HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 26 March 2008

Session 3

£5.00

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by RR Donnelley.

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HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE
9th Meeting 2008, Session 3

CONVENER

*Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
*Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
*Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP)
*Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP)
*Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
*Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee West) (SNP)
Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Professor Fred Coalter (University of Stirling)
Forbes Dunlop (sportscotland)
Maureen Kidd (NHS Health Scotland)
Liz McColgan MBE

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Tracey White

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Douglas Thornton

ASSISTANT CLERK

Emma Berry

LOCATION

Committee Room 6

Scottish Parliament

Health and Sport Committee

Wednesday 26 March 2008

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:02*]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Christine Grahame): I call members to attention for the ninth meeting of the Health and Sport Committee in 2008. I remind everyone present—at the table or in the public gallery—to ensure that their mobile phones are switched off.

We have received no apologies for absence.

Item 1 on our agenda is a decision on whether to take item 5 in private. Item 5 is consideration of evidence received during item 4, which is on a sports legacy for Scotland. Are committee members content to take item 5 in private, in line with standard practice?

Members *indicated agreement*.

Subordinate Legislation

Rice Products from the United States of America (Restriction on First Placing on the Market) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/87)

Personal Injuries (NHS Charges) (Amounts) Scotland Amendment Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/96)

Meat Products (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/97)

10:03

The Convener: Under item 2 on our agenda, we have three Scottish statutory instruments to consider under the negative procedure.

SSI 2008/87 implements the emergency control measures set out in European Commission decision 2006/601/EC, to deal with potentially contaminated rice imported from the United States of America.

SSI 2008/96 uprates the tariff of amounts that hospitals can recover from compensators for treating victims of road traffic accidents, when the victim has successfully claimed for personal injury compensation. As the original scheme was established in January 2007, there was no uprating last April.

SSI 2008/97 brings labelling requirements for starch and protein in Scotland into line with European legislation and removes uncertainty in the law regarding the definition of a "technological purpose" for added starch and protein.

The Subordinate Legislation Committee made no comments on the instruments. No other comments have been received from members and no motions to annul have been lodged. Are we agreed that the committee does not wish to make any recommendations in relation to the three sets of regulations?

Members *indicated agreement*.

The Convener: We are awaiting the arrival of the first witness so I will suspend the meeting.

10:04

Meeting suspended.

10:06

On resuming—

Pathways into Sport Inquiry

The Convener: I am pleased to welcome Liz McColgan to give evidence to the committee during the first phase of our pathways into sport inquiry, during which we are taking evidence from successful sportspeople.

As members will be aware, among her many achievements, Liz McColgan has won two Commonwealth gold medals, an Olympic silver medal and a world championship in a sporting career as a distance runner that has spanned over twenty years—although she does not look old enough for that. She has agreed to make a short presentation before answering members' questions.

Liz McColgan MBE: Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here. I was asked to detail my pathway from when I started out to when I won my medals. I will say why and how I started, list my career up until the end and say what it took me to get there.

I first came across athletics in 1976 at St Saviour's high school. I had moved there from primary school and the introduction was made by Phil Kearns, a physical education teacher who was a mad marathon runner. Instead of giving us hockey or netball during the winter months, he used to make us do cross-country runs for which he set the routes. He noticed that I was always first back from the run.

Phil had a friend called Harry Bennett, who was head coach at Dundee Hawkhill Harriers. Phil sent four girls from St Saviour's, of which I was one, to Harry Bennett. We went there three days a week. After a year, I was the only one still at the club. I enjoyed the athletics. In 1976, I had my first win per se in the Dundee schools cross-country championship. Before I left school in fourth year, I got second at the Scottish schools cross-country championship at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh.

My parents were unemployed and we did not have a lot of money. If Phil had not driven me to races when I was a youngster, I would not have run in any of them. He took time out to drive us in the school bus to Scottish schools events. He also arranged school competitions. He was a great guy; he motivated us. He set me on the route to my career in athletics.

I was very much a tomboy at school. I was the captain of the hockey and volleyball teams. I had decided to leave school at 15, but Harry asked me to stay on, stop all my other sports and concentrate on running. Instead of training for only three days a week, he told me that I needed to train for six days a week.

In 1979, aged 16, I left school and went to work on a youth training scheme place in a jute mill for £23.50 a week. I got up at 5.30 in the morning and went for a run, worked a full day, met Harry at 6 o'clock and trained at night. Looking back, I remember that my coach always used to tell me that I was a 10 kilometre runner. When we decided to train on the extra days, he said to me, "Liz, you're going to be a great 10km runner." To me, that was a big shock. At the time, the longest distance that women athletes could run at Olympic and international level was 3,000m, so I could not understand why he said that I would be a long-distance runner. Thank God that I had him as a coach, because he really directed me and educated me in athletics.

Unfortunately for me, Harry was a very driven guy. At the end of 1979, I got a phone call at my house in Whitfield from a Mr Woods from the States, who I did not know. He offered me a scholarship to the States because he had seen that I was ranked third for my age group in the United Kingdom for the 800m. When he offered me a full scholarship, I thought that it was a bit of a prank and I put the phone down. He called back and talked to my parents, but I was adamant that I would not go. Unfortunately, he then called Harry, who said that I was going—

The Convener: I know men like Harry.

Liz McColgan: Harry actually gave my mum and dad the money for the flight and he forced me, along with my uncle, on to a bus all the way from Dundee to London. I got on the plane and off I went. Unfortunately, after I had been away for a year, Harry died of a heart attack. He never got to see the success that he started, but he put me on the road to that success.

In the States, I got my first opportunity to study at school while being encouraged to practise sport. For the first time, my day was centred around my training. Classes took place in the evening or early morning, with gaps in-between when we went to train as a group.

My scholarship was to a junior college called Ricks College in Idaho. Unfortunately, I did not know that it was a Mormon school—I had never heard of Mormons before—where the routine was very restricted. However, it was probably just as well for a young girl from Whitfield on her first time outside Scotland.

When I was at Ricks College, I won every collegiate title that was available. That was the first time in the history of the school that anyone had won all the titles across the board—cross-country and indoor titles as well as national titles on the

outdoor track. I was heavily recruited by all the major four-year schools in the USA. I was flown to a few of them, but I decided on the University of Alabama because it offered both me and my boyfriend a full scholarship. We went together.

Alabama was a major turning point in my career. I was there for four years. I had a great group to train with and I worked with a great guy who allowed me to come home in the summertime to compete in European events. That was very difficult because, back then, schools in the USA expected their students to compete in their regional and NCAA—National Collegiate Athletic Association—events. Many athletes who went to the States would come back in the summer burned out because they had had a full season in the States. However, I was lucky enough to have a coach who allowed me to plan my year. I told him that it was important to me to train so that I peaked for the Commonwealth games. He allowed me to do that, which was very good of him.

In 1984, nobody in Scotland knew what I was doing but I scored the highest for Alabama at the indoor national championships, for which I received a letter from Ronald Reagan. If I had been a school on my own, I would have finished third. I sort of doubled up for the team by competing in the 1 mile and 2 mile races as well as the medley relay. The points that I gathered made Alabama, for the first time in the school's history, NCAA indoor champions. Ronald Reagan's letter said that that was an amazing feat and well done to me. I also got the freedom of the city of Alabama.

In 1985, I competed in my first race for Great Britain during the world student games, in which I came fifth in the 10km and seventh in the 3km.

10:15

In 1986, I returned from Alabama as kind of an unknown quantity and tried to qualify for the Commonwealth games. I ran the UK championships, which, unfortunately for the other girls, had a really silly rule, which was that anyone who got lapped had to stop, and I lapped everybody in the field at the trials. That gave me my first UK championship title, which qualified me for the Commonwealth games, at which I won Scotland's only gold on the track. That year, I had prepared to run only in the Commonwealth games, but I was put in a situation in which I was kind of like a duck out of water. Because I had won the Commonwealth games, I was then the best in Britain and was asked to run in the European championships 10km. I said that I was not happy about that and that I did not want to run it because I had not planned on running another 10km so close to the Commonwealth games, but I was kind of forced into it by a guy called Frank Dick. Unfortunately, I had a really disastrous games and finished seventh in the 10km and fifth in the 3km. I went from a high where I feeling great about my racing to a low where I was wondering where I had gone wrong.

In 1987, the world-class athletics ball started to roll. In Bali's richest road race, I became the first lady to beat Ingrid Kristiansen. I also got third-degree burns on my arms because I was not used to being out in the sun and did not know any better.

Back then, because there was no lottery funding and so on, you earned your living by winning your races. There were no up front appearance fees—you had to go out and run. If you won, you earned; if you lost, you did not. It was a hard career to try to make a living out of if you wanted to support a family and yourself.

I have never been a big cross-country runner. I have always preferred the road and the track—I cannot get through mud, for whatever reason. In 1987, Scotland had its last opportunity to run as Scotland at the world cross-country championships, because there would be a GB team the next year. I got a phone call from someone at Scottish Athletics asking me to do them a favour and represent Scotland, as I had a chance of winning a team medal. I changed my training for a couple of weeks and came second in the race. I think that we also got a third team medal, so it was not too bad.

In 1988, I went to Seoul. A guy called John Anderson, who I had met at the European championships at the end of 1986 or the start of 1987, asked if he could start coaching me. Since the end of 1979, when Harry Bennett died, I had not had a coach—I had self-coached all the way through. It was quite good to have a Scottish person say that they thought that they could help me.

I started working with John Anderson at the start of 1987. He coached me to Seoul, where I got a silver medal. I felt that I had overtrained in Seoul. That was the first time that I had run in a competition after following someone else's programme and I felt that I was a bit leg tired going into the championships that year. I was very disappointed with my silver medal.

In 1989, whether it was because of the training or something else, I went through a period when I felt really burned out and disillusioned with the sport. I was not enjoying doing what I was doing, and I decided to retire. For nine months, I did not run a step. I remember sitting in my house in Maniki with my husband and seeing a preview of the Commonwealth games in Auckland, which featured a clip of an English runner called Jill

Hunter. I said to Peter, "I could beat her," and he said, "Well, you'd better do something about it."

The Convener: I am glad you never became a politician; that is all that I can say.

Liz McColgan: I hauled myself off to Australia for 12 weeks' training. That was all the training that I did before Auckland in 1990, where I won gold in the 10km and bronze in the 3km, which was a bit of a surprise.

I came home really motivated, thinking, "I am really enjoying my athletics again." However, after I had been home for about three months, I did not feel right at all. When I started to put on weight on my arms, I realised that something was up with me. I went to the doctor's and found out that I was pregnant. I had my first child in 1990. During my pregnancy, I felt that I was not happy with the way things had been going with my coach, John Anderson, so I decided that I would terminate the coach-athlete relationship. As I did not know whether I would get back into running, I preferred to relax during my pregnancy and not worry about my coaching situation. I ran throughout my pregnancy—I ran as usual until I was seven months pregnant and only once a day after that. I even ran the day before I gave birth. In other words, I was fairly fit while I was pregnant.

In 1991, I coached myself. I got back into training very quickly after giving birth. Seven weeks after giving birth, I won my first 5km race in Carlsbad in the USA. Twelve weeks after giving birth, I finished third at the world cross-country championships in Antwerp. Nine months after giving birth, I was world champion at 10km in Tokyo. After the world championships in Tokyo, I got a call from New York and was asked whether I had ever thought about doing a marathon. When I said no, the reply was, "We'd love you to come to the big apple to take part in the New York marathon." I decided to do that and, after six weeks' marathon training, I won the New York marathon in the fastest ever time for a first-time marathon runner. In the same year, I was named BBC sports personality of the year.

In 1992, I went on to become world half marathon champion. I was world record holder for the half marathon and at 10km, 8km, 5km and 5km indoors. I also won the Tokyo marathon at the end of that year.

In 1993, I picked up a bit of a back problem and was advised by physiotherapists at UK Athletics to put an orthotic in my shoe. Unfortunately, on my first run using an orthotic, I tore the medial retinaculum in my knee. I had an operation, but after I was discharged from hospital, I got a knee infection. Thankfully, a local surgeon at King's Cross hospital in Dundee saved my knee by doing a major operation on it. Unfortunately, I got no proper rehabilitation and was left with a knee that I could not bend or straighten. Even though I was the best runner in Britain at the time, I received no medical help whatsoever.

I went to America where, on the off-chance, I met a friend of my husband called Frank O'Mara, who was the Irish indoor mile champion. He had gone to school in the States. We got chatting and he told me that he had a friend, Gerard Hartmann, who was a kinesiotherapist and who would be able to help me. I linked up with him and he worked wonders—he worked on my leg for four hours a day. It took nearly two years before I could run again. Without him, I would not have achieved what I did.

Gerard Hartmann arranged a meeting with a lady called Grete Waitz, who was an inspiration. In 1995, after a few meetings with her, she became my coach. She was the first proper coach I had had since my split with John Anderson. She coached me until the end of my marathon career.

In 1996, I won the London marathon. In 1997, I was diagnosed with arthritis in my feet but still finished second in that year's London marathon. That was the last race that I ran—I retired as a result of arthritis in my feet.

The Convener: That was breathtaking. You have given us a most lively, straightforward and honest presentation. I know that members have many interesting questions, but I noticed that the official reporters did not catch your description of the injury that you sustained. We have medical practitioners on the committee, but could you repeat what you said, just for the record?

Liz McColgan: I tore the medial retinaculum, at the side of the knee.

The Convener: Okay. We move now to questions.

Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP): Thank you, Liz—your account was very impressive. I was struck by the number of things that happened just by chance: you happened to meet someone, you happened to have a teacher at school who started you off and a friend of your husband's happened to say that a certain person could help you. We are considering pathways into sport and we want to make it as easy as possible for people from all backgrounds to get into sport. Can you name two or three things that we should be recommending to make things easier for young people, so that they do not have to rely on chance?

Liz McColgan: The main thing is to start by considering what happens at school. It should not be left to a teacher to identify which kids are good at sports and then organise sports for them. In this day and age, with the back-up that we have, professional club coaches should be linked into

schools. They should go in once a week or once a month for an athletics session. It should not be left to untrained people to introduce the kids to sport.

I was a very fit child because I took part in everything. However, there are a lot of very unfit children in school who do not get the opportunity to say, "Maybe I'd be good at tennis," or, "Maybe I'd be good at golf," or, "Maybe I'd be good at athletics." We need to offer our children a fairly basic fitness programme. When the children are fit, that is when they will catch the eye if they have good hand-eye co-ordination or if they look as if they could be a good runner, footballer or whatever. That is when we can direct them towards sports. However, the first problem to address is that a lot of children are very unfit.

Many children do not get opportunities. They might come from a background like mine, and it might be that people cannot afford to let the children take part in sport, or cannot afford the shoes or the kit that they need. If those problems could be addressed properly at school, and if the education system could include a fitness programme, we would be reaching a lot of kids who might otherwise be passed by.

Ian McKee: I take on board what you are saying. You said that when your talent was discovered you joined the Dundee Hawkhill Harriers. How many people were in the club? Does it still exist? How many people are in it now? Has it grown?

Liz McColgan: I am now a coach at the Dundee Hawkhill Harriers. I coach 30 athletes, whose ages range from nine to 33, and seven of them are international runners. I have come full circle; I am back where I started. However, my club has fewer runners now than it did when I ran, and fewer children running now than it did when I ran. I can go to a lot of kids in Dundee and ask them where their local running club is, but they do not know.

The council charges £1.80 to use the club, which is in an area where families are on very low incomes. How can you expect a child to go to a club three times a week, paying £1.80 each time? It ain't gonna happen.

Ian McKee: What is the difference now? How many people were in the club when you joined in the 1970s?

Liz McColgan: In the 1970s, our club would probably have had around 70 or 80 kids a night—hurdlers, sprinters, throwers and whatever. Nowadays, we would be lucky to get half that number. In fact, it is probably less than half—and the number of kids competing would be even lower, because they cannot afford it.

The Convener: How many kids are competing?

Liz McColgan: If 30 kids attend, around 10 of them will not be club members because they cannot afford to join. If we go to Inverness or wherever, our club cannot afford to put on a bus to take the kids up. We depend on parents, but many of them do not have cars. However, we do not want to put kids off by saying, "If you don't compete, you can't come," or, "If you're not a member of the club, you can't come." We are trying to encourage them to come, but they are not getting competition or getting involved in the social side of athletics.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I want to pick up on a couple of points that you raised. How different would your life have been had you not had a PE teacher who was, in your words, "a mad marathon runner"?

10:30

Liz McColgan: I would probably be on the dole; I would be smoking and drinking. That is the lifestyle that I came from, and I still have family members with that lifestyle. I was very lucky that I chose a different path from many other members of my family. I do not hide where I came from, because it is part of me. No opportunities were open to me at the time. When I ran as a child, my mum and dad did not come to see me racing. They did not know what I was doing. I had no money to get to races, and I had to run down to training, do my session and run back. Once, when I was about 13, I wanted to go and run a race in Dundee. Without realising it, I ran about 6 miles down to the race, I ran the race and then I ran 6 miles back. That is what I had to do. I know where I would be if it was not for my running.

Mary Scanlon: There are probably many school pupils, at the age you were then, who do not have a PE teacher who is a mad marathon runner. Where are they being picked up? Are they being picked up at all?

Liz McColgan: That has not been addressed. I was referring to that when I spoke about going into schools. When I was young, I was a quiet, shy person. I sat at the back of the classroom and let the world go by. Nobody ever gave us any motivation. The schoolteachers did not praise me, even as a runner. I got remarks like "Your brains are in your feet" or "You'll never mature to anything." I did not come from a very positive background.

Getting on our little soapboxes and talking about changing the world and getting all these talented children into sport is all fine and well, but we are passing by some people who might be really good. We are not giving them the opportunity because of their family life or circumstances. We need to go into the schools with an overall programme that

encourages everybody in the class. It is not about winning or being the best; it is about taking part, learning about fitness and wellbeing and, for those who want to, taking that to the next level.

Mary Scanlon: I come from the same area as you, and I understand a lot of what you have said. I was told quite a lot of things by teachers, too. Despite everything that we are told, we can still work hard and make our own way in life. I certainly would not be here if I had listened to my teachers.

You mentioned lottery funding. There is an assumption that, because it is there, we can throw money at things and make them happen. Lottery funding was not around when you started your career, but now we have lottery funding, sportscotland and the Scottish Institute of Sport, and we seem quite sophisticated and professional. However, you say that fewer children participate as athletes now than when you started. What is happening with lottery funding? Is it simply not being used properly? Do we not have the right attitude? Do we not have the right culture for supporting people? Where is it going wrong?

Liz McColgan: The children are not coming through because we are not letting them know what is out there and available to them. The problem lies at school level, and we need to address that.

It is great that we have lottery funding, but it is being allocated in the wrong way. For example, somebody could be a national champion of their sport and not get any funding at all; they might need to go and work a 9-to-5 job. In contrast, a 16-year-old on a gifted and talented scheme could get lottery funding—they could get their medical, their physiotherapy and everything else paid for. Is that lottery money going in the right direction?

I am all for supporting talented people and youngsters, but a national champion should be given some opportunities. A championship comes round every three or four years. If someone has proved that they are the best in their country at whatever they do, they should benefit from a support system, using a three-year rota. If people do not improve or if they fall by the wayside, their funding could be withdrawn, but they could have a three-year opportunity in which to fulfil their potential. That does not happen for many of our senior athletes.

I can give you an example. The national cross-country trials were held last weekend. The winner of the men's race, who is running for Great Britain this week, gets no lottery funding. However, three junior runners were on full lottery funding. Two of them were injured and did not make the race, and one of them did not make the team.

Mary Scanlon: Is sportscotland or the Institute of Sport—or whatever it is called now—making the wrong decisions about the allocation of funding?

Liz McColgan: It is not a matter of just throwing money at people. There is a big pot of money that can go a long way, so let us make it go a long way. I have always believed firmly that the money should not all go to one athlete. The top seven or eight at an event should all get help—although not necessarily living expenses—from that pot. In my sport, the top six 10km runners in Scotland would be on a training programme to ensure that they are training properly, and coaches would be brought in so that they are educated properly. Their medical bills would be paid—they would get some form of support. A squad, rather than an individual, would be supported. The chances are that three of them will make the British team or a final. If everything is put into one person and they get injured, that is a waste of 30 grand.

The Convener: You mentioned something called a talented scheme. Is that the technical name for it?

Liz McColgan: There are world performances, and lots of different levels to the world performance plan, which is directed at UK level. There is a junior plan within that plan—that is what I was on about. There is a world-class performance plan for juniors—the three world-class juniors get lottery funding.

The Convener: I just wanted the name of the scheme for our report, but I think that some committee members will know about it.

Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): Thank you for the interesting presentation on your career. I was struck by the relationship you had with your PE teacher at school and the way in which he created a bridge for you to join Hawkhill Harriers. Are we still too dependent on PE teachers for delivering sports programmes in schools? Are we doing enough to get coaches in from community sports clubs to do that, in order to create a stronger link between schools and community clubs? If we are not doing enough in that respect, what should we do to ensure that that happens?

Liz McColgan: There are athletic development officers, who are supposed to link in to the schools. However, they do not yet link completely into the club system. We have not had any kids come through from schools in the area as a result of that set-up. That link-up could be better. The athletics development officers in schools should be liaising with the coaches who are available. At the end of the day, it is the coaches who will be there with the kids, trying to keep them in the sport and make them the champions of the future and so on. In my experience, there seems to be no

communication between the schools and the clubs.

Michael Matheson: To develop that relationship, does more support need to be provided to community sports clubs to give them the capacity to send coaches into schools, or are there sufficient coaching levels in community clubs?

Liz McColgan: A lot of community clubs do not have sufficient qualified coaches. At Hawkhill Harriers, the parents become level 1 coaches; they do that because they are sitting up at the track on Tuesdays and Thursdays anyway, waiting for their kids, and they want to be part of it. In my club, we have two level 3 and 4 coaches, who do not get used in any capacity for athletics in schools—it is a waste to have that level of coach in our area and not to use them in that way.

Michael Matheson: That is interesting. My second point was on the scholarship in the USA, which played a big part in your personal development. You said that, for the first time, you were able to do your academic schoolwork and continue with your sporting development at the same time. Are there lessons that we could learn from that in Scotland, to give youngsters who have an aptitude for sporting activities greater support in developing as you were able to do in the US?

Liz McColgan: A few universities are doing that. The University of Abertay Dundee has a programme like that going on. It awards £1,500 to sportspeople and supplies physio back-up on top of that, which is a good start. Personally, I felt that the scholarship gave me the structure to allow me to do both.

I have an athlete who is a straight-As student, who should be studying medicine but who has decided that she cannot do that because she wants to run. There is no support for anybody who wants to study at that level and continue in their sport—they have to give up their sport to follow that career path. In America that would not be the case, because they would be supported in their chosen career as well as in their running. You could learn a lot from that system.

I do not think that all athletes have to go to America to be successful. We had to do that 20 years ago, but there is enough support now to allow athletes to be successful in this country; the difficulty is in finding where to go to do that. Loughborough University has a good set-up, and St Mary's University College Twickenham, in London, has an American-style system in which a student's classes are centred around their sport. Unfortunately, the degree courses tend to be mainly in sports education, which is not what intelligent students want to study.

Michael Matheson: Do you think that that model could also be used in secondary schools, like the Bellahouston academy approach? Should we look to develop that model throughout the country?

Liz McColgan: Yes. It is a good model to be worked on.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): We are keen to ensure that all children have opportunities, regardless of their background and of whether their parents can support them. The evidence that we have taken suggests that that is possible in a lot of sports until someone needs to travel to competitions. What should we do to enable children from all backgrounds to take part in competitions at that level?

Liz McColgan: Again, it is about providing support in kind. Someone on a low income who has a talented child should have access to help. Athletes whom I have dealt with have been supported by a local charity in Fife. Unfortunately, one of the guys in the club there died of cancer and the charity was set up in his legacy. Someone who is on income support can apply to the charity and it will pay for them to take part in a race.

Three athletes whom I coached were in that position because their parents were unemployed or low waged. They were selected to run for Scotland in the British schools international match, but they had to pay for their tracksuits. I applied to the charity for a grant, which paid for their tracksuits—that was really good of the charity.

In another case, a child was an extremely good runner and I thought that he would benefit from going down to England to see the Reebok cross-country series, in which around 400 kids take part in the same race. It is all very well being the best in Scotland, but outwith Scotland there is a big difference in the standard of competition. The charity paid for him to go to England and do that.

It should not be left to charities to support such athletes, though. There should be some way in which parents of children who are at a certain level could apply for support from a club or the Government.

Rhoda Grant: Would that be at a regional or a Scottish level?

Liz McColgan: The regional institutes of sports could deal with that. We are talking about a child who would have reached a good level of athletics, for example, and whose progression in the sport we would not want to be hampered by lack of competition. A child who is at such a level would be at an institute of sport level.

10:45

Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD): It would be fascinating if we were talking not only about the pathways into sport, but about how people have the motivation to become the quality of athlete that you did. It is difficult to imagine you as a quiet, shy and retiring pupil at the back of a class. I was glad that you did not look at any of us on video or television and say, "I could beat him or her"—that would be quite embarrassing.

Michael Matheson, Ian McKee and other members have stressed where we are trying to get to. How on earth do we improve access to all sports? You have been consistent in saying that you want there to be much greater emphasis in schools on giving people an introduction to a variety of sports, in order that we might see the beginnings of a particular talent. In my experience, which is limited, there has been a conflict between the occasional games master or mistress who had that idea and a school ethos going on for many years in which netball, hockey, football and other team sports were played. There has been a conflict between resource and time in schools and many children have opted to do one or the other, but not both. Can you, from your experience, help us? If we put much more emphasis in schools on introducing children to sport, what do we need to do?

Secondly, to pick up on Michael Matheson's point, if that means that young people have to be referred to a club that has people of coaching standard, what more must we do to ensure that that support is there? Currently, in schools, we do not get either the good introduction or the right people playing the right sport.

Liz McColgan: In my sport, and in other sports such as football, there are some unfit sportspeople—not all sportspeople are fit. Addressing fitness at a school level means that we are getting fitter, healthier children into our sport. Even if the kids do not go into our sport, it is still a great way for them to go home to mum and dad and educate them with whatever they learn at school through their fitness programme. The programme includes health and nutrition, not just going out and doing a sport; we are talking about a package that is concerned with needing to be fit and healthy, eating the right foods and making the right decisions.

We are educating children at a very young age in a way that might not happen at home. Kids have a great way of going home and saying, "I learned at school today that chips aren't the greatest thing for me—can we have something else?" and they can educate parents to go out for walks. I am not just talking about everybody being Olympic gold medallists—we need to address the fact that although some people will not get into sport, we can still give them a better lifestyle and a better start that they might not otherwise have.

You need to be able to run, walk and jump for all sports; it does not matter what you do, you need those three basic elements. If children learn to do that at a young age, they come into the sports fitter and more aware of what they are doing. At club level, it is about getting the coaches qualified and able to motivate the kids and train them properly. Coach education is very important in the club system. In athletics, there are a lot of good courses for coaches at all levels, from level 1 right through to level 4. People can take the path the whole way in coaching if they choose to do so; someone who is very motivated can get the highest qualifications, but not a lot of people have the time and the finances to do that. Looking at coaches' education would be a really good direction to move in.

Ross Finnie: That is very helpful.

We know where funding comes from for schools. Taking the Dundee Hawkhill Harriers as our example, it seems as if fewer people participate and, as you have made clear, it costs money to attend the track. How much financial effort has to go into keeping Dundee Hawkhill Harriers going?

Liz McColgan: That is a major concern. The Dundee Hawkhill Harriers clubhouse is two cottages knocked into one. There is one ladies' and one men's toilet. There is no heating. The building dates from about 1800, so it is pretty bad, but it is the centre of the club. We have no indoor facilities, but we are lucky enough to have a Tartan track, which was relaid last year. There is no adequate lighting to allow running at night. If someone is running at night in winter, it is so dark that we cannot see who they are. The track is registered as an official training track, but it is not good. There is one working bulb in our floodlights. It is amazing to think that it is supposed to be a good facility. If it is raining or snowing, that is tough; there are no indoor facilities at all for the kids.

Dundee City Council has offices that used to provide three showers and a toilet, but the footballers have come and booked that now so we do not get any access at all. There is nowhere to get any drinks or anything. It is just a track with wonky lights and it costs £1.80 to use it.

The track has some serious health and safety issues. There could be 30 from my group running on the track, along with seven or eight guys from Fife athletics club; the children's group of about 30 that uses the track could be there at the same time; an international javelin thrower could be using the in-field at the same time as a hammer thrower; and we have to run across the in-field to record times. The situation is so bad that I have

had to take it upon myself—this will cause a lot of problems when I go to my club committee meeting tonight—to book the track for an hour so that my athletes do not get injured. I have athletes who run for Britain and they can run 200m in 22 seconds, or 400m in 46 seconds, and if someone steps out in front of one of them when they are in full flight, their season is over through injury. I cannot risk that any more.

It is a little club up in Dundee and it is not ideal.

Ross Finnie: That is a slight understatement.

Liz McColgan: Especially when we have to charge people £1.80 to use the track.

The Convener: I am glad that that question was asked, but I want to move on from that sombre issue.

We know that fitness is a major issue. Getting people to get fit was your preliminary idea, prior to getting them to engage in sport. What age would you start with? I do not want to fix on people of secondary school age.

Liz McColgan: Fitness is fun. It is amazing what children as young as primary 1 can absorb. Fitness in education should be introduced to every child's life, no matter what.

The Convener: Would you go as far as nursery schools?

Liz McColgan: We can do a lot for children's co-ordination, even in nursery schools, but especially in primary 1.

My main concern is children who do not have the same opportunities as others because their parents may have drink or drug problems and the children might not get fed properly. I see in such children the type of person I was when I was their age. If I had not had the luck or the chance to become the person I became, I just would not be here today. Everybody used to pass me by. My PE teacher was the first person to take notice of me, which was a lucky opportunity for me. If he had not noticed me, I would not be sitting here.

We must grasp those children. There are many really talented children out there who just do not get an opportunity. Programmes must be put in place when children are very young so that those who are in the circumstances that I described can come forward and say, "I can give that a go", without someone saying to them, "You're useless at that. Don't talk to me. Don't tell me that." All my life, I was told I was useless.

The Convener: Would you begin a fitness programme at the P1 stage?

Liz McColgan: Yes. I would do that in order not to miss anybody and to give everybody the same opportunity. Programmes could have information about, for example, where the children can go if they want to do running or golf, and there should be people to direct them. There is not enough information or direction just now for young children.

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I would describe much of your evidence as graphic. It is important for us, because it gives us a clear picture of how far we still have to go. I do not know how aware you are of the report from the physical activity task force that John Beattie chaired—"Let's Make Scotland More Active: A strategy for physical activity"—which was followed by the appointment of sports co-ordinators and sports development officers, and the development of active primary schools programmes. We are five years on from the publication of that report, but we still hear graphic descriptions of inadequate communication, disconnectedness and so on.

We have covered most areas, but I have two specific questions. First, how much linking does your club have with the education department in Tayside? Are there links? Does the education department discuss issues with you? Do the sports development officers talk to you? Is there communication across the sectors? Communication has been emphasised to us; that is why I ask about it.

Liz McColgan: Communication was not that great previously, but the club has a new committee that is moving forward and trying to get a better connection with local authority placements. There is a bit of a way to go, but the situation is definitely better. A guy called Alastair Donaldson has just started in the area, and he is very good at trying to bring everybody together. For example, he sends out e-mails to ensure that everybody is listening. Communication is better than it was two years ago.

Dr Simpson: I want to return to your point about the £1.80 charge that people have to pay three times a week. Does the club have to make that charge to meet the charges that are made on it? What is the charge for?

Liz McColgan: It is for using the track. It has a fence all the way round, and a guy stands at the gate and will not let us in until every person pays £1.80. The money is put into a meter and we get a little ticket, like you would get in a car park.

Dr Simpson: The word "graphic" comes to mind, regarding barriers to sport.

Liz McColgan: Yes.

Dr Simpson: That is bizarre.

Liz McColgan: The problem for me is not just the £1.80 charge. There are three boys from one family who run with me. The father is a single parent and he has to pay £1.80 three times a

week for his three boys to run. That is a lot; it comes to £5,000-odd a year, and he is struggling big time to do that. However, he wants his sons to run. He was a harrier and he wants his sons to be harriers. He is now a level 1 coach, but he has to pay those charges. He wrote to the council and asked whether there was any way that it could do a family concession, but that is not happening.

Dr Simpson: I think disconnected is the other word that I would use.

Liz McColgan: Paying such a charge is difficult when people are on a low income. Athletics is not as expensive a sport as some—for example, people pay quite a bit just to go and watch a football match—but it is difficult if someone has to pay that per week. We try to train on grass as much as we can so that people do not have to pay the charges all the time. However, when it is the track season, they have to do the work and the charge has to be paid.

Dr Simpson: A health and safety issue is involved in training on grass, too.

Liz McColgan: It is a nightmare.

11:00

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab): I have greatly enjoyed your presentation, for which I express my gratitude. Given that you have travelled extensively, are there examples of best practice that you think that we could learn from? Are there any governmental initiatives that you have heard of while you have been competing against other champions elsewhere in the world, which you feel we could follow in Scotland?

Liz McColgan: Nothing specific. I did not run at school level; I came through a collegiate set-up into professional running in Britain, so I did not see a lot of school-level athletics. Now that I am coaching, I am involved with children who are in similar situations to those that I experienced when I was a child—they are not 100 miles apart. Children now face similar problems to those that I faced when I was 13 or 14, and that should not be the case. In this day and age, things should have moved on and we should have better facilities and providers, but we do not.

I have not really come across any initiatives of that kind in my experiences of travelling abroad. Australia had a great thing called mini athletics, which was very good. I first came across that in Canberra. Every Saturday morning, there was a mini athletics event involving seven-year-old kids—in Britain, kids cannot compete or join a club until they are nine. Loads of kids turned up and it was like watered-down athletics—it was all competition on the day. That was successful, but I have not seen that happen in Britain or Scotland.

If we want to engage children, we have to give them something to look forward to. They have to get excited about it. Another problem is the fact that there is not an awful lot of competition for our youngsters.

The Convener: How old were the children who were engaged in mini athletics?

Liz McColgan: They were seven-year-olds and upwards. There were fun events such as tossing the beanbag. It was a mini version of the sport and it was so much fun.

There is a big push on from UK Athletics for what it is calling street athletics, which is a fantastic thing. If it can take it up a level and go into the housing estates where the children are living, get them out of their houses and do stuff with them, that will be a big step forward. I hope that someone will come up with that idea and take it forward.

Helen Eadie: I identify with a lot of what you say. In the part of Fife that I represent we have the Inverkeithing Swifts. One of the big issues that the club faces is that, at the community centre where they practise, the players are not allowed access to the sports centre's changing facilities, toilets and so on. Instead, they have had to go off and get one of those construction storage things. I find that bizarre. We have such facilities throughout Scotland; it is a question not of building new facilities but of rejigging the facilities that we have. Have you experienced a similar lack of connectedness?

Liz McColgan: The same thing is happening in Dundee, where the football team has now taken over the pavilion because their football pitch has been taken away from them by the council. The deal is that they now get to use the changing rooms at Caird park, which we are no longer allowed to use. The changing rooms that we had have been reduced to one toilet. The girls pay £1.80, but they have only one toilet. They also have to run through a big barrage of football players with their running gear on and they get abuse as they go in and out, so they do not want to use the toilet.

Exactly the same thing has happened with us. Football has taken priority. There used to be more facilities at the pavilion, but they were taken away to make offices for the council's sports development people. There are now eight, nine or 10 people in offices there and we have nothing except our club rooms.

Helen Eadie: That is very helpful. Thank you.

The Convener: Yes, it is very helpful. Michael Matheson's question will be the final one.

Michael Matheson: I am looking for some clarification on the answer that you gave about

supporting university students in undertaking sport. You said that people who want to do sport at Loughborough University are limited by the courses that are offered there. One school of thought says that we should have a university of sport in Scotland, but others argue that it is better to have a more flexible approach, in which the support goes to the student irrespective of the university. That would allow the student to do the course that they want to do. Is that your thinking?

Liz McColgan: It is difficult to do that. In an ideal world, where we had all the money that we needed, it would be great to have a university that could cater for sportspeople while providing the degree courses that they want. That would be great in a perfect world, but it is never going to happen.

Michael Matheson: So do you think that we should go for a university of sport with a single campus?

Liz McColgan: It would be great, but it is impossible to offer all the courses that would meet everyone's needs. It is difficult for an individual who is studying medicine at the University of Dundee to get five hours a week off to go and run. The courses could not be as individualised as that; a course is a course. The onus falls on the athlete to choose whether to do their sport first and then fall back on something such as medicine or law or whatever at the end of their sporting career, or to try and combine the two and get as much support as they possibly can.

The Convener: I thank you very much. I am sure that other committee members are looking forward to reading your evidence, although we will have absorbed it today. Other people will have the opportunity of reading your evidence, which will be on the web in five or six days. You have given us a great deal of food for thought and made many interesting points. Thank you.

Liz McColgan: Thank you.

The Convener: Before I suspend the meeting, I tell the committee that Craig Brewster is coming to give evidence to the committee on 23 April.

11:07

Meeting suspended.

11:16

On resuming—

"Glasgow 2014—Delivering a lasting legacy for Scotland"

The Convener: Item 4 fits in very nicely with the evidence session that we have just had.

We have been invited to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation paper "Glasgow 2014—Delivering a lasting legacy for Scotland", which was published on 15 February. The closing date for responses is 9 May. To inform our response, we have invited Professor Fred Coalter from the department of sports studies at the University of Stirling; Forbes Dunlop, the acting director of achieving excellence in sportscotland; and Maureen Kidd, the programme manager of physical activity in NHS Health Scotland. The latter two witnesses are not authors of the consultation paper, so there is no conflict of interest.

Other committees have also been invited to respond to the consultation so I encourage the committee members to stay within those areas that are in our remit.

Maureen Kidd (NHS Health Scotland): I am from NHS Health Scotland and I have come here with some guarded optimism.

The consultation is important. There is no better legacy than a health legacy for Scotland, and there is no better time than this to look at how we can achieve that legacy. A positive outcome can be secured from the Commonwealth games, but it will not happen automatically or as a natural by-product. It has to be planned for and co-ordinated, and it must involve lots of agencies. I am pleased to see that the Scottish Government health and wellbeing directorate has announced that a health legacy board is being set up, which will involve key organisations and will work towards delivering a legacy.

In summary, I want us to be clear about the outcomes that can be achieved. There are three different, discrete outcomes. The first is increased physical activity for more people, or more people being more active for more of the time. The second is increased participation in sports, and the third is more elite athletes and, at the end of the games, more medals. It is a bit like a pyramid, but those are discrete outcomes that look for different things and target different people. If we try to bundle them together as one outcome, we will risk failing to get that legacy.

Forbes Dunlop (sportscotland): I will briefly give some background. I work for sportscotland on performance sport, which is where my expertise

lies. I agree with Maureen Kidd that that is a discrete area, which is dealt with separately in the legacy documentation. I have a history of working in local authorities on club development and with volunteers, and I am a volunteer in sport.

Sportscotland welcomes the consultation document, which we believe contains the right headline statements on sport. We look forward to working with the Government, local authorities and Scottish governing bodies to develop some of the detail that will sit below those headlines. The coming months will be crucial in ensuring that we get the detail right and that we agree the delivery mechanisms and the communication roles and responsibilities so that we can make the best of a unique opportunity.

Professor Fred Coalter (University of Stirling): Good morning. I support what Maureen Kidd has said. We must be much more specific than the consultation document can be. We must distinguish between physical activity and physical recreation, between physical recreation and sport, and between sport and elite sport, which each involve different dynamics. A simple two-week festival of sport in Glasgow will have substantial difficulty in addressing those issues.

I have just produced for UK Sport a framework for analysing the non-economic impacts of large-scale events. To do that, I had to examine the evidence. Although the document was long, it was short on evidence. The evidence that exists suggests that such events have a minimal or negligible impact, even on competitive sport. That is disturbing. One might expect a large-scale event to contribute in some way to sports development, if not to physical activity more broadly, but the evidence is clear: if such events are left to their own devices, they are little more than celebrations; they are not social policy interventions.

If Glasgow 2014 is to have a legacy, Scotland will have to find ways of doing things that no one else has ever done. For that reason, I find the consultation document superficial. It does not ask some of the questions that need to be asked about the assumptions that we are making about the nature of large-scale events and their impact.

Much is made of the example of Australia, but the sports participation rate in Australia is the same as ours and the child obesity rate there is higher than it is in England. We are talking about a nation that has hosted an Olympic games and a Commonwealth games and which places a great deal of emphasis on elite sport. Many Australians now draw the conclusion that the emphasis on elite sport has been wrong and has had a negative impact. There is a realisation that an overemphasis on elite sport disfranchises many people by creating an environment in which only the best can participate and in which other forms of intervention are given a much lower priority.

You would probably expect this from an academic, but my view is that the questions that need to be asked are more complicated than those that are outlined in the consultation document. In an era of evidence-based policy making, that surprises me.

The Convener: Thank you for that. We have already had evidence along those lines about the legacy from various international sports games and events.

I will leave it to other members to ask detailed questions.

Dr Simpson: It seems to me that Professor Coalter's comments are absolutely correct. From the various documents that I have read, it is a fallacy to presume that 2012 or 2014 will make a blind bit of difference to the physical activity that Maureen Kidd talked about or even to basic participation in sport. However, we must address that challenge.

I was interested to read the large tome—it was between 200 and 250 pages long—that was produced following the Olympic games in Greece, which contained a two-paragraph acknowledgment that there had been a failure on health promotion. As a committee, we know that no one else has succeeded, but we have nearly four years before the 2012 Olympics and another two years before the Commonwealth games in which to work out how those two foci can give us a double whammy.

Where do we start? What help can those two celebrations—as you have called them—give us? Should we simply ignore them and concentrate on the other bit of our inquiry, which is pathways into sport, or can we use the celebrations in any way to improve the levels of activity and participation in recreation as well as in sport?

Professor Coalter: It depends on what is meant by "catalyst"—it is a huge, amorphous thing. A catalyst might be shaming the Scottish Government into investing in sport because it does not want to be humiliated in 2012. It depends on what "catalyst" means and where you put your money. I would start with the bit that is most likely to be affected, which is competitive sport, and think through the relationships between competitive sport and a competitive event. There are then knock-on, infrastructural effects that might impact on broader recreational sport. Please excuse me if I am offering you problems rather than solutions but, for me, too much of the documentation is supply led. Too much thinking about sports participation and physical activity is about getting structures and opportunities right and not understanding motivations and why

people would take part in sport and physical recreation.

There is a lot of play in the document about role models, but I think that you should choose your role models extremely carefully. Liz McColgan is a good role model because she came from an extraordinarily poor environment. People might be able to identify with that and say, "If she can do it, I can do it." The role models must be relevant and accessible; they should not be people such as David Beckham, who lives in an inaccessible world to which most people cannot aspire. Once you begin to use the games to send messages out and raise consciousness, you must be careful about the role models that you use and the way in which you do that. The Olympic Delivery Authority is thinking about that as well. If you start using elite athletes, who is your target? Is your target children, middle-aged people like me or women between 35 and 45 who have never taken part in sport? Who are the messages aimed at? What are the target groups that you are using the Commonwealth games for?

We speak too generally about levels of participation and sport. We must think about to whom we are communicating and what the messages that we are communicating are. That would lead you to have a much more marketing-oriented approach, with different messages for different sectors of the community. At the moment, the approach is far too generalised. A lot more thinking must be done on perceptions—how people perceive these things and what their motivations are to take part in physical activity.

Maureen Kidd: We are in agreement that there are three outcomes that we are chasing after. From the health perspective, it is the broader mass of people that we want to target. We know that two thirds of adults in Scotland are not active enough for their health. That has serious implications for health and wellbeing. We look at inequalities when considering those who are less active than others. We know that, as we get older, we become less active; that women are less active than men; and that many girls drop out of PE and leisure activity in their teenage years and never participate again. We also know that certain ethnic minority groups have a lower level of participation than the general population. It is those groups that we are trying to target.

The strategy of which I have sent the committee a copy is very much focused on those who are inactive. If we promote activity to those who are already active, we risk widening inequalities. The group that we are chasing after is a different group entirely from those who are targeted for sports participation and so on. They are also the most difficult to work with, and it is a long-term strategy. The national strategy for physical activity came out five years ago. It is a long-term strategy, but its ambition is to increase levels of participation.

11:30

The Convener: Buried in what you said was a list of different groups of inactive people. According to Professor Coalter, we would have to give different messages to each group in order to engage them.

Maureen Kidd: Yes. For example, teenage girls' perception is that boys do sports, such as playing football. We found from focus groups of girls that they believe that being feminine means not being sporty. Liz McColgan said earlier that she was a tomboy. Other girls regard girls who are sporty as a different category of person.

The girls on the move project, which is funded jointly by the Government and the Robertson Trust, is geared at girls who would not take part in traditional sport. The project aims to get them involved in activities that they will enjoy, such as trampolining, dance and Frisbee. Good role models would be people who do those activities.

Forbes Dunlop: The documentation refers specifically to the performance end of the spectrum, and it has outcomes that we can attain and for which we have plans. Much of what is on pages 36 and 37 of the consultation document is what sportscotland is doing. We regard 2012 and 2014 as opportunities to accelerate our work of refocusing and prioritising to ensure that the planned outcomes happen. However, our work is very much about the competitive sporting structure and the top end of the pathways that we have heard about this morning.

Professor Coalter: I have a point about what Maureen Kidd said regarding gender. If you want to reach your participation targets, the issue of gender looms extraordinarily large. For example, 67 per cent of females in Edinburgh take part in sport and recreation, but less than 30 per cent of females in Glasgow do so. Unless you address the issue of female participation as a sustained target group, you will not reach your participation targets. The differences in participation between men and women in Scotland are astronomical.

I do not agree with having national targets because they hide more than they reveal. You should consider regional targets for addressing low participation rates in, for example, Ayrshire and Glasgow in the west of Scotland. In comparison, an area such as Moray has reached the peak of its participation rates; you will not get much more participation in places like that. Therefore, you must target regionally, and you must target gender.

If the consultation document is to be a catalyst, I would start with the problem. I would try to work through that and ascertain whether we can make the Commonwealth games a solution. This will sound both regionalist and sexist, but the problem for me is west coast women.

The Convener: That is helpful and interesting. Does Maureen Kidd concur with Professor Coalter on that?

Maureen Kidd: For us, the catalyst would be accelerating the existing national strategy, which is geared towards those who are inactive and which is already biased towards the west coast, women, minority ethnic groups and older people. The perception in primary care is such that older people tend not to be encouraged to be more active.

Dr Simpson: I am not looking for a reply to this—it is more of a comment than a question—but it seems to me that the health service up till now has been an illness service. We now talk about health promotion, but we do so in relation to chronic conditions. However, we need to give people a health plan at an early stage that is actually a healthy living plan.

The Convener: Rhoda Grant has a supplementary question on participation rates.

Rhoda Grant: What happens in Moray that does not happen in the west of Scotland? If you are saying that saturation levels for participation in sport and recreation have been reached in Moray, what lessons can be learned from there that could be used in other parts of the country?

Professor Coalter: It is a matter of class, environment, culture and money. I raised the issue because I am doing some secondary analysis for sportscotland and we have data. We cannot understand the disparities that exist between Moray and the west of Scotland because the level of provision is more or less the same in both communities. There is more or less the same access to facilities in Moray as there is in the west of Scotland, so we have ruled that out as a reason. We are doing environmental analysis and considering the Scottish health survey and material on social capital and attitudes towards community—whether the people who live in those communities see them differently. Walking accounts for quite a large proportion of physical activity in places such as Moray but not so high a proportion in places such as Glasgow. Also, the social class profiles of Moray and Glasgow are different. Folk who live in Moray are richer than those who live in Glasgow and in the west of Scotland. Therefore, a range of issues must be considered.

We are exploring the data to try to understand the disparities that exist, because we do not understand them. At the extremes, poverty, environmental conditions and cultural attitudes are explanations. The majority of people who continue to participate in sport are those who have stayed on after the minimum school leaving age. All the evidence shows that if a person leaves school at 16, they will not really participate in sport. We should consider people who go to university. The dramatic growth in female participation in sport in the 1980s was directly paralleled by the doubling of the number of women in further and higher education. A range of cultural and environmental issues is involved.

The Convener: That is helpful.

Michael Matheson: My question is largely directed at Maureen Kidd and Forbes Dunlop. I got the clear impression from your opening comments that you believe that a strong legacy can be left by the 2014 games, but I am struggling to get a grasp of the specific measures that you believe should be implemented to achieve that legacy and the evidence base that demonstrates what actions should be taken to deliver it.

Maureen Kidd: As I said, there is a legacy to be had, but it must be planned for. From a health perspective, measures should be targeted at those who are inactive. Evidence has been brought together in a national physical activity strategy. Therefore, we know that there are evidenced activities, and we want to ensure that they are accelerated and protected.

With the move towards single outcome agreements, there is concern that money will be diverted elsewhere and that the health improvement activities that are mentioned in "Glasgow 2014—Delivering a Lasting Legacy for Scotland" will not be fulfilled. In the document, physical activity is seen in its broadest sense: it means any movement of the body that uses energy. Therefore, dancing, gardening, working on local authority allotments and active transport are covered. As I have said, two thirds of people are not being active enough for their health, never mind for the purposes of fitness or sports performance. Does that answer your question?

Michael Matheson: I am afraid that it does not. I will be a bit more specific. The physical activity task force's recommendations have been in place for five years. We have evidence on participation levels on the west coast of Scotland. In the past five years, what impact has the task force's report had on increasing participation levels, particularly among females from deprived west coast communities?

Maureen Kidd: We do not have a national health survey yet—the 2005 health survey will come through this year. There has been an impact on groups of people—girls, for example—who are

less active than others, because we have started to deliver programmes that are targeted at them. I refer again to the girls on the move project. We know exactly how many girls are coming through that project. They are from areas with the most deprivation, they are the most disadvantaged, and they will participate in programmes that will make them more active.

The girls on the move project is a good example. It has two strands: participation, which is a matter of trying to get the girls to do more; and leadership. The leadership component is geared at girls from deprived communities who are interested in sport or activity. We pay for them to do a leadership training course and they, in turn, go on to become role models for other girls who are being introduced to being more active. They build their self-esteem and, as role models, start to deliver classes in schools.

A very sustainable model is coming through, although it takes time to get things up and running. The programme is now in its third year, and it is showing really good results throughout Scotland. In Mary Scanlon's area, there are examples of good practice. We are trying to share that good practice across other areas.

Michael Matheson: That is helpful, but I will push you a little further: are you saying that the way to achieve the health and wellbeing legacy of the Commonwealth games is to accelerate the implementation of the task force's recommendations?

Maureen Kidd: I am starting with the strategy that we have and then considering what the games can do for us.

Michael Matheson: I am trying to be clear and specific. Are you saying that you want to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations in the task force's report?

Maureen Kidd: Yes—or, at the very least, we should deliver the aspirations in that national strategy. If we are looking for a catalyst for a lasting legacy, the strategy gives us a framework on which to focus our attention. The evidence is not good at all—there is no evidence of such legacies from other sporting events. If we want to do something different in Scotland, we should use the framework that has already been established to improve health. That is what we would like to focus on.

Michael Matheson: How do we know that that will work?

Maureen Kidd: The activities in the national strategy are evidence based. The World Health Organization has commended the strategy for its evidence base.

Michael Matheson: Right. Does Mr Dunlop have anything to say on that?

Forbes Dunlop: Yes. The outcomes that we are talking about are: increasing the number of medals that we win, including winning the most gold medals ever; establishing clear pathways within sports; and ensuring that sports are well governed through the Scottish governing bodies. Sportscotland has been working on those aims for a long time. Again, the idea is to accelerate the work that we are doing.

The Scottish team's Commonwealth games performance history has been on the up. Certainly, the previous two Commonwealth games have been among the most successful ever for us. Since lottery funding for the UK infrastructure came on board in 1997 or 1998, performance levels have increased.

We have a formula: investing in coaches; supporting athletes in squads through the governing bodies and, at the right level, as individuals; and providing athletes with the necessary medical and physiotherapy back-up. The things that were mentioned as not being in place are now in place, so it is about accelerating that work.

I will give an example. The Scottish Amateur Swimming Association—Scottish Swimming—is a governing body that, 10 years ago, probably was not in a good place. Because of the work that has been done to develop it, it is now a healthy, well-governed organisation. At the participation end, it has coach education schemes in place. Whether we are talking about swimming teachers or coaches, the participation end is now well governed and well managed. At the performance end, the results in Melbourne show that Scottish athletes now deliver on the world stage in a sport that is well governed because of long-term, sustainable investment.

Michael Matheson: We heard from Liz McColgan that there are some concerns about the way in which lottery funding is allocated to athletes who compete at national and international levels. Apart from counting the number of people who get on to the podium, how do you assess whether you are correctly targeting the resources that you have to spend on those who could compete at national and international levels? In other words, how do you know that you are getting the resources to the right individuals?

Forbes Dunlop: We work predominantly with the Scottish governing bodies and ask them to identify the right athletes, as they are best placed to understand their sports and the clubs—usually, the clubs are members of the governing bodies. A simplistic model is that squad-based support is provided at a regional level for the younger

athletes who have been identified. Once they get to the national level, there is squad-based support with some individualised support. At a senior level, individual support is available for athletes who are identified by the governing body as those who could go on to deliver on the world stage. Support is tiered but guided by the Scottish governing bodies.

11:45

Helen Eadie: Your strategy is impressive because it points to the fact that you are interested in encouraging inactive people to become active. A table on page 18 of "Let's Make Scotland More Active" sets out by age group the barriers to becoming more active. For younger people, the main barrier is a lack of time because of other commitments, but among the age groups from 45-plus, one of the main barriers is ill health and chronic conditions. In a sense, Liz McColgan alluded to that when she talked about her arthritis.

How do we reassure the public that they can still feel comfortable participating in sport when they face the barrier of a chronic condition or ill health? Many people are told that they must check with their doctor before undertaking a sporting activity. That is an immediate barrier, because a lot of us would not want to bother the doctor with that. How do we overcome that mindset and those attitudes? If those people became more physically active, that would make a big difference to them.

Maureen Kidd: If we promoted activity to the group that you mentioned as participation in sport, that group's perception of what sport is would be too much of a barrier. We encourage such people to be more active, more often. Research has shown that if we encourage people to integrate activity into their daily lives and routines—for example, by walking to school with their children, using the stairs, doing a bit of gardening or finding something else that they enjoy doing—that is more sustainable.

The aim is to encourage people to do more than they are doing and to build up activity gradually. You will have read in the document that the minimum recommended level of physical activity is 30 minutes a day, most days of the week, which is still too much for most people. We encourage people to start from where they are and to integrate into their day something that they enjoy doing.

Helen Eadie: I will continue that thread of questioning. Over the years, Government strategy has involved showing commercials on TV about the effect of smoking on people's lives. Recently, I was struck by a programme that showed that older people's agility could be increased enormously by taking all kinds of exercise, such as Pilates and yoga. Should the Government do such health promotion work through TV commercials, which have had an impact on other forms of health promotion?

Maureen Kidd: I understand that the Government will run a campaign this year to promote walking. Walking is accessible, costs nothing and can be done in most weathers when people are properly attired. I have not seen the campaign, but its objective is to promote walking.

Helen Eadie: Could we break down the barriers in other ways to reassure people who are worried that they will harm themselves more by doing exercise? How do we overcome those feelings?

Maureen Kidd: Awareness raising is key. Only one in three people are aware of the recommended levels of activity, so the prime task is to raise awareness. Another task is to motivate people—Fred Coalter referred to that. Sometimes, health is not a big motivating factor. The people who participate in led walk groups under the paths to health initiative do not go primarily to benefit their health; they enjoy the social inclusion and the feeling that they have been given a purpose in life. The walks make them feel better so, as a by-product, they are healthier. The motivation is just to be with others and to do something that they enjoy doing.

The Convener: I do not want the committee to get into pathways into sport, although it is tempting to do so because it is an element of the Commonwealth games.

I ask members to focus their questions. We must respond to the Government's consultation on the legacy that the Glasgow Commonwealth games will have. So far, we have heard nothing that tells us that the games will have any legacy. I encourage members to ask questions that will give us a key to enable us to make a rigorous response.

I do not blame the present Government or any other Government, but so far we have had no evidence from anywhere in the world that says that hosting such an event increases the number of elite athletes. Rhona Martin said that participation in curling fell away following her Olympic success. Even Liz McColgan, with all her charisma and energy, is struggling to run her club. If the achievements of such people do not provide inspiration for elite athletes, what chance do they have of inspiring run-of-the-mill people such as me to get out of their chairs to do some walking or whatever? When members ask their questions, I ask them to bear in mind the need to focus on the legacy that the games will have, if any, rather than on pathways into sport.

Helen Eadie: With respect, the consultation document says that ensuring that the nation as a

whole becomes much more active will be part of the legacy.

The Convener: I was not picking on anyone in particular. The two issues are very close, but we must come up with a crisp response for the Government.

Maureen Kidd: If the people of Scotland are to feel engaged with the Commonwealth games, we must break down the barrier between sport and physical activity, or create a linkage between them. It is my personal opinion that sport embodies elemental values that can be translated into everyday life. I am talking about self-improvement—doing better and achieving a personal best—to which people can relate a sense of national identity and pride.

We know that women, especially, are turned off by the notion of sport and that if attitudes stay the same, they will not engage with the Commonwealth games, so we need to change those attitudes. Girls, too, are turned off by sport, but things are changing. PE is not the same as it was when we were at school. All sorts of different activities are now on offer: aerobics, Frisbee, trampolining, dance mat—

Professor Coalter: Cheerleading.

Maureen Kidd: Pupils can even do Bollywood dancing. Girls are becoming active. They might not be competing for medals and might not see themselves as being sporty, but they might see themselves as being more active. If we could become an active nation—

The Convener: When the Commonwealth games come on the television, many women will switch over to a film—they will not even watch the games. Even if people watch the games, they will do so from their armchairs. That is the issue.

Professor Coalter, were you being serious when you mentioned cheerleading?

Professor Coalter: Yes.

The Convener: I thought that you were; I was not challenging you.

Professor Coalter: One local authority in Scotland has two cheerleading development officers.

The Convener: It is glamorous.

Professor Coalter: It is sexist, as well.

The Convener: Some of us might be past it, but we can see that it could be quite attractive. We could always be geriatric cheerleaders.

Professor Coalter: You spoke about women turning off sports coverage. When I was in the United States during the most recent Olympic games, I found it interesting that broadcasters there attracted a female audience by telling the participants' stories. In other words, people were engaged not by just sitting watching the athletes, but by the emotive reasons that some of them gave for participating, such as, "I am running for my father, who died of cancer last week." The media used different mechanisms in an attempt to engage a wider audience. How sport is covered on television might be an issue to examine.

Let me be positive. A positive outcome of both the Melbourne and the Manchester Commonwealth games was an increased expressed intention to participate in sport. The big issue is what happens with that expressed intention once we get people that far. We are talking about small numbers—the increase in the expressed intention to participate in sport was 5 per cent following the Manchester games and 6 per cent following the Melbourne games. We know that, in all our lives, the leap between intention and action is pretty big, but things are happening that we could work with positively. The hosting of large-scale events has some effect. Even if it does not lead to increased participation—we do not know why that is the case—it leads to an increase in the intention to participate of between about 5 and 6 per cent.

Maureen Kidd: Two areas that we could work on are volunteering and role models. With past sporting events, volunteers have been drawn from a narrow segment of the population—they have been white active people. We have pools from which we can draw volunteers. For example, hard-to-reach girls who have been introduced to other forms of activity are themselves good role models and could be drawn on as volunteers.

Professor Coalter: There is evidence that mass participation events can help. One wonderful phenomenon is that marathons are beginning to attract walkers. Of those who took part in the Honolulu marathon, 40 per cent walked it. That is a bit cheap, but at least it is an activity. The Commonwealth games could be used to generate a series of participation events, rather than the passivity that games tend to induce. In Australia, there are cycle-to-work and walk-to-work days. If we begin to build around the games and have events in which people participate, the games might begin to be a catalyst in that sense. For example, there could be a Commonwealth games walk-to-work day in Glasgow. Such events could start now and begin to build up. The brand could be used to disguise what is really a health promotion campaign.

Maureen Kidd: We could use the Proclaimers song about walking 5,000 miles.

Professor Coalter: It is not 5,000 miles—I think your general practitioner would tell you not to do that.

The Convener: Perhaps we could all walk to the Proclaimers to get our exercise.

Ian McKee: The reason why this committee covers both health and sport is the link between those two subjects. I will put my question a little more starkly than I might otherwise do, just to try to draw out a response. Apart from those last observations by Professor Coalter, I have so far seen precious little demonstration of a link. In fact, there may be clear evidence that the Commonwealth games will have a negative influence on health for a variety of reasons. I would like you to convince me that they will not.

We have heard in evidence from Rhona Martin and Liz McColgan that there is no link between success in sport and follow-up success. Rhona Martin's curling club went from about 200 junior members to about 30 after her success, and there are fewer ice rinks in Scotland now than there were before she won a gold medal. Liz McColgan's sports club has gone from 80 members to 30 since her enormous success. To be controversial, the training schedules required for participation in elite sport often create a slightly rare or perhaps unbalanced person. People have to go to swimming pools at 5 in the morning because the public use them at other times. They have to train in the middle of the night and their parents have to take them miles away, so they do not meet friends.

I have severe doubts about whether elite athleticism is healthy for people. When I was in medical practice, I met many footballers who were pretty crippled in their 50s. Liz McColgan says that she has arthritis in her feet—I do not know whether that is connected to her running, but it is possible. Elite athletes may not be very healthy people and the lives that they live mean that they are not very good as role models. There is no link between their success and other people coming into sport.

Mary Scanlon: On that cheerful note.

Ian McKee: We may be concentrating so much on the games that we are not concentrating on the basic, positive measures that were being taken before we won the games bid. The positive aspect is that we might get loads of medals that can make us feel that we can rise up as a nation once more, but is that anything to do with the health of the population?

The Convener: I do not know whether the witnesses were expecting that from the committee, but there you go.

Professor Coalter: I could not have put it better myself.

The Convener: You see, you are getting the unexpected from us.

Maureen Kidd: The consultation document assumes that there are benefits to be had and that it is a question of choosing which ones. However, we started by saying that we cannot assume that and that we will have to do something different in Scotland.

The Convener: Ian McKee has rather flattened the discussion.

Forbes Dunlop: I will put a positive spin on things, as I am sure the committee would expect. The 2014 games are a unique opportunity. Other nations have not done things in the past, but that does not mean that we cannot do them.

It is not just about winning medals—we understand that very few athletes win medals. However, some of the life skills that many non-elite athletes get from participating and from competing in club and district competitions are crucial. If we can link together the infrastructure that is being created at the school level, the infrastructure that we are starting to put in place at a regional level and the infrastructure that we have at a national level, that will be a good legacy to leave. However, that is not new. We want to accelerate what we are already doing and make it better.

12:00

Liz McColgan mentioned the local athletics development officer who has been in touch with her and is now supportive of her club. That is part of a regional structure that we are putting in place and which links into the active schools network, which is now developing school-club links. It will not be easy, but we believe that that can be done. The 2014 games will be a catalyst that can be used in a hundred different ways, from school kids watching the announcement when Glasgow won the bid to school kids watching the games themselves. Who knows? A lot of people believe that the games will have a positive impact.

The Convener: A good committee is a bit cynical. We have to give things a rigorous examination; it is not that we are trying to be difficult.

Rhoda Grant: Liz McColgan talked about the facilities that were available to her club, and said that they were pretty dire. Is one of the legacies of the games likely to be more investment in sport facilities? If so, how can that investment be spread away from centre? We have talked about the suggestion that Scotland might host training camps for the London Olympics, in order to improve the facilities here. The same thinking should apply to the Glasgow games. How far from Glasgow can we spread that legacy of investment in facilities?

Forbes Dunlop: Although there are many poor facilities, there are also some fantastic facilities. There has been recent investment in new facilities, and investment will continue to be made. Along with those facilities, we have real expertise in managing them for all uses. For example, the national swimming pool at the University of Stirling is managed well for community use, learn-to-swim programmes, elite use, Paralympic use and so on. New, modern facilities, which cost a lot of money, can be managed well to deliver facilities for all aspects of sport in the community.

The issue comes down to investment and partnerships with local authorities.

Professor Coalter: There are only 17 sports in the Commonwealth games—one of those is shooting, which means that, given the legislation in Scotland, there are only 16 sports for the purposes of this discussion. It would be astounding if the infrastructure and organisation of and the levels of participation in those 16 sports were not strengthened as a result of the Commonwealth games.

You need to be less imperialist and ambitious in the consultation document. What are the things that can have an impact that are closest to the games? The infrastructure and the governing bodies of 16 sports in Scotland will be strengthened as a result of the Commonwealth games. That is an achievement in and of itself. However, you must bear in mind that those are all minority sports. If you start off with medals, you do not necessarily end up with mass participation. At the Athens Olympics, Britain won medals in equestrianism, rowing and sailing—practically no athletics medals were won. If winning medals is your target, you will invest in those sports that will win you medals, which means that you might not end up with mass participation in sport.

In the interests of being positive, I will restate the fact that leaving 16 sports with better infrastructure and improved professionalism is a good legacy.

Rhoda Grant: I understand that, but in a way we need mass participation to get athletes coming through at the elite level. If we do not have mass participation and people are not fit and taking part in sport—I keep coming back to the evidence that we heard previously, with which there is a connection—the elite people never come through. It is about trying to get the two elements to work together. Mass participation sport has positive health impacts—not the unhealthy impacts of elite level sport—and you need to get people involved to spot that they have talent.

Professor Coalter: Many people in sport would disagree with you. Sport has changed dramatically with the use of sport science and talent identification. Most people involved will tell you that they do not need mass participation for elite sport any more. The nature of selection in sport has changed dramatically. There is the old myth of the broad base, but there is no broad base in rowing and equestrianism. The relationship between an obsession with elite performance and a need for mass participation has been fractured dramatically. The lottery fractured it—from 1994 onwards the nature of selection in British sport changed substantially.

I apologise, as I have ended up depressing you again, convener.

The Convener: No, not at all. I am very cheerful. It is important for us to hear interesting, challenging evidence.

Ross Finnie: I am still puzzled by the evidence we have heard this morning. It seems to me that the Government has properly asked how we can have a legacy from the Commonwealth games. It has not specified the legacy—the question was deliberately kept broad. I am disappointed with the response. We have in front of us three people from the organisations involved, who clearly have a range of experience—I do not mean this in a personal way; I am talking about the bodies for which you work—but the response of sportscotland is that the programme is in place, that we have identified where we want to go and we know how we will get there, we need more resources, but we are dedicated about the elite athletes.

There was not a suggestion that the fact that we have won the Commonwealth games for Glasgow might have an effect; we might as well have lost it to Nigeria, because it made not one whit of difference to the thrust of where sportscotland is going. The programme for elite athletes might be improved, but it is not fundamentally affected—there is no analysis of the impact of the Commonwealth games.

Likewise, NHS Health Scotland's existing programme to increase physical activity might be accelerated, but the existing approach continues. Given that the Government has challenged you to think about the issue, I am disappointed that your respective organisations do not appear to have done any analysis of what the Commonwealth games might be or do. The impact of the presence of different cultures and different personalities and the games being the focus of attention and media attention—all elements that will be present—seem not to have been considered.

The view appears to be that the Commonwealth games is just an event: it will cost billions, it will happen, there will be lots of applause, and that will be good; some people will win medals, some will not, and we will pack up and go home; the existing programme will have been in place, so

sportscotland will have got a rub-off and will be better; the participation programme will have been good, although it will not have been helped because the Commonwealth games will not bring role models in Frisbee throwing or allotment gardening, so that programme will not have accelerated as quickly as we might have hoped.

Does no one think that we can analyse elements of such a major event, which will bring a large number of people to Glasgow, and do what Professor Coalter more helpfully suggested and consider the outcomes and the ingredients that we bring to the pot and try to develop something? If sportscotland is not interested—or, rather, does not see the connection—and if NHS Health Scotland does not see the connection, we must look to other bodies to look at the investment that the nation will make in the Commonwealth games and consider what we can do to improve the connection. I do not intend to diminish what your organisations do, but it does not seem to me that it will be affected in any way by the Commonwealth games coming to Glasgow.

The Convener: I think that the witnesses are definitely due a right of reply.

Maureen Kidd: There is not a lack of interest; there is an acknowledgement that the first step has been taken. We are giving our response to the consultation in the context of the assumption on which the consultation is based. We work on the basis of evidence—what we know already. Having said that, we are working with other organisations to see what we can do to make a difference. That discussion is just starting. The physical activity and health alliance involves 2,000 practitioners in sport, health promotion and academic institutions and has a website. We had a debate at the recent national conference. There is cynicism and dismay that this big event might take funding away from what those practitioners are doing, but when we raise the issue we find that there is guarded optimism and a will to do something with other organisations to make the benefits happen. There is not a lack of interest, but healthy cynicism.

Ross Finnie: With respect, you are not giving us even vague indications. You talk about there being interest and what people might do, but you are here before the Health and Sport Committee to give evidence. We know what the subject of the sentence is, but we have not formed a verb and we certainly have not got the object of the sentence.

I am not questioning your enthusiasm or willingness—that is not my purpose—but I do not discern a hint as to the direction of travel that we might be taking to optimise benefits and look at things differently. The challenge exists. I accept that we have to look at things differently from Melbourne or anywhere else, but I do not discern even a hint as to how we are going to look at the event differently to optimise its benefit to the nation.

Maureen Kidd: We have a framework and a direction of travel. We have a 20-year strategy for trying to raise physical activity levels. We are trying to link into the Commonwealth games as much as we can, because that is an opportunity for us. We will deliver more of the programmes that we are delivering already and link in with the games as far as possible in relation to volunteering and role models—wherever we see the synergy. We are not ignoring what is going to happen but driving forward our own framework, which is based on evidence, and linking it to the games.

The Convener: You are hoping for an enhancement of what you are doing already?

Maureen Kidd: Yes. We hope that we can draw volunteers and role models from the work that we are doing already and use them to work with people who have been uninterested in activity and encourage them to become engaged. We will achieve success if we can do that as part of this broader national event.

Professor Coalter: I want to turn Mr Finnie's question back on him. I know that you are not responsible for the consultation document, which reminds me of the old Irish phrase, "If I wanted to get there, I wouldn't start from here." It starts in the wrong place. It takes the Government's economic strategy, which is a series of round holes, and tries to stick square pegs into them. Some of the claims in the document are ludicrous, such as that the Commonwealth games will encourage late-night coffee drinking. It incorporates existing documents, such as "Reaching Higher: Building on the success of Sport 21". It does not invite radical thinking. It does exactly what you have accused sportscotland and NHS Health Scotland of doing; it takes existing documents, sets them out in the right column, and says that there is a relationship. It constrains thinking.

The document should start by looking at the Commonwealth games as an event and a process and try to theorise and work through what we can get from them. Trying to stick square pegs into round holes on the basis of existing strategies is part of the problem. Both witnesses have, quite rightly, outlined their strategies, which are also outlined in the document. I am not representing anyone but myself, so I can say that I would not have started where the document starts. It does not invite radical thought.

We know where others have gone wrong. We know that one of the reasons previous games have failed is that they have depended on a trickle-down, role-model approach. We know that

that approach has not been prepared properly. There has been a dramatic growth in rugby, not because England won the rugby world cup but because three years beforehand a substantial grass-roots development programme was put in place. The rugby world cup came in the middle of that programme and raised the sport's profile, but it was the existence of the programme that meant that people had somewhere to go. There was a long-term strategy.

It is unusual for me to defend public agencies, but I would work out from the event rather than try to insert it in existing strategies, which is what the document does.

12:15

Ross Finnie: Your comments are helpful. I accept the criticism that I may have got things the wrong way round, but I asked who had analysed the event to see which elements would be relevant to prompting and assisting the strategy. I hope that I made clear it that I was not attacking Forbes Dunlop and Maureen Kidd. It seemed to me that having a strategy that does not take into account the fact that the Commonwealth games will be held in Glasgow places us in a straitjacket.

Professor Coalter: You should start with the intervention and work out what it can achieve. If the event achieves one tenth of what is set out in the consultation document, it will be extraordinarily successful. Too much is being asked of the event, which sets up Forbes Dunlop and Maureen Kidd for failure and sets up the population for disappointment. We need to be much more realistic about what can be achieved by a seven-year development period and a two-week festival to shift dramatic cultural and cross-generational problems. There is no question but that the event will have some effect, but we should start with the event and work outwards rather than try to insert it into other strategies.

The Convener: That is a helpful point.

Mary Scanlon: The document suggests that the games will contribute to meeting NHS health improvement, efficiency, access and treatment targets and other national targets. That supports the point that you are making—that the Government's targets have been fitted into the document. There is no need for me to pursue the issue with you further.

You said that the games are a celebration, not a social policy intervention. You also said that we are not getting the motivations right. On page 32, the document states that as well as helping us to meet the HEAT targets, the games are expected to highlight self-esteem and

"use athletes as positive health role models."

We have already heard from Liz McColgan and others about motivation. How do we get motivation right, to raise expectations and increase confidence—not just in the sporting world, but academically—when in Scotland teachers and others are constantly putting people down?

There is a famous saying that applies strongly to Scotland: no one is ever a prophet in their own land. When we were chatting during the tea break, we all came up with anecdotes that illustrate the point. It takes a strong person such as Liz McColgan to come through the demotivation that is all around us. People are told, "Who do you think you are?" and, "What are you trying do that for?" It is as if they are stepping outside their class and the expectations that surround them, which is very difficult.

You compared the class profiles of Moray and Glasgow. As an economist, I would like to put on record that the average wage in the constituency of Moray—excluding the air bases—is the lowest in Scotland. Many people in Moray would be delighted to have an average wage near to that of people in Glasgow. That needs to be considered when we talk about participation in Moray. There are rich and poor in the area, but the average wage in the constituency is, and has been for many years, the lowest in Scotland.

My question is about how we get the motivation right. We live in a Scotland where people are all too ready to put others down—whether in an academic sense or in a sporting sense—as Professor Coalter said at the beginning. I cannot imagine that the games will do this, but can we do something about that? If our attempts to encourage, motivate and praise people are all that come out of the games, surely those things might help us in future. Where do we start and how do we do it?

The Convener: I am glad that, as always, Moray has been defended so vociferously.

Professor Coalter: My apologies.

I am not great on the vision thing, I am afraid, so I will give a practical answer. Most events are highly dependent on volunteers. In Sydney, volunteers accounted for just under 5 per cent of the total budget. For large-scale events, volunteers provide an enormous economic value and therefore an enormous social value. Volunteers do a very valuable job.

However, a problem with volunteers is that, for example, the evidence suggests that 92 per cent of the volunteers in Manchester were white and the bulk of them were previous sports participants. With proper selection and a strategy, a volunteer programme can be used to develop long-term volunteering. The post-games volunteering programme in Manchester allowed the city to use

the volunteers again for the UEFA cup final. A strategy is needed.

For the Commonwealth games, we should select volunteers who need the skills development rather than just let the middle class pile in from their sports clubs so that they can get free participation. We should select volunteers precisely—volunteers have a social status that is of a very high value—and we should have a volunteer training programme and a post-games volunteering programme. That is one example of how the games could be used as a catalyst. Glasgow City Council could develop a large pool of volunteers as part of its broader sports events strategy. It is not enough to bring people along and give them a T-shirt; volunteers need to be trained, supported and retained. That is one example of how the games could work as a catalyst.

Mary Scanlon: Yes, but how do we retain people in sport, or even introduce them to it, when teachers and others are telling them how useless they are?

The Convener: It is perhaps unfair to say that about all teachers. As an ex-teacher—one of my former careers—I do not think that it is fair to say that all teachers do that.

I am conscious of the time and that we need to move on. An interesting point has been made about volunteers. I take it that, at the moment, volunteers are a pretty self-selecting group.

Professor Coalter: The evidence shows that, in Manchester, the volunteers who were selected were not representative of those who applied. Members can work that out for themselves. Those who were not selected would have needed substantial training. If we want to use the games as a catalyst, that is a classic example of what needs to be done.

The Convener: That is a new issue for us to consider. Do either of the other witnesses want to comment on that?

Maureen Kidd: I totally endorse Fred Coalter's comments. We know that volunteering makes people feel better and gives them a sense of belonging. If we can draw from a broader pool, we will already be widening the reach of the games.

Forbes Dunlop: There will be numerous opportunities for volunteering before the games in the many test events that are brought to Scotland. Every sport will have a pre-Commonwealth games test event to give people the opportunity to try out venues. That will give volunteers experience. The games will not be a one-event hit, as there will be on-going events. For example, the world cross-country championships will be held in Edinburgh and many people will be involved in organising it. A great deal of expertise is created every time such events come to Scotland.

The Convener: I am conscious that time is moving on. I thank our witnesses very much for their evidence, which was extremely interesting. It was also testing for the Government, but we have been very testing of everybody. However, that is what we are like. I thank the witnesses very much for their evidence, which will be very useful to us in drafting our response to the consultation. I am looking forward to that.

That concludes our formal business in public today. We will now move into private session.

12:24

Meeting continued in private until 12:39.

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