

MINUTES

Date:	16 January 2003
Time:	1.30 – 4.00pm
Venue:	Committee Room 2, National Assembly for Wales
Attendance:	
Members	<p>Rhodri Glyn Thomas) (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, Chair)</p> <p>Jenny Randerson (Liberal Democrat, Cardiff Central, Assembly Minister)</p> <p>Owen John Thomas (Plaid Cymru, South Wales Central)</p> <p>Lorraine Barrett (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth)</p> <p>Delyth Evans (Labour, Mid & West Wales)</p> <p>Alison Halford (Labour, Delyn)</p> <p>Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru, Caernarfon)</p> <p>Glyn Davies (Conservative, Mid & West Wales)</p> <p>Rosemary Butler (Labour, Newport West)</p>
Officials	<p>Margaret Evans (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)</p> <p>Arthur Emyr (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)</p>
Secretariat	Marie Knox: Head of MRCS
	Lynsey Hazzard: Deputy Clerk

1.30pm-1.35pm**Item 1: Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**

1. The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public.
2. Apologies were received from Delyth Evans and Glyn Davies. Apologies were initially received from Lorraine Barrett, however she was later able to attend.

1.3 The Chair reminded Members of the declarations of interest requirement, in accordance with Standing Order 4.5.

1.35pm to 2.30pm

Item 2: Policy Review on Sport: Cabinet Office

CC 01-03(p.1)

Presentation from: Simon Cooper, Cabinet Office/ DCMS

1. The presentation was based upon the joint DCMS/Strategy unit report: "Game Plan" which concerned sport in England. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes at Annex A. The following points were made:
 - The objective of the review was to develop a framework for developing sport, to review existing funding and develop a new approach for major events. The report recommended that the key objectives for sport strategy should be:
 - i. To increase mass participation
 - ii. To improve high performance athletes' success in international competitions, particularly in popular sports.
 - There were 5 key points that arose from the review, namely:
 - i. More needed to be done to raise participation in sport. Health benefits were the main focus of increased participation as they were the most documented. The team had estimated that physical inactivity in England cost almost £2 billion per year in terms of health care. A 10% increase in activity levels could reduce costs by £500 million per year. More benefit would be gained from encouraging moderate exercise for the sedentary, rather than more strenuous exercise for those already active. More evidence was required in terms of the benefits of sport in terms of crime reduction, education and social inclusion as there were other influencing factors to be considered. To promote participation, the report concluded that action would be taken to address both supply side barriers, such as facilities and staff development, and demand side barriers, such as income, time and motivation.
 - ii. More help was needed for high performance, elite athletes in order to bridge "talent gaps" and identify potential talent earlier. There was no systematic approach to talent identification in the UK and no seamless path for young athletes to progress from school to high performance competition. Work needed to be done to plug any gaps in the process.
 - iii. Strategic long term planning was necessary in order to compete for the staging of "mega events" such as the Commonwealth Games, Olympics and the Football World Cup. It was highlighted that, as with elite athlete success, such events promoted a "feel good factor" in the population as a whole. There were also economic benefits to the host country.

- iv. A more professional approach was required, in terms of the skills taught to staff within sports councils, local government and the sports governing bodies. Also a strengthened role for the Sports Cabinet was advocated to ensure better co-ordination of sport in the UK.
- v. It was proposed that "overlap" sports with funding links to both UK and devolved sports bodies should be funded via one route. It would be for the governing bodies to make the UK/devolved route recommendations, followed by discussion between the sports councils and ratification of the Sports Cabinet.

1. There followed a question and answer session during which the following points were made:

- There was a concern that if funding were centralised in the UK, Wales would be disadvantaged. If the WAG were expected to provide funding then they should be a part of the decision making process. In terms of lottery funding of sport in the UK, Wales were disadvantaged due to the smaller population. There needed to be fundamental reforms in funding criteria.
- The top ten "popular" sports listed were mainly male team sports. Moving away from supporting all the sports where the UK achieved international success could potentially disadvantage women and individual competitors. There was a 20% difference in sport participation between men and women and certain groups should be targeted to increase participation.
- The staging of major and mega events was a devolved issue. It was down to the home countries to decide whether to compete for events and how to fund them. The recommendations in the report were intended to address problems that had arisen in the past with mega events.
- Consultees had not been in favour of a statutory requirement on local authorities in relation to sports provision. In this context, the report recommended the introduction of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets; greater use of county partnerships with Sport England; and more co-ordination within Whitehall.
- On funding it was explained that £2 billion was being allocated to sport over 2 years. However it was essential that improvements were made to the current structure before additional funds could be allocated. Members were concerned that there should be an equitable distribution of lottery funds across the UK. It was noted that lottery funding was under review. There was also concern that it was more difficult to obtain private sector sponsorship in Wales than in England, and that a match-funding requirement could disadvantage smaller sports.

2.3 The Minister then made the following points:

- Wales did better per head of the population in relation to major sporting events than any of the other home countries.
- Concerns raised by the WAG had been taken into account by DCMS/Cabinet Office in producing "Game Plan".
- In terms of mega events, the Commonwealth Games was realistically the only event Wales could bid for. If a bid was made, it was felt that Wales should receive the same subsidy as Manchester had for the 2002 games.
- It would be helpful if the research information arising from the recommendations could be made available to the Assembly.

Item 3: Policy review of Sport-Federation of Sports Associations for the Disabled (FSAD)

Presentation from: Jon Morgan, FSAD. A copy of the presentation is attached at Annex B.

3.1 The following points were made:

- The FSAD was formed in the 1980s as an amalgam of various disability representative groups. Within the FSAD were representatives from the Sports Council of Wales (SCW) and local authorities. The key role of the FSAD was to develop sporting opportunities for disabled people at both grass roots and high performance levels. A 2-year interim plan, "Moving Forward" had been implemented to monitor the FSAD's effectiveness and see how it could be improved. The aim was to provide a "clear path" for participants in place of the present complex network in terms of accessing facilities and funding. The FSAD supported both priority sports and other sports such as wheelchair rugby, tennis and basketball. Many athletes competed in both Welsh and GB teams.
- Disability Sport Cymru (DSC) was an initiative based on a partnership between the FSAD, SCW and local authorities. Its aim was to provide community based recreational opportunities throughout Wales. There was a network of 22 DSC officers, 8 full time, in place throughout local authorities in Wales to implement its objectives

3.2 The following were highlighted as barriers to participation in relation to the disabled and action being taken:

- Coaching and sustainability of both coaches and volunteers was a concern. Coaches were having to be fast tracked. FSAD had received £50,000 from the European Commission to introduce more volunteers and create a support programme for volunteers.
- Transport - FSAD were hoping to work with social services in order to access suitable vehicles out of working hours.
- Training - More training of leisure centre staff was required to meet the needs of the disabled participant. It was suggested that concessions should be given to disabled group activities as many were receiving state disability benefits .
- Facilities – Facilities could be upgraded, often at little cost, to be made more accessible to the disabled in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Education - Disabled children who were integrated into mainstream schools should have equal access to sporting opportunities and facilities.
- Marketing – There were two elements, namely market research and promotional campaigns. The profile of disabled participants and FSAD was critical. A National Marketing Campaign had been launched focusing on sport rather than individual disability in addition to creating a healthier nation.

3.3 In relation to high performance athletes, assistance was provided via the following:

- Athlete Support Services-the FSAD were keen for athletes to receive sports science tuition in addition to dietary education. This was currently being provided by a Cardiff based company.
- Talented Athlete Support Fund- the FSAD were keen for those on Disability Living Allowance who were not talented enough to obtain funding from Elite Cymru, to receive financial assistance to reach their full potential.
- Event Management-more strategic event management was required as on occasion, both at UK and international level, squads were provided with details of events at short notice which put pressure on systems.

- Performance camps-to bring together developing and elite athletes
- Local competitions across Wales in order to create the first step on the performance ladder.

3.4 During the question and answer session, the following points were made:

- In relation to funding, the SCW were very supportive financially however the FSAD could not rely solely on this funding and could not raise funding in the same way as able bodied sports. Sponsorship had been agreed with a Cardiff company to provide £50,000 over the next 2 years. They provided services to disabled participants and accordingly the partnership was mutually beneficial.
- The FSAD were developing a website for information purposes. They wanted to establish a partnership with social services and the education sector to assist with the seeking of external funding.
- Local authority support was very good and it was hoped that all local authorities would support the scheme in the same way.
- The WAG could assist the FSAD in raising the profile of disabled sport at both grass roots and elite level. The WAG could also assist the FSAD in making the right connections with the new health boards. FSAD could benefit from assistance from ELWA in training volunteers, although funding would be required.
- Transport was a problem for the disabled across all areas, not just sport. A broader audit was needed of wider community transport that may be available.
- Getting good media coverage for Disability Sport Cymru was essential. DSC had trained staff working with the media. The FSAD preferred a focused, strategic approach to sponsorship as opposed to one-off events.
- Research carried out over the next 2 years would give the FSAD information on how successfully their schemes had been delivered.

Item 4: Policy Review of Sport: Sports Council for Wales

CC-01-03 (p3)

Presenters: Huw Jones, Director, Sports Council for Wales, Gareth Davies Chairman, Sports Council for Wales. A copy of the presentation is annexed to the minutes at Annex C.

4.1 The following points were made:

- 57% of the Welsh population participated in sport, regularly or occasionally, which was a 2% increase in the last 2 years. There were higher levels of participation in Ceredigion and the North than in the South Wales valleys. The greatest benefit of participation was improvement in health. It was estimated that 30% of coronary heart disease was caused through lack of exercise and there was a high correlation between inactivity and mortality rates. Other benefits of sport included social inclusion. The Social Inclusion in Sport scheme was a lottery-funded scheme, providing support for communities.

4.2 The SCW recognised that barriers to participation in sport were not generic and differed in different parts of Wales. There were a multitude of barriers which were summarised as follows:

- Time/Commitment/Family responsibilities - especially in relation to women who generally had less leisure time than men.
- Cultural differences/attitudes to sport.
- Gender equality - it was noted that women in Finland had a higher rate of participation than women in the UK however there were better childcare facilities in Finland and women had more financial power.
- Alternative activities - especially in relation to young people who had a greater variety of activities to choose from today than in the past.
- School attitudes to sport - not all schools placed emphasis on sport and therefore opportunities for children were not equal.
- Role models - the lack of role models for women and girls was an issue that the SCW were looking into. More role models, such as Tanni Grey-Thompson were needed.
- Personal safety/abuse - especially in relation to women and children
- Parental attitudes - a healthy parental attitude toward sport generally meant greater support for children participating in sport. Family attitudes were very important as research showed that often families considered it more acceptable for a boy to participate in sport than a girl. There were schemes in place to overcome this and things were improving.
- More media attention should be given to women's sport to encourage participation.
- Facilities/costs/transport - these varied significantly throughout Wales due to the different local authorities. The SCW were looking at a "benchmarking" system to co-ordinate local authorities.
- Lack of coaches/volunteers - due to concerns over legal obligations
- Competition structures
- Negative/positive experiences - these influenced a person when deciding whether to participate in sport.

3. During the question and answer session the following points were made:

- The difference in participation levels as between boys and girls was both a historical and cultural issue. Boys had leagues for the sports they compete in whereas in the main, girls did not. More needed to be done in relation to media coverage of women's sport to create interest for women and girls to participate.
- An analysis undertaken three years ago in relation to areas of the country that had accessed lottery funding, indicated that Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil had not received a great deal of money. Lottery funding applications were very time consuming in terms of paperwork and it was felt that this discouraged applicants. Deprived areas should be targeted to create community-based schemes using lottery funding.
- Some individuals were at a disadvantage due to where they lived. It was suggested that Centres of Excellence be established on a regional basis and more coaching be provided on a local level. The SCW had received an additional £1/4m from the WAG to assist in implementing this programme.

Action Points: The SCW were to write to the WAG to provide a more detailed breakdown of the levels of sport participation across local authority areas.

Item 5: Forward Work Programme

5.1 The Chair asked for Members to advise him of any comments they had in relation to the Forward Work Programme. The following points arose:

- The Minister's position paper for 22nd January 2003, would not be available. The Chair asked the Minister to provide the Committee with a paper indicating the WAG's current policies and activities in relation to participation in sport, in particular any points not made previously by the SCW. The Minister agreed to this.
- Concern was raised regarding legislation in relation to the hosting of cultural events in chapels and churches.
- The information requested in relation to the Audit of Festivals had been placed on the Arts Council for Wales website
- "Scoping sessions" on Anglo-Welsh culture were intended to draw up a draft terms of reference for a possible future review. This would be for the successor committee to consider after the elections.
- Music for young people was suggested as a possible discussion topic for a future meeting.
- Due to the amount of time that had already been spent on the Welsh language, it was felt that an information paper on the 2003-04 detailed funding allocation would suffice in relation to the meeting scheduled for 26th March 2003.

Item 6: Minutes of Previous Meeting

CC-21-02 (min), CC 18-02 (min)

6.1 It was requested that Dafydd Wigley's point in relation to the volume of reading material provided to each Committee member be included in the minutes dated 18th December 2002.

