MacDonald MSP (Independent) was proposed to continue as Convenor by Paul Wheelhouse MSP, who read out further written nominations for the continuation of her tenure. Margo accepted this nomination. No other nominations were received and Margo was duly appointed.

Cross Party Group Vice Convenors

The following were all approved as Vice Convenors:

- Jim Hume MSP (Liberal Democrat)
- James Kelly MSP (Labour)
- Liz Smith MSP (Conservative)
- Paul Wheelhouse MSP (SNP)
- Clare Adamson MSP (SNP)
- Mark Griffin MSP (Labour)

Cross Party Group Secretariat

Margo proposed that the current arrangement of a joint-secretariat between her office and the Scottish Sports Association (SSA) be continued. She read out an email of opposition to this arrangement from Ron Sutherland, a CPG on Sport member, and invited comments on and asked if there was support for his viewpoint. James Kelly MSP responded by stating that the current arrangement worked well for MSPs, and seemed to be headed by an efficient, competent and impartial team. He was 'delighted' to see the co-secretariat continue and wished personally to be disassociated with the previous comment. Paul Wheelhouse MSP echoed his sentiments, and pointed out that the CPG on Sport had been highlighted as an exemplar of good practice by the soon-to-be-

Group Contact:

Margo MacDonald MSP

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5714

Fax: 0131 348 6271

E-mail: peter.warren@scottish.parliament.uk

published Parliament report into CPGs. Further voices backed these sentiments, and the co-secretariat between the office of Margo MacDonald MSP and the SSA was accepted by the Group.

Round Table Discussion

Margo introduced and welcomed Derek Mackay MSP, Minister for Local Government and Planning. The Minister thanked the Group for inviting him along to its AGM. He would talk, broadly, about the role Local Authorities play in sport, and specifically about the opportunities for sport presented by the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill (CERB).

He began by outlining his experience as leader of Renfrewshire Council, and an account of how Local Authorities (LAs) view sport and physical activity. He referred to the statutory duty on LAs regarding the provision of sport and physical activity, recognising that the law was not specific, therefore allowing LAs to decide on delivery.

Since the 2007 Concordat, relations between Local Authorities and the Scottish Government had taken a new direction. Things were no longer centralised, LAs took more budgetary responsibility and far less money was ring-fenced (only approximately £6million in total), which influenced sports provision. As the Minister now responsible for that relationship, he was not suggesting any structural change, but instead an emphasis on preventative spend, integration of services, workforce development inclusive of the private and third sectors and a renewal of community planning to deliver Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).

He reflected on the meeting he'd attended earlier in the day, the first time in 14 years that Council leaders, Government and Ministers met to discuss public services. The priority topics discussed were:

- Prevention
- Integration and services
- Workforce development
- Improved performance (looking at outputs not inputs).

They were responding to public sector reform by renewed Community Planning Partnerships to deliver new SOAs. The Minister then gave the budgetary context in which LAs operate, pointing out that Scotland had as yet only had a fifth of the public sector cuts anticipated. He continued that while sports provision had historically been a casualty of cuts, LAs now took their responsibilities in this area very seriously in relation to sport, physical activity and health. There remained a desire to protect facilities and programmes. He highlighted a willingness to work in partnership with Local Government, with a focus on outcomes due to financial pressures.

There were, then, huge pressures of budget on the way for LAs and therefore worries for sport; however, there were also opportunities presented by the CERB. Potentially, under-used and unused facilities could be transferred to community groups in a transparent way, not just when LAs want rid of them as occurs presently – these groups would have the right to make an approach for a building they had ideas for. Groups would be empowered to release the potential of facilities, which includes challenging the private sector regarding land and facilities. The ethos behind this was the notion that local communities were best placed to empower themselves to make local decisions. He extended this theory to the provision of public services too – if the service delivery is not valued by the community, they can request a change to this. He then invited comments.

Margo began by clarifying that the Minister kindly attended the meeting to exchange information and ideas and that Ministers are not accountable to Cross Party Groups. Margo then intimated the timely nature of this discussion following the recently announced challenges for Glasgow Rangers along with the subject of Leith Waterworld, a swimming pool set to be shut down by Edinburgh Council. The Minister replied that streams did presently exist for communities to investigate asset transfer; and any mooted closure should look at community ownership before a final decision was reached. Powers for community ownership did exist at present; CERB's aim was to enshrine them and remove barriers. The Bill aims to make this easier in relation to accountability, governance and overcoming barriers.

Diane Cameron, Social Enterprise and Sports Co-ordinator with Senscot, pointed out that in Scotland there currently existed 12 community-run swimming pools. Her own role was to help disparate community groups come together in providing positive cost savings to ensure viable and feasible businesses.

Paul Wheelhouse MSP asked how the committees of local sports clubs could engage with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). Minister Mackay replied that they must become organised, that there was potential in unity.

Group Contact:

Margo MacDonald MSP

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5714

Fax: 0131 348 6271

E-mail: peter.warren@scottish.parliament.uk

They must engage with all LAs, and work with other sports to create a united front. Then, CPPs would listen. He stated that organisations must be prepared to engage with 32 LAs (assuming this is their desire) or to watch their organisations wither on the vine. He confirmed a step change with CPPs with an increased focus on them. He confirmed a great willingness of the Government to support preventative agendas; £0.5 million will be spent on preventative spend over the next 3 years.

Charlie Raeburn made several points relating to LA sports provision and the CERB: PPP/PFI contracts had not yet been amended to allow community access to schools; LAs did not have any control over Leisure Trusts; sports clubs needed encouragement to self-manage; people needed to be empowered before they felt there was worth in being involved. The Minister replied that PPP/PFI contracts were incredibly difficult to renegotiate, but that they were doing what they can in this area; **sportscotland's** report on this is ongoing. To that end, lessons had been learned and such terms would not be agreed again. The new Procurement Bill would have an ethical element, which would also help.

The Minister continued that Glasgow 2014 was a blessing for sport; in a time of cutbacks, it concentrated the minds of Local Authorities on the importance of physical activity. It had helped in leaning on them to work towards the two hours'/two periods' of PE in schools target. Community engagement – especially through the CERB – could be a huge legacy of the Games.

Councillor Chas Booth reflected on work related to Leith Waterworld and highlighted the current challenge for community groups in accessing the required and accurate information to aid informed decision making regarding community management/ownership of facilities. The Minister agreed that accessing such information was vital. He continued that there was a clear need for a register of assets across the public sector to enable communities to understand the potential that exists.

Mark Griffin MSP raised the matter of access to the school estate. Could clubs access school swimming pools, for instance? He also asked how closely the quality of PE provision was monitored. The Minister responded that many LAs thought the Scottish Government was being too prescriptive in its target-setting, but nonetheless monitoring the quality of PE was agreed by COSLA. On the school estate, there was no formulaic approach to opening up, but the Government did endorse and encourage it, for example through Community Sports Hubs. Sharon MacDonald, Scottish Swimming, noted that often school swimming pools are open, but that communities can't access these due to private and commercial swimming providers monopolising water time.

The Minister concluded by urging SGBs and clubs to engage in the Community Planning process. He also invited responses from sport to the CERB consultation.

Margo thanked the Minister and attendees for their contributions, and concluded the 2012 AGM.

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