

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 4 March 2009

Session 3

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CONTENTS

Wednesday 4 March 2009

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SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION	1583
Plastic Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (SS1 2009/30)	1583
WELFARE REFORM BILL	1584
PATHWAYS INTO SPORT INQUIRY	1589

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

7th Meeting 2009, Session 3

CONVENER

*Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (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)

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

George Black (Glasgow City Council)

Ian Hooper (Culture and Sport Glasgow)

Ian Pye (East Renfrewshire Council)

Bruce Robertson OBE (Association of Directors of Education Scotland)

Shona Robison (Minister for Public Health and Sport)

Emma Sinclair (Scottish Government Primary and Community Care Directorate)

Rod Stone (Voice of Chief Officers of Cultural and Leisure Services in Scotland)

John Wilson (East Renfrewshire Council)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Callum Thomson

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Douglas Thornton

ASSISTANT CLERK

David Slater

LOCATION

Committee Room 6

Scottish Parliament

Health and Sport Committee

Wednesday 4 March 2009

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

Subordinate Legislation

Plastic Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/30)

The Convener (Christine Grahame): Good morning and welcome to the seventh meeting in 2009 of the Health and Sport Committee. I remind all members and witnesses to switch off their mobile phones and other electronic equipment. Apologies have been received from Dr Richard Simpson.

The first item on the agenda is consideration of subordinate legislation. We have before us SSI 2009/30, which is subject to the negative procedure, and which will revoke and reinstate with changes the Plastic Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/127). The changes reflect changes that European directive 2008/39/EC made to the list of authorised substances and additives. No comments have been received from members and no motions to annul have been lodged. The instrument was not drawn to our attention by the Subordinate Legislation Committee. Are we agreed that we do not wish to make any recommendations on it?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Welfare Reform Bill

10:03

The Convener: The next item on the agenda is oral evidence on legislative consent memorandum LCM(S3)18.1 on the Welfare Reform Bill, which is currently before the UK Parliament. I welcome Shona Robison, the Minister for Public Health and Sport. She is accompanied from the Scottish Government by Emma Sinclair, who is team leader in self-directed support, and Graeme Bryce, who is a policy co-ordinator on equality. I invite the minister to make opening remarks, which will in the usual fashion be followed by questions from members.

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Shona Robison): I thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to explain the provisions of Westminster's Welfare Reform Bill, on which we seek consent for it to legislate. The main purpose of the bill is to further reform the welfare and benefits systems to improve support and incentives for people to move from benefits into work. The bill also includes measures to provide greater choice and control for disabled people. It is on that element that we seek the Scottish Parliament's consent.

The Scottish and Westminster Governments are committed to increasing for disabled people choice and control, which are important elements of independent living. We want to enable disabled people to make choices about how they live their lives, and to have the control that many non-disabled people take for granted. The bill's right-to-control provisions will help disabled people to have control over their lives by giving them a right to control certain services for which they are eligible, and it will allow for the new arrangements to be piloted.

The relevant provisions in the Welfare Reform Bill relate to further and higher education, training and employment, independent living and participation in society. Not all services that could be covered are included; for example, community care services are excluded from the bill because legislation exists to enable disabled people to control, through direct payments, budgets that relate to community care.

The right to control will be delivered through regulations. The provisions in the bill include a power to enable the appropriate authority to make regulations that specify precisely how greater choice and control will be delivered, and the support and services that may be included. The Scottish ministers are the appropriate authority for provisions that would be within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament, if they

were included in an act of the Westminster Parliament.

The Scottish Government believes that it would be appropriate to take advantage of the enabling legislation that is being promoted at Westminster, while exercising specific responsibility for determining, through regulations, those devolved funds that will be eligible for the right-to-control mechanism. A legislative consent motion is required because some of the bill's provisions apply to devolved areas such as education and training. Other provisions confer new powers on the Scottish ministers.

As I have said, the right to control will support the move towards independent living in Scotland, which has widespread support from disability organisations and from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Independent living is strongly supported by the Scottish Government and in June last year we announced our plans to develop an approach to independent living in Scotland.

I invite the committee to support the measures that I have outlined, which are addressed by the legislative consent memorandum. I am more than happy to provide any further information that is required and to deal with questions.

The Convener: Thank you very much, minister.

Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP): The minister mentioned pilots and test sites. Where in Scotland will pilots be run? What effect will that have on the running of services in Scotland?

Shona Robison: I am happy to answer that. I wrote on 17 December last year on that very point to Tony McNulty, who is the Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform. We are keen for a site in Scotland to be included among what are described as the trail-blazing sites to test the best way to implement the right to control, because it is clear that there will be complexities around reserved and devolved budgets. It seems to make sense for there to be a Scottish test site so that we can test whether any difficulties arise and consider how they might be ironed out.

Last month, I received a response that said that there will be trail-blazing sites only in England. I am not happy with that, so we have decided to raise the issue at the next joint ministerial committee on 11 March. There is a big opportunity for a test site in Scotland to build on the test sites that have already been established. It would be a really good fit. We certainly want to pursue that with Tony McNulty, and I hope that our discussions will have a satisfactory conclusion.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I appreciate that direct payments for community care are excluded because legislation on that is already in place, but if we want to get people out

of benefits and back into work or education, and to give them more flexibility, choice and control in their daily lives, I am sure that you will agree that it is important that, as part of that package, they have access to direct payments.

I will be diplomatic. In my experience, councils are not always keen to support people in making that move towards direct payments. The uptake of direct payments across Scotland has been slow and fairly limited. As the minister, what can you do to encourage councils to be more co-operative and supportive, and to ensure that more people are aware of direct payments so that they can have the control, choice and flexibility that we are talking about?

Shona Robison: That is a pertinent question. I remind members that local authorities have, since June 2003, had a duty to offer to all eligible people direct payments in lieu of council community care services. Before I say more about that, I point out that we should remember that, although Mary Scanlon is right that we perhaps do not have the uptake that we would want, and that compared to England it is still quite low, there was a 14 per cent increase in uptake from March 2007 to March 2008. There has been some progress, but I certainly want more.

One reason for the establishment of test sites in Scotland is to examine how we might remove some barriers, whether structural or attitudinal. The test sites are being established in Glasgow, Highland and Dumfries and Galloway to consider ways of, for example, integrating health moneys and to investigate how we can help local authorities to work with people to encourage and support them.

I will ask the self-directed support reference group, which is overseeing all this work, to review the operation of the legislation as part of its work on developing a national strategy for self-directed support. If it throws up evidence that we need changes—legislative changes or other changes—I am prepared to consider them.

There is some room for optimism, because there has been an increase in uptake, but it is clear to me from speaking to disability organisations and to people directly that they want more control over their lives, which we are determined to achieve. I am confident that, as a result of all the work that I have outlined, there will be a substantial increase in uptake.

Mary Scanlon: Thank you. That is helpful.

The Convener: Since when has the duty been on local authorities?

Shona Robison: They have had the duty since June 2003.

The Convener: Who is on the self-directed support reference group?

Emma Sinclair (Scottish Government Primary and Community Care Directorate): The group's members include the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Association of Directors of Social Work, a number of third sector organisations and support organisations for disabled people. I can provide a list.

The Convener: That is helpful. Mary Scanlon has mentioned an issue of which other members may have experience. Although it is not suitable for all people to receive direct payments, there are issues about people being aware of the option.

Shona Robison: I should perhaps also have said that we are working closely with COSLA on the strategy—it is very much a partner in this work. In addition to the test sites, we are visiting local authorities to understand better any local circumstances that contribute to low take-up. The work with COSLA is important.

The Convener: Thank you—that is helpful.

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab): I do not know whether the minister remembers—I seem to recollect it, although I cannot be certain about my recollections—that we found during the Health Committee's care inquiry in the previous session that there were different levels of direct payments in each local authority. Was that the case and is it still the case? If it is, would you find out the level of direct payments in each local authority in Scotland? I am not sure about my facts, but I would like you to investigate that issue.

Shona Robison: As I understand it, assessment of the person's needs would decide the package of care that the person requires. The package can be provided through local authority services or the equivalent resource can be provided through direct payments. Is that correct?

Emma Sinclair: Yes—that is right. It is effectively the same as a community care assessment, so it is on the same level.

Shona Robison: Payments will differ depending on the package.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I welcome the proposals; this is absolutely the right thing to do. However, I want to tease out the emerging thinking, because although I think that in principle the proposals are right, the devil will be in the detail. If, for example, there were direct payments for further education or higher education, I would be keen to know whether that would be new money or whether money that currently goes into the system would be taken out and provided to the individual. If it is the latter, I can see problems with people exercising their choice and some of the institutions will not have the money that they rely

on to provide class-contact time. The transition will be important. Is your emerging thinking that there will be some money to oil the wheels of that transition?

10:15

Shona Robison: We will have to consider such matters. However, when we consider how self-directed support and direct payments have operated in the context of community care, it is clear that the choice is between provision of a resource through local authority services and provision of the resource directly to the person, who decides whether they want to use local authority services as part of a package, employ a personal assistant or whatever. We are talking about the same resource. Local authorities have managed the process; some have done so particularly well. Fife Council and the City of Edinburgh Council have managed to secure a high uptake of direct payments without their services being undermined or destabilised. It can be done, and we expect other institutions to be able to take a similar approach.

If issues to do with resource or other issues to do with the proposed legislation emerge from the test sites and other work, we will have to consider them. However, the principle is about control. It is about ensuring that people have a choice between having directly delivered services and having an equivalent resource, which they can manage themselves.

The Convener: There appear to be no more questions, so I thank the minister and her officials for their help. I am sure that members have read paragraph 5 of committee paper HS/S3/09/7/3, which explains that there is no required form of report that we must use. Paragraph 6 sets out the options that are before us. We must decide whether we want to comment on the LCM.

Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): I suggest that we choose the first option.

The Convener: That option is that the clerks produce a report in which we recommend that the LCM be agreed to. Are members content with that approach?

Members indicated agreement.

Pathways into Sport Inquiry

10:17

The Convener: I welcome our first panel of witnesses. Bruce Robertson OBE is president of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, and Rod Stone is chair of the Voice of Chief Officers of Cultural and Leisure Services in Scotland. We do not usually invite opening statements from witnesses, so we will go straight to questions from members.

Mary Scanlon: We have been taking evidence on pathways into sport for a few weeks—I dare say that the witnesses have read what people have said. You will agree that provision of physical education and physical activity—whatever we call it—is disappointingly patchy in Scotland.

Under the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982, local authorities must ensure

“adequate provision of ... recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities.”

What do you understand “adequate” to mean? Why is East Renfrewshire Council the only local authority that is meeting the target to provide two hours a week of PE in schools?

Rod Stone (Voice of Chief Officers of Cultural and Leisure Services in Scotland): The statutory duty refers to the “adequate provision of facilities” for sport in general. No definition of “adequate” or guidance on what is meant by it has been provided, so it is left very much to local authorities to determine what they consider to be appropriate and adequate for their area. Most local authorities would tackle that by working with sportscotland, using a model that examines both current demand for particular sports and whether provision of facilities in the local authority area matches demand for those particular sports.

In my local authority—Aberdeenshire Council—we have examined existing provision of facilities in relation to demand to see whether it is adequate. We have also taken a look at the structure plan to see what population levels might be like in the future, and whether provision is likely to continue to be adequate.

The challenge in ensuring adequate provision is in making sure that we have the resources to deliver what is required. Local authorities would struggle to provide everything that is needed, but it is not essential for local authorities to do everything themselves. We have to consider provision in the independent and private sectors, what schools are doing, and what local authority leisure facilities exist. We need to look at the complete picture, assess the priorities and plan for meeting them in the future.

Mary Scanlon: I have a supplementary question on that point. I want to be specific. Does adequate provision include access to swimming pools and ice rinks?

Rod Stone: The statutory duty is not as specific as that—it does not go into detail about the particular facilities and sports that need to be provided. We would try to look at everything and decide on the principal areas of demand. Certainly swimming is one of the most popular sports, and we would expect to make adequate provision for such popular sports.

Mary Scanlon: So, by your interpretation, “adequate provision” means that every child in Scotland should have access to a swimming pool within X miles or so.

Rod Stone: That is what we would aspire to, but the ability to do that depends on available resources.

Mary Scanlon: So, it could be a private leisure centre or public facilities.

Rod Stone: Yes. We are trying to ensure that everyone has access. Where they get that access and who provides it does not really matter.

Mary Scanlon: I want to finish that line of questioning. Last week, we spoke to petitioners who were very vocal about ice rinks. Would it be fair to say that adequate provision would include swimming pools but not ice rinks?

Rod Stone: It is a matter for local judgment how best to meet demand for sport. We would try to ensure that everyone has reasonable access to a swimming pool. The demand for ice rinks for skating and curling and so on is not as high as the demand for swimming pools, so we would not expect as many ice rinks to be provided as swimming pools. In some cases, a large ice rink that can cater for curling, skating and so on would serve more than one local authority area, so we would have to look at the catchment area and the number of facilities that are required.

Mary Scanlon: The Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982 simply mentions “facilities”—some children might not have access to those facilities if their parents cannot pay the fees for a private gym or whatever. You assume that because something is available, provision is adequate, but there is—to stay with the swimming pools example—no onus or responsibility on you to make sure that children learn to swim.

Rod Stone: It is important to distinguish between the statutory duty to provide an adequate number of facilities and what we do to promote participation in sport, to ensure that there are pathways into sport, and to ensure that people progress and improve their standards of performance. Although the statutory duty does not

cover what we do to develop sport, every local authority exercises enabling powers to try and encourage participation and promote higher standards. We do that through local authority leisure services and, in most cases, we take an integrated approach with what is happening in education, as well. Bruce Robertson might want to say something about that.

The Convener: I will let Mr Robertson come in at this point, if he wants to.

Bruce Robertson OBE (Association of Directors of Education Scotland): Thanks, convener.

As Mrs Scanlon knows, I am familiar with rural areas, such as the one that she represents, in which there is an excellent example of the local authority working with the independent sector to ensure that youngsters who are at some distance from a local authority-run pool have access to the first-class swimming facility at the Macdonald Aviemore Highland Resort. That is the sort of flexibility that is necessary.

Rural areas face particular challenges regarding access to swimming pools and other sporting facilities. There is an extremely helpful facilities planning model that we in Aberdeenshire are using to look at all sporting facilities, whether local authority, voluntary sector or private sector, to ensure that we get the best value for the public.

I would be happy to answer Mrs Scanlon's original question on the provision of two hours of PE, if that would be helpful.

The Convener: Yes—please do.

Bruce Robertson: I also point out for the record that I am an ADES past president.

The Convener: In a nice way—you were not deposed.

Bruce Robertson: ADES conducted a survey of all 32 authorities on provision of two hours of PE, which I know has been a compelling issue for the committee. We have had positive responses from 25 of the 32. They report good progress. Although only one authority has managed to provide two hours of PE in its schools, they all say that it is extremely helpful that the number of teachers who are being trained has increased and that the teacher training programme has been guaranteed through to 2011. They say, too, that the active schools programme is a helpful addition to what is provided through the traditional route of PE and are linking that work with the healthy lifestyles agenda, to which the committee is committed. They also pointed out that there have been no cuts in PE staff in the present budget round. The fact that they have been able to maintain their PE staffing levels is excellent. Some of us are making

a direct link between traditional PE and the whole business of physical activity.

It is certainly true that there are barriers to the provision of two hours of PE. The lack of qualified staff in primary schools is one of the two biggest barriers, but the teacher training programme that the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow are delivering is helping with that. None of my colleagues has reported that they have been able to increase staffing levels. According to those who responded to me, the present levels will be maintained, but the budget round will not allow them to increase their staffing levels. The fact that the training is provided in Edinburgh and Glasgow is an issue. I do not need to tell certain members of the committee that there is a world beyond the central belt. PE training should be provided elsewhere in Scotland.

The other big barrier that colleagues report, which we in Aberdeenshire can certainly relate to, is a lack of facilities, particularly in smaller primary schools. It is extremely difficult to provide two hours of PE in a multipurpose room in a wee primary school. That is true whether the school is in an urban or a rural location.

Secondary school timetables are another barrier. Some of our colleagues deliver two 55-minute periods of PE, which is just short of the two hours, so a bit of flexibility would be appreciated. Some say that there is curriculum overload, in that everyone wants a slice of the action. In the rural areas, as some committee members will know, the costs of transport to facilities such as those that Mrs Scanlon mentioned are extremely high.

However, real opportunities exist. The transformation of the curriculum through the curriculum for excellence is one that we want to take advantage of, and the active schools programme has been a great fillip—the more we can combine it with PE, the better. Some of the facilities issues can be dealt with by building on the Commonwealth games and the idea of community sports hubs.

The Convener: Mary Scanlon has raised numerous issues. Before I let other members in, I want to follow up on the definition of “adequate provision”. Given the publicity in the papers about the loss of open spaces and the selling off of playing fields by local authorities for housing developments, has that definition ever been the subject of a legal challenge in the courts?

Rod Stone: It has not that I am aware of. One of the difficulties is in determining what is “adequate”, because what would be adequate in one area might not be in another. The demand for sport varies enormously and demographic issues must be taken into account, but it is quite tricky to measure demand.

10:30

The Convener: That is evidential. Words are often defined in the courts, but nobody has yet tried to challenge the meaning of “adequate”. I hope that somebody is listening who may think of doing so some time.

Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD): I want to return to what Mr Robertson said in terms of getting away from anything that is demand led and dealing just with physical literacy, which is not demand led and which we have to deal with.

I need a little more detail. We have had conflicting messages about the complexity of delivering physical education in primary schools. Obviously, we acknowledge that there are issues with facilities—particularly in primary schools that have only one hall, which is used for multiple purposes—and Mr Robertson hinted that more PE teachers would be a great help. We have also had conflicting evidence about whether, at local authority level or elsewhere, there is a sense that reading, writing and arithmetic remain the priorities and that the curriculum and the school day simply get more added to them, such that the primary school is to be likened to a paper bag that will simply burst if too much is put into it. Do you have a view as to what one would need to do to effect a fairly radical change in approach to embedding seriously the provision of physical education in our primary schools?

Bruce Robertson: There may be two dimensions to that question. First, it was a national report that started the discussion on the input-driven two hours of PE by a qualified PE teacher. That issue, which we have talked about so far today, continues to dominate. I have already alluded to the difficulty in delivering those two hours, but primary schools have a variety of means to ensure that young people have physical activity in their experiences. When I referred to opportunities earlier, I had in mind the curriculum for excellence, through which all local authorities are looking at new ways of delivering a 21st century curriculum.

One strand of the curriculum for excellence that will cut across all the experiences of our young folk is health and wellbeing, which the committee should take cognisance of. Primary school children are active in a variety of ways in the formal curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. I chair the outdoor learning strategic advisory group, which the Minister for Schools and Skills set up, and I am glad to say that there is a huge interest in outdoor learning these days. Children have active experiences outside in their play areas on just about every day of the five days a week of pre-school experience to which they are entitled.

There is the traditional view of physical education being delivered by a qualified PE teacher, but I would add to that the much broader definition of physical activity and health and wellbeing. I am confident that our primary schools deliver a series of exciting opportunities whereby youngsters are active from the minute they leave their home and walk to school, through their play in the playground and compulsory PE time, to their extra-curricular activities. That is the broad view that we should take, which includes physical activity as well as physical education.

Rod Stone: The real issue is the time that children require to spend in physical activity and sport for health benefit. We should not envisage all that having to be delivered through PE; there is an important role for PE in physical literacy, but we must also consider the activity that is required for health benefit.

There is no agreement on exactly what such activity should be—it will vary from individual to individual—but it is likely to be a minimum of about half an hour to an hour a day, four days a week, of activity that gets the youngsters a bit out of puff. If we aspire to all our children taking part in that level of physical activity, we need to look beyond what can be provided in the curriculum—which is why the active schools programme is important. It is also important that we look at what is happening in the community and ensure that local strategies to develop interest and participation are joined up.

The role of PE is to provide physical literacy. We should see that as a foundation level and seek pathways from PE into physical recreation and sport. We should look at the complete package instead of focusing entirely on what can be delivered in schools during curriculum time.

Ross Finnie: Your evidence is helpful and I do not contest it, but it appears to be in stark contrast to evidence that we heard earlier, especially on primary schools. I always get slightly nervous when my brain reflects back on previous evidence, but to date we have had the sense that there has been much more improvement at secondary level. The evidence is that providing two hours of PE per week at primary level is proving to be an enormous challenge and that the reservoir of PE teachers is hopelessly inadequate. We have also heard evidence on the work that primary teachers do in areas outwith their core training. Teachers who have played a sport tend to provide PE, but teachers who are musical or artistic tend to engage in extra-curricular activities in those areas.

You have painted a picture of uniform progress at both primary and secondary levels, but I must press you on the situation in primary schools. The difficulty with evidence is that people give an individual view—I am not for a minute suggesting that what you have told us is not accurate, but I

would like you to drill down into the issue. I am sorry to take so long, but we have begun to get a body of evidence on pathways into sport that suggests that physical illiteracy at an early stage is a serious problem. The problem affects both educational delivery and, concurrently, people's interest in participating in sport.

Bruce Robertson: In my introductory remarks on barriers, I indicated that the number of qualified PE staff was an issue in primary schools—the majority of the authorities that responded to the ADES survey indicated that. They also indicated that PE was being delivered by class teachers in schools, and there is no doubt that there are barriers relating to facilities.

I went on to say that the curriculum for excellence offers real opportunities, as the notion of health and wellbeing runs across the curriculum. Evidence from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education confirms that, in the majority of primary schools in Scotland, two hours of PE per week are not being delivered. There is no doubt that we are some way off achieving that target.

Ross Finnie: The committee agrees that embedding the curriculum for excellence has the potential to improve the situation, but will it automatically produce a slot for PE? Many primary teachers, including those who suffer from paper-bag syndrome, are happy to provide PE if it is included in the curriculum for excellence, but what elements of the current school timetable, running from 9 o'clock to the time when schools close, will you allow teachers to get rid of? Have you made a categorical statement to that effect?

Bruce Robertson: I have highlighted some of the issues. There is curriculum overload, as everyone wants a slice of the action at both primary and secondary levels, but I contest the view that literacy and numeracy dominate the curriculum—that is not my experience at the hundreds of primary schools that I have visited in my career.

The curriculum for excellence is about transformational change. It gives us the opportunity to set priorities, and the key issue is that there must be a convergence of physical education and physical activity for our young people. The aim is for youngsters to be fit and active and have a healthy lifestyle, and there are different ways of arriving at that outcome. One of my association's concerns is that the debate has been very much input driven, and the critical input is that there should be two hours of PE. Frankly, two hours of poor PE is no benefit, particularly to some teenage girls, who would far rather have two hours of exciting physical activity, delivered in a variety of ways.

Ross Finnie: That is not contested even by the physical education teachers. None of the evidence to the committee has suggested that PE teachers are not open to different ways of delivering physical activity, and no one has suggested that PE teachers' approach is that of the old bench raised above the head in a boring, tedious and quite dangerous way. There is a sense of convergence. You say that there is clutter, but where will the committee find some view on how to declutter it?

Bruce Robertson: A number of local authorities, including mine, are at a fairly advanced stage of considering what we call the curriculum architecture for youngsters—from three to 18—in Scotland. I urge the committee to consider whether we are talking about physical education or a broader definition of physical activity. If you go with the broader definition, you will find that not only are there are many experiences in which young people are given opportunities to be active and fit and to engage with PE but there is a range of other activities that will help them to become active, healthy citizens.

Michael Matheson: You highlighted that the curriculum for excellence provides a good opportunity, particularly as the health and wellbeing strand runs right through it, but I am conscious that there appears to be a piecemeal approach throughout local authorities to increasing the level of physical activity in their schools. I do not want to get drawn into whether you call it physical activity or PE, because we are comfortable that we do not have to get the old horse out to say that it is physical activity—as far as I am concerned, dance or whatever can qualify.

I am not clear about what we can do at a practical level to ensure that all 32 local authorities, when they are drawing together the architecture for curriculum for excellence, are working towards and achieving two hours of physical activity for the children in their schools. What can be done centrally to ensure that that is in the curriculum for excellence?

Bruce Robertson: That is an excellent question on exactly what we need. A number of different bodies of expertise can give us the outcomes that we want, and it is key to consider carefully the health and wellbeing outcomes that could be mapped out in a curriculum for excellence and to highlight exactly the range of experience.

Aberdeenshire Council is going down the road of entitlements for our young people. For example, PE is an entitlement, but so is a quality experience in the Cairngorms national park in which children will be active as well. We are setting out a broad range of physical activities in the outcomes of the health and wellbeing dimension of the curriculum for excellence. We have expertise from our PE

teachers and their associations, from Learning and Teaching Scotland, from HMIE and of course from throughout the 32 local authorities. I would far rather go down that road than get hung up on an input-driven measure of two hours of PE. The former—what you suggested—is definitely the direction of travel.

10:45

Michael Matheson: That is helpful, but it is still not clear what the committee should recommend at a national level when we conclude our inquiry. Should we recommend that ministers direct all local authorities to ensure that there is an output measure for physical activity as part of the health and wellbeing strand of the curriculum for excellence? How can we get away from the piecemeal approach and ensure that all local authorities are moving in the same direction?

Bruce Robertson: The starting point would be the single outcome agreements in the current concordat. You need to start at a high level and make it clear that physical activity is a community planning target as well, as we would deliver such a target in partnership with our community planning partners across Scotland. In the single outcome agreements below that, it needs to sit in a set of outcomes—the health and wellbeing outcomes of the curriculum, which can be set out in some detail. HMIE would inspect against them and local authorities would report against them. That would be a logical way to work.

It would also be helpful to establish a broader definition of physical activity, which would take into account the experiences that young people have not only in the formal part of the curriculum but in extra-curricular activities as well. They pursue a range of different physical activities.

You would need time to map out that system, but I hope that there is a degree of logic to it. The concordat, the single outcome agreements, the outcomes in the curriculum for excellence, HMIE evaluating and inspecting, and local authorities reporting—that is the logical approach that I would take.

The Convener: Is your question on the two hours, Mary?

Mary Scanlon: It is on the single outcome agreements. Michael Matheson mentioned ministerial direction. Mr Stone's written submission states:

"The extent to which sport features in Single Outcome Agreements varies between local authority areas but the trend towards limiting the number of local outcomes and having higher level agreements is likely to reduce the profile of sport with the consequent risk that its potential contribution to broader policy areas like health and the quality of community life will not be sufficiently recognised."

We already have single outcome agreements that have been directed by ministers, agreed by local authorities and signed off, but we have heard from other witnesses that physical activity and PE are almost non-existent in those agreements. I wanted to ask about that.

Rod Stone: There is a danger of confusing two things. With respect, the committee should consider what its objective is. If the objective is to ensure that children and young people have a sufficient level of physical activity to bring a health benefit, that can be achieved in other ways than through the curriculum and through PE. If the real target, in terms of providing a health benefit, is regular exercise on, say, five days a week, local authorities and others need to ensure, through the single outcome agreements, that opportunities for that exercise are available. That could involve consideration of the time that is set aside in the curriculum for PE, the amount of school sport that is available and the opportunities to participate in sport in the community and seeing what all of those add up to.

There is a limit to the amount of detail that can be included in a single outcome agreement. It is intended to be fairly high level and to give a broad indication of what local authorities are going to do—it does not go into detail. However, there are other documents that sit behind it, which can go into more detail. If we were to focus on the outcomes that we are looking for—the things that would be captured in a single outcome agreement—they might relate to the health and wellbeing of children and young people. One of the national outcome measures relates specifically to the level of obesity among children and young people. That can be the focus for what we are trying to achieve, but all the detailed work that goes into achieving it will be captured elsewhere; it does not have to be crammed into the single outcome agreement.

Bruce Robertson: I will supplement that with a here-and-now example. We are working closely with NHS Grampian on a childhood obesity project, which can be delivered only in partnership with colleagues in health, schools, the local authority and parents. We are identifying young people who present as obese at the age of 5 and we are trying to address that in partnership with parents, school nurses, health visitors and teachers. Physical activity is part of the approach, but there are other dimensions, such as nutrition. That is a good example of a community planning partnership that is trying to address perhaps one of the most serious health challenges in Scotland in the 21st century.

The Convener: For clarification, Mr Robertson, must a particular number of hours a week be

dedicated to other topics in the primary curriculum, such as reading, writing and arithmetic?

Bruce Robertson: There is an expectation that youngsters will attain certain standards in reading, writing and arithmetic, as Mr Finnie indicated. These days, we approach the issue in a far more holistic manner than has ever been the case. We are considering literacy right across the curriculum. Youngsters can have fantastic literacy and numeracy outcomes outwith an hour of literacy or maths teaching. However, there is an expectation that a period of time will be set aside during the week—although it will not be every hour of every day. It is expected that primary teachers will deliver on that.

A range of specialist teachers, including PE teachers, is deployed throughout primary schools in Scotland. In my authority—Aberdeenshire Council—we have specialists who deliver technology, science, modern foreign languages, art, drama and music. We have a large team of more than 100 visiting specialists, just over 20 of whom are PE specialists who help to deliver that specialism.

The Convener: I wanted to pick up on what you said about two hours being just a quantity and not necessarily meaning quality. It struck me that you would not say that about other subjects. PE is a bit of a Cinderella subject. As long as we tick the PE box, that is okay, but if I said that two hours of arithmetic does not necessarily have to be a quality two hours, you would be quite shocked at such a presumption. An underlying theme that has emerged in the committee's inquiry is the attitude that as long as there is PE in some form or other, that is okay. The issue is not just that delivery is different throughout the country but that the quality of delivery is not measured.

Bruce Robertson: Whatever subject we are talking about, there is a requirement for high-quality teaching input. The stark fact is that many teenage girls are turned off PE—

The Convener: Forgive me for interrupting, but I was asking about provision in primary schools. The point arises from the issue about HMIE reports, which Mary Scanlon raised, and the attitude whereby if it is not mentioned it is assumed that all is well.

Bruce Robertson: I am sorry; I do not understand what you are asking.

The Convener: When we took evidence from HMIE, Mrs Scanlon opened a line of questioning, from which it emerged that if there is no reference to PE in a school's full report, which is produced every four or five years, we must presume that all is well. Committee members were quite shocked to hear that, because such a presumption would not be made about other topics in the primary

curriculum. The attitude is, "As long as we're doing something, everything is all right in this primary school", but the committee is hearing that everything is not all right.

Bruce Robertson: PE is an integral part of the experience of young folk. Local authorities operate quality assurance mechanisms and it is clear from the responses that I receive from authorities that they have a good handle on what is happening with PE in primary schools. As I said to Mr Finnie, a minority of schools in Scotland are delivering two hours of PE, but the vast majority are delivering a variety of physical activity programmes, which tend to be high quality.

Ian McKee: I would like Bruce Robertson to explore a little bit the relationship between directors of education and the schools in their areas. I was at a local primary school recently—it is perhaps best not to say where. Enormously high standards were apparent—the children were happy, the school was well run and the head lectures to his peers on various educational matters. However, in the course of the morning, I elicited certain facts and opinions from him. What local authority education departments tell us is not always what is happening on the ground, because they do not know what is happening on the ground.

The head said that his school had reached the two-hour PE target and that the education inspectors were happy with it. However, his school had no PE input at all. The money that was in the budget for PE had actually been spent on art and, as the art teacher now had a protected post, that was not going to change. The school coped with that by setting up what the head called a health faculty—the school had faculties that related to the curriculum for excellence—but the first thing that the named teacher in charge of the health faculty told me was that the school could do with a PE teacher. The head also thought that active schools co-ordinators were a waste of time and that the money should be taken away from them and spent on providing a bit more PE, paradoxically.

That struck me as a disconcerting situation. However, that school would presumably be reported to the committee as achieving its targets. The evidence that we have heard so far—my colleagues will correct me if I have misinterpreted it—is that there are two elements to PE. One element is physical literacy—throwing and catching balls, for example—which is really important and will enable children to enjoy all their experiences of physical activity to the full; the other is physical activity itself, which is getting the children running around and out of puff. The school that I visited was probably quite good at getting its children out of puff, but as it did not have a PE teacher and having one was not high

on the head's agenda, how on earth could it teach physical literacy?

Bruce Robertson: I clearly cannot comment on the specifics of that school.

Ian McKee: I appreciate that.

Bruce Robertson: The quality indicators in the early years framework that we have in Scotland demand that there be cognisance of physical literacy at an early age. I am sure that Rod Stone would agree that we cannot start young enough on that.

The specialisms within a school depend on the people that the school has at a given moment in time. For example, it may have teachers with qualifications in modern languages and not need a visiting teacher. The majority of local authorities in Scotland have teams of visiting specialists or specialists who serve a cluster of schools. There is normally dialogue between the local authority and a school on what type of specialism or additionality—call it what you will—the school would like for a time, depending on the profile of the school.

If the headteacher in the school that you visited has managed to get two hours of PE a week, that is great. The additional qualification that I talked about, which is being delivered through the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow, is designed to help qualified primary teachers and qualified secondary teachers of another subject to get a PE qualification so that they can go back to their school or cluster and help to deliver the target.

The story that I have just heard about that school does not mirror the pretty positive view that my colleagues give me of their willingness to support schools in trying to reach the target. No one is saying that that is the wrong direction of travel; they are saying that there are two barriers. One is the number of qualified staff and the other is the facilities in primary schools. Those are the two largest barriers.

11:00

Ian McKee: But you would not spend your English or mathematics budget on art, would you? It seems that PE has a lower status among the subjects that are taught in primary education.

Bruce Robertson: I am one of the longest-serving directors of education in Scotland—I was director in Highland and am now in Aberdeenshire—and I do not recognise that description. The relationship between PE specialists and local authorities tends to be very positive. We expect a primary school teacher to be able to deliver the whole range of the primary curriculum. HMIE advised you of that in its

evidence. However, we recognise that teachers may need additional support in doing that. In my authority, just over one fifth of the specialists are PE specialists. It is not a Cinderella service at all.

Ross Finnie: On behalf of the committee, Jackie Baillie and I visited a secondary school on Monday. I will not name the school. We interviewed a number of pupils as well as the four full-time PE teachers in the school. Also present was a probationer teacher. Among other questions, we asked their opinion of the state of physical literacy of first-year pupils in the school. Their unanimous view was that physical literacy among first-year pupils was at the lowest level that they could remember and that it had been declining over recent years.

When we asked the head of PE about the role of the probationer, it was explained to us that the probationer was being sent out to assist with PE teaching in the primary schools. Her report back was that she was seen almost as manna from heaven, as the primary schools that she had visited had no teachers who admitted to having any expertise in delivering any form of physical education. Any school in Scotland that has such teachers would seem to be the exception. That is in stark contrast to what you are saying.

The Convener: Jackie Baillie may want to add to that.

Jackie Baillie: As I have listened to the debate, I have felt a growing sense of frustration. You are talking about high-level strategies and the need to change things at the directorate level in local authorities. However, the reality on the ground is an entirely different picture from the one that you are painting. I do not understand how you get from that high-level strategy, which may or may not be owned by your senior management team, down to a practical resource-led model that makes things happen on the ground.

You seem keen to widen physical education into physical activity, but physical education is currently part of the curriculum. Before the target of two hours per week was set, what were local authorities delivering?

Bruce Robertson: I think that local authorities were delivering and continue to deliver the best possible experiences for young people within the resources that we are given. At no time following the national report were we ever given additional resources to deliver its recommendations. The only additional resources that we were given were ring-fenced resources for the additional training of teachers. In my authority, that came to £18,000 a year.

Mr Finnie used an interesting turn of phrase when he likened the situation to a paper bag. Nobody ever suggested what should stop going

into the paper bag. The reports that I get from my fellow directors are positive. They are committed to physical education and physical activity, but none of them is saying that they are in a position to add significantly to the resources that they already have for that.

There is a requirement on us to deliver a set of experiences in terms of physical education and physical activity. You will have seen what the report "Improving Scottish Education" says about that. The picture is mixed but, within the resource template that we have, I cannot see what else we can do. The commitment is definitely there but, unless we start to drop areas of the curriculum—unless we stop doing something or something else becomes the Cinderella subject—I cannot see what else we can do. We are working with a finite resource.

Jackie Baillie: I had always understood that local authorities were given resources to deliver on the curriculum. Therefore, when I see facilities that are inadequate to deliver, say, the higher physical education syllabus, I am disturbed by that. When I see local authority schools in which the equipment is more than 30 years old and well past its sell-by date, I worry about that. So it is not about the additional resource that comes on the back of something. I am keen to understand why we are in the position that PE—which is part of the curriculum—has slipped so far down the agenda.

I accept the fact that, as you say, no local authority has cut its PE staffing this year. However, I know of one local authority in which peripatetic PE teachers in primary schools were offered up as a saving, as was continuing professional development for its primary school teachers. Perhaps not all your colleagues share your view.

Michael Matheson: I also want to cover the interaction between active schools co-ordinators and physical education teachers. The evidence that we have taken so far has produced a mixed picture on the effectiveness of that. For example, some local authorities appear to have a good model in which physical education teachers work closely with the active schools co-ordinators in developing programmes and in working with local clubs to bring in club coaches to deliver programmes in schools. They take almost a small hub approach to running programmes in schools. However, in other local authorities, there appear to be barriers between the active schools co-ordinators and the PE teachers, who want to keep the co-ordinators at a distance.

In your experience, what practical steps can be taken to ensure that the active schools co-ordinators are utilised fully and effectively by local authorities and are seen as part of the integrated

programme that is provided from school right through into community clubs?

Rod Stone: We have considered that question ourselves, as it gets to the heart of what is required. We are not suggesting that the amount of time in the curriculum for PE is not an issue. It is an issue, but it is not the only issue. The whole purpose of the active schools programme was to add value to what is happening in the curriculum. It is important that connections are made between what is happening in the curriculum, what is happening in school sports and what is happening in the community. In many respects, the active schools programme provides the glue for that.

That is not to say that there are not issues in individual schools and individual local authority areas around how that works. It is inevitable that in any major new scheme such as this there will be issues that need to be resolved. Nevertheless, in general, the active schools programme seems to be working fairly well. It is important that every local authority has an active schools manager who can manage the overall programme rather than individual co-ordinators being left to negotiate with individual head teachers. The funding that is currently available to enable a local authority to appoint an active schools manager is therefore important, as that person can identify the issues and start to tackle them.

Underpinning all that, it is important that each local authority develops an integrated strategy for sport, physical activity and PE. In the past, what happened in the curriculum and what happened in sports strategies were approached separately. We need to join those up so that the pathways are much clearer than they are at the moment. In the past, we have assumed that children are first introduced to sport at school and that the pathway is from the school into the community. However, many children take up sport for the first time outside school because there are some sporting activities that simply cannot be provided within school. We must recognise that children have that opportunity. It is important that they have sufficient choice and opportunity and that their experiences are positive. We need to consider the opportunities that are available across the board—those that are available through school and those that are available in the community—ensure that we understand all that is available and promote all the opportunities in an integrated and co-ordinated way.

Bruce Robertson: The ADES survey was clear that our colleagues—I include myself—really welcome the active schools initiative. It is very popular and is making big differences. In some local authorities, the active schools co-ordinators work directly with the PE specialists; in others, they work outwith that remit. Much depends on

how the initiative is managed across the local authority. A good example is our national sport, golf, for which there are targets for introducing—

The Convener: You are in dangerous water when you say that golf is our national sport. That might be contentious. Some people might argue that it is fishing, cricket, football or, indeed, rugby.

Bruce Robertson: Perhaps I speak as a frustrated golfer.

The Convener: I thought that you were.

Bruce Robertson: We have a target for introducing all primary school children to golf. Had it not been for the active schools co-ordinators in Aberdeenshire, we would not have reached our 100 per cent target. The active schools initiative is great. I recommend and commend it highly to the committee.

Michael Matheson: The golf example is very good. The evidence that the Scottish Golf Union gave last week highlighted the point that, often, a national governing body will approach a local authority and suggest that it could provide X, Y and Z if the authority allowed it to run a programme in its schools. Then it will go to another local authority and try the same thing. Whether the programme runs depends on the reaction that the body gets from the different local authorities. It did not appear that any local authority had attempted to take the initiative and approach the national governing bodies about developing a strategy for working with a range of sports across the education system that would build in the local sports clubs and develop provision across the authority as a whole. Although the Scottish Rugby Union, the Scottish Football Association and other governing bodies have good programmes, it is often the case that they approach the local authorities and offer their programmes instead of the local authorities taking an integrated approach that they ask the governing bodies to buy into.

That leads me to Mr Stone's comments about the need for a sports and PE strategy. I confess that I am a bit sceptical about strategies because, at times, we appear to have them coming out of our ears. I am more interested in what we do on the ground to ensure that things happen. How do we ensure that active schools co-ordinators work much more effectively with PE departments? The witnesses admitted that that does not happen as well in some local authorities as it does in others. What should we say in our report? What direction should we give on what should happen to ensure that active schools co-ordinators work more effectively with PE departments? That appears to be one of the key areas that we are not addressing effectively.

Bruce Robertson: There is an easy answer to that: it should be written into the contract that we sign with sportscotland. We regularly meet sportscotland and governing bodies. We are delighted to work with the SRU, for example, and met its representatives recently. It is simply good practice to write it into the contract. It is a wasted opportunity if that does not happen.

Michael Matheson: Will you explain what contract you mean?

Bruce Robertson: It is the contract that a local authority would sign with sportscotland on the funding models.

Michael Matheson: Is that for the active schools co-ordinators?

Bruce Robertson: Yes.

11:15

Mary Scanlon: I want to pick up on two of Bruce Robertson's points. First, I appreciate that he is no longer director of education in Highland Council, but he said something about no cuts in PE. I put it on the record that it is my understanding that Highland Council has made cuts at Muir of Ord outdoor education resource centre. I can also confirm that, through a job evaluation exercise, many instructors in community centres and elsewhere are being downgraded, which is not exactly good for morale.

Secondly, Bruce Robertson implied that people should be taught by a qualified instructor. Ian McKee and I took evidence from active schools co-ordinators at sportscotland, but I still have difficulty understanding how their role sits with that of PE instructors. The co-ordinators all had a lot of experience, but only one person in the room was PE qualified. However, when I asked what the content of their training and instructing was, I was told that it was every sport from shinty to rowing, and everything in between. Are you content with that, Mr Robertson?

The Convener: I think that there were three questions in there about downgrading, cuts and multitasking not being the best way forward.

Bruce Robertson: For the record, convener, I cannot comment on the detail that Mrs Scanlon raised. However, I can say that the director of education in Highland Council has confirmed that PE specialist staffing levels have not been cut. I genuinely cannot comment on outdoor instructors. I think that Mr Stone is better placed than I am to pick up on the active schools detail.

Rod Stone: It is important to understand the role of active schools co-ordinators in relation to PE teachers, who are qualified teachers who are there to deliver PE. The role of active schools co-

ordinators is different because they are there to co-ordinate, not to instruct or to teach. Their role is to provide the links between what happens in school and what happens in the community. If some co-ordinators are spending their time on instruction, I suggest that they are probably missing the opportunity to develop links between the school and clubs in the community. It is important that they look at the role of co-ordination.

If you do not mind, convener, I will return to Mr Matheson's important point about the relationship between local authorities and governing bodies, and strategies for developing sport. I am not sure that it is the case that governing bodies always have to approach local authorities. Generally, there is good dialogue between the major governing bodies and local authorities, and discussion about what is required. In our case, in Aberdeenshire, we have initiated discussions with some of the major governing bodies and we have some very good partnership schemes in place to develop major sports such as football and rugby, as well as some minority-interest sports.

Part of the job in developing particular sports at local authority level is building the capacity of local clubs. In many cases, local authorities are better placed to do that because they are more local than governing bodies. Some of the larger governing bodies have the capacity to do that, but the smaller ones struggle to provide support to their local clubs. It is important that work in that area is done on a partnership basis.

I agree with Mr Matheson's view that there is no point in having strategies that are just pieces of paper. A strategy is about what we do to implement our plans; it is about being clear about what we want to achieve, having a rational and sensible way of achieving it and checking that it is happening. That is the real value of a strategy. It is important to have a strategy because we would otherwise end up with a piecemeal, scattergun approach whereby whatever people want to do can be done. However, we would have no idea in that case about what we were trying to achieve and what was happening across the country. It is therefore important to have a strategy, provided that we implement it rather than just publish a document.

The Convener: You will not like my saying this, but I think that my colleagues and I all know what strategies are. We are, however, worried about what we see on the ground. You can have all the strategies on the planet, but my colleagues' experiences of various schools is that in some places active schools co-ordinators function beautifully, while in other places it is difficult to deliver on the ground, especially if there are no facilities. In such cases it does not matter how

many strategies you have. If you will forgive me, we are a very pragmatic committee in such matters.

Michael Matheson: It is worth saying that there has been a strategy to have two hours of quality physical education in schools for some five years, but we still have not achieved that.

The Convener: I am making the witnesses blush. I thank them for their evidence. I suspend the meeting for five minutes before moving on to the next panel.

11:20

Meeting suspended.

11:30

On resuming—

The Convener: We resume with our second panel of witnesses, who heard the evidence in the first session and now know the kind of questions to expect from the committee and the tenor of the answers that we are looking for. I hope that we have no lectures on strategy—I am sure that we will not. I welcome Ian Pye, quality improvement officer for sport, leisure and recreation with East Renfrewshire Council; John Wilson, director of education with East Renfrewshire Council; George Black, chief executive of Glasgow City Council; and Ian Hooper, director of special projects with Culture and Sport Glasgow.

Ross Finnie: The witnesses will not be surprised to find that I want to pursue the same issue that I pursued earlier, namely the provision of physical education in primary schools. I preface my remarks by saying that you should be in no doubt that I understand that enormous difficulties are involved. We perhaps had a little misunderstanding in the previous evidence session. We are not in any way suggesting that people such as you do not have aspirations and ambitions to do things better. That is excellent and we admire that. We want to get from you a picture of what is happening on the ground, what you can deliver and the limitations that the committee ought to be seriously concerned about.

We want to know about the extent to which you have increased provision for physical activity in primary schools and how you have done that. How have you overcome barriers such as the crowded curriculum and problems with facilities? I am genuinely interested in that. Some of the written submissions are excellent. We understand that you want to reach the standards that have been set, and we might come back to that, but I want to direct attention to the practicalities and the difficulties. That is not about an admission of guilt;

it is about being realistic about the provision of physical education in primary schools.

The Convener: We wish to be helpful. Our purpose is to point the Government in the right direction and remedy any ills. Who wants to break the ice?

George Black (Glasgow City Council): I am happy to do so. I will start by going back in time to 1996. In Glasgow, we inherited a secondary and primary school estate that was in disrepair. The priority was to concentrate first on secondary schools. We entered into a public-private partnership for all our secondary schools, which led to a situation in which facilities in secondary schools are in the excellent category. Primary schools came after the secondary schools, but we did not go down the PPP route with them; instead, we utilised the prudential framework route. We had overcapacity in the schools, so we rationalised and reinvested in new schools. We have invested about £250 million in our pre-12 strategy, central to which are physical education and wider facilities.

The issue now is that the prudential framework has run its course, simply because we cannot dispose of any more surplus land that is released from school closures. We must therefore consider alternatives for funding the required investment in the remainder of the primary school estate. To give a flavour of the numbers, about three or four years ago at the start of the pre-12 strategy, we had about 203 primary schools. Several schools are now under construction. When they are finished in a year or two, we will be down to about 150 primary schools.

That is the route that we have gone down in Glasgow to try to address investment in schools, if that is what you are asking about. We have achieved a great deal, but I acknowledge that there is more to be done.

Ross Finnie: I was not asking only about investment in physical assets. I am interested in your views on provision—perhaps my use of that word was confusing—with regard to, for example, the curriculum issues that have arisen. I am also interested in the level and nature of staffing provision in terms of employing people who are able and qualified to deliver physical education.

George Black: That is outwith my detailed knowledge, but we have specialist PE teachers in all the secondary schools. We support initiatives such as the mandatory requirement of two hours of physical education and the active schools co-ordinator programme, which we believe has been a success.

Ian Hooper (Culture and Sport Glasgow): I want to add a small point to the issues that Mr Black has raised. Each new pre-12 school that has

been developed as part of the programme in Glasgow is being provided with a seven-a-side, floodlit, synthetic-grass pitch. In that respect, the quality of outdoor facilities in those schools will be vastly improved. That is a core part of the schools that have been built, and it is good for the curriculum and for the community.

The Convener: I see that Mary Scanlon has a question. Is it on facilities?

Mary Scanlon: It is on that exact point.

The Convener: Does Mr Wilson wish to comment on that point, too?

John Wilson (East Renfrewshire Council): Not on facilities, convener—I just wanted to address the earlier point about curricular issues. The issue of facilities has been well covered, and I will build on what my colleague Bruce Robertson said earlier in relation to the ADES survey. We were facing a situation in which, as a medium-sized authority, anything that we did had to be sustainable. We could not simply build on external funding for a few active schools co-ordinators, or rely on our own specialist PE teachers.

As a result of the issues that we faced, such as the compulsory requirement for two hours of physical activity, the council underwent a process of restructuring. The entire culture, leisure and sports development area came under education, which enabled me to gain access to sports development co-ordinators and active schools co-ordinators and to make links to local clubs, as was highlighted earlier.

I am not comparing myself to Henry Kissinger at all, but the situation brought to mind his famous request for the telephone number for Europe, in that it enabled me to have one telephone number for everything. We restructured the department and put Ian Pye in position to drive those issues forward, which has been hugely beneficial for us.

We identified early on that primary school teachers lacked confidence in PE. They might cover art and music and be confident with mathematics and literacy and so on, but if PE was mentioned, the majority of them became very nervous. We took advantage of the national programme to train a few people to gain specific qualifications, as was mentioned earlier, but we felt that more was required to support primary school teachers, who, at the end of the day, had to take the majority of the work forward.

We cannot just send people on training courses only for them to be left on their own when they come back. We need to consider what support materials are available for the primary teacher in his or her school, classroom and playground. Ian Pye has brought people together to develop the active 8 programme. From their visits, committee

members will no doubt be aware of what the active 8 programme contains. It is a very structured programme involving eight sports, and it supports the teacher not only in introducing particular sports, but in helping to develop the skills that are associated with those sports.

Given that we believe that healthy, active young people do better in so-called traditional subjects, a bonus for me is that when active primary school teachers deliver part of the programme, they are also exercising and improving their own lifestyles, so when they go back to their traditional classroom they may perhaps be able to do better with their young people. That has been borne out.

Many primary school teachers are volunteering to do the national qualification in PE, and all teachers in the primary sector are involved in delivering the active 8 programme. If you want to hear more about that programme, the best person to tell you about it is the person who developed it and has made it available nationally.

The Convener: I will bring in Mr Pye. Does every local authority have a quality improvement officer for sport, leisure and recreation?

Ian Pye (East Renfrewshire Council): No.

The Convener: Do you have pals in any other local authorities or are you a lone figure?

Ian Pye: I think that I am a lone figure within the 32 Scottish local authorities.

The Convener: Do you want to respond to Mr Finnie's questions?

Ian Pye: East Renfrewshire is delivering two hours of timetabled, core PE in primary and secondary schools. We met primary school teachers when we launched the timetable in 2006 and they asked for two things: support resources to enable them to deliver two or three 50-minute lessons a week, rather than one lesson a week, which was the standard then; and training.

We developed a programme on the back of a pilot PE programme, which was launched nationally. In conjunction with the University of Strathclyde, we produced support material, such as lesson plans for the teachers, and a comprehensive training programme, which continues today. Having operated that programme for the past three years, our primary school teachers in particular are far more confident in delivering curricular PE than they were three years ago. The continual process of CPD and in-service training for primary school teachers is sustainable because it is the class teacher who is delivering and who is being skilled up.

Ian McKee: Can you explain your responsibilities?

The Convener: Yes, given that you are a lone wolf, as it were, can you explain the system under which you operate? Are you above active schools co-ordinators? How do you relate to the network that we have been told about? How do you relate to sports? What is your job description?

Ian Pye: I have responsibility within East Renfrewshire for the management of leisure facilities, for sports development, for the active schools programme and for curricular PE in primary and secondary schools. My remit encompasses sport, leisure and recreation in the round in East Renfrewshire.

The Convener: How long have you been in the post?

Ian Pye: Almost five months. The post was created on the back of the integration of leisure services, leisure facilities management and sports development with the education department. We integrated all those services into one service unit, which is now headed by me. Officers with responsibility for sports development, facilities management and active schools work under me.

The Convener: So you are a bit of a pioneer.

Jackie Baillie: Other local authorities have merged those functions, but they are not the exemplar that East Renfrewshire Council is when it comes to delivering the two hours or the wider agenda. Why is that? It is not just about a physical integration, is it?

John Wilson: I can speak only for East Renfrewshire Council, and we can speak only for our model, which covers not only PE and sports activities and now leisure activities, but other areas of the curriculum. My belief is that if the model works for other areas of the curriculum—I think that earlier a committee member mentioned Mickey Mouse subjects—

The Convener: No.

John Wilson: Cinderella subjects?

The Convener: Not Mickey Mouse.

John Wilson: Okay—Cinderella subjects. I did not want to have a Cinderella curricular area, given that it is so important and will have spin-offs into other areas. Therefore, we imposed the same structure that we have in other areas of the curriculum.

Sports clubs and so on have been mentioned this morning. One benefit of our model is that our sports clubs now have one port of call when they want to access authority facilities or authority developments—they contact Ian Pye.

11:45

Michael Matheson: We have previously heard in evidence the clear suggestion that the health and wellbeing strand of the curriculum for excellence provides a good opportunity to ensure that much more physical activity and PE take place in our school set-up. You will have heard Bruce Robertson say that his local authority—Aberdeenshire Council—is developing the architecture for that strand. What is your experience as local authorities of developing the health and wellbeing strand of the curriculum for excellence to ensure much more provision for physical activity in primary and secondary schools?

George Black: First, I will make a general comment on a previous question. I do not know how councils are organised throughout the country, but Glasgow City Council has a quality improvement officer who is responsible for the 31 active schools co-ordinators. It is not the case that we do not have quality improvement, but it might be organised differently.

The physical activity agenda will be developed differently in Glasgow from other parts of the country, because of the scale that is involved and because of the drugs and alcohol issues in Glasgow, which are being dealt with under the community planning banner. In Glasgow, we do not believe that only education can deliver the learning outcome, that only the police can deliver the safety outcome or that only the health service can deliver the health outcome, so we get together. Under community planning, we are trying to ensure that all such issues are addressed in a joined-up way. The scale of that work will be different from that in other parts of the country. We have divided Glasgow into five planning areas that link into school community campuses to progress such work.

Michael Matheson: The curriculum for excellence applies to all your schools, so its health and wellbeing strand applies to all your schools. Strategically, what is your local authority doing on that? In Glasgow, not all children experience two hours of quality PE per week. If the curriculum for excellence provides the opportunity to achieve that target, what practical steps are you taking to ensure that that happens?

George Black: I acknowledge that primary schools with old school halls that have not been invested in have a difficulty with physical activity. I am saying that, although the curriculum for excellence is a major strand, it is not being progressed in isolation in Glasgow—it is being dealt with in the context of the wider community planning agenda. No one issue can be in a silo; matters must be interlinked. The issue is major, but it must tie into health services in addressing

drugs and alcohol in the city, for example. Thinking that we could deliver physical activity outcomes without addressing some of our social issues would be a mistake.

Michael Matheson: I do not want to spend much longer on the point. I understand that the issue does not live in isolation, that the curriculum for excellence is much more holistic and that partnerships are a key part of that. However, I am not sure what different action is being taken under the curriculum for excellence to ensure that kids are more physically active in schools. In practice, what should be the difference between a primary school in Glasgow pre-curriculum for excellence and post-curriculum for excellence?

Ian Hooper: I can pick that up, although I might not give a direct answer.

The Convener: We would like a direct answer, please.

Michael Matheson: I am trying to get at what practical measures are happening on the ground.

George Black: In secondary schools there will be a dedicated PE teacher. In the vast majority of primary schools there will be no dedicated PE teacher; it will be the class teacher who takes PE, supported by the active schools co-ordinators. Compared with secondary, primary is a mixed bag.

The Convener: With respect, you heard the previous evidence session and we know all this. We accept that practical barriers exist, and you have explained that primary schools are often in old estate. However, within budget limits, what can you do to overcome those barriers, so that you can deliver two hours of quality PE in primary? I think that that is what my colleague Michael Matheson is getting at. What is being done?

George Black: What is being done is the completion of the pre-12 strategy, which addresses this very issue when we can invest in facilities. However, if the requirement for such investment is a barrier, it is very difficult, using existing facilities, to achieve the standard of education that is possible in other schools, both primary and secondary.

The Convener: If I followed you correctly earlier, you are saying that you have come to the end of school closures and therefore money to invest in better facilities. I think that you are telling us that you cannot do anything much because you do not have the facilities.

Michael Matheson: Would it be fair to say that primary and secondary schools in Glasgow that have the physical facilities are meeting the target of providing two hours of physical education a week, but that the schools that do not have the physical facilities are not likely to be reaching the

target? Is the barrier nothing to do with teaching or anything else, but simply to do with the lack of physical facilities in some schools?

George Black: No, I am not making a statement as general as that. There are around 150 primary schools in Glasgow, and I could not tell you exactly which schools have physical barriers as opposed to other barriers. I am saying that problems with physical facilities in some schools are a major barrier to rolling out the programme that has been rolled out in other schools. We are not sitting doing nothing. We are considering alternative ways of getting investment in schools. However, the problem is major.

The Convener: Forgive me. You knew that you were coming to give evidence to this committee. I do not expect you to list schools, but you must know the number or the percentage of primary schools that will be unable to deliver quality PE for two hours a week because they do not have the physical facilities. Let us park the issue of whether staff are able to deliver PE; let us consider only the physical facilities.

George Black: I could not tell you the exact number of schools that do not have the physical facilities to deliver that standard of PE.

Mary Scanlon: A few weeks ago, we learned from written evidence that Falkirk Council decided to integrate a swimming pool into every new school it built. We were also told that Glasgow City Council decided not to build any swimming pools in secondary schools. Is that accurate?

George Black: It is not as sweeping as that. Glasgow City Council has a number of swimming pools that are not part of schools. Some schools have swimming pools.

Mary Scanlon: You have said that the physical barrier is a major barrier to providing physical activity. On what basis did you decide when to build a swimming pool in a secondary school and when not to? The evidence that we received suggested that your new schools did not include swimming pools.

George Black: We considered the range of provision within the city. We did not consider the schools in isolation. However, in some schools with special needs requirements, for example, we decided to incorporate a pool.

Mary Scanlon: In the schools in which you decided not to incorporate a pool, what was the basis of the judgment?

George Black: We considered our strategy for sports provision across the city.

Mary Scanlon: Does that include sports provision in the independent sector, the private sector, the council sector or wherever?

George Black: Primarily, we consider the council's own facilities, but we also consider private facilities.

Mary Scanlon: You have said that there is a physical barrier to sport, and in your opening statement you said that your school estate was in bad repair. However, you have rebuilt most of your secondary schools, so do you accept that you have contributed to the physical barrier by not including swimming pools in the majority of your secondary schools?

George Black: No. What I am really homing in on is that a number of primary schools have one hall, which is usually a dining room, that is used—

Mary Scanlon: It is really secondary schools that I am asking about. That is what the evidence was about.

George Black: In secondary schools, the decision was taken on the basis of the facilities that exist throughout the city. The city has excellent sporting facilities that are not in schools.

Ian Hooper: We have rebuilt most of the swimming pools in the city in the past 20 years, and they are spread throughout the city. Local areas have good accessibility to modern, high-quality swimming pools, and they are extensively used by schools.

The Convener: Can you tell us how many swimming pools Glasgow has, and its population?

Ian Hooper: The population is—

George Black: 580,000.

Ian Hooper: I think we have something like 16 swimming pools throughout the city, but that includes Tollcross leisure centre, which has a 50m pool that is 25m wide, a learning pool and a teaching pool all in the one venue. The development of swimming pools in Glasgow has been based on sportscotland's facilities planning model, which takes account of demand and supply and population, and has been part of a programme that has taken place over the past 15 years.

The Convener: Before Michael Matheson asks his question, will you tell the committee about schools' access to swimming pools? There are sometimes issues of accessibility and cost.

Ian Hooper: The pools are extensively used by schools. They are made available during school time for use in the school curriculum. Tollcross leisure centre in the east end of Glasgow, which is an area with poor health statistics, has an extensive learn to swim programme for primary schools in that part of the city. In the management of that facility, we work closely with schools in the area, and we work with PE specialists to encourage primary schools to use the pools.

The Convener: So cost is not a barrier. We have heard elsewhere that some pools—

Ian Hooper: No, cost is not a barrier.

George Black: During the school holidays, our class connections programme makes transport available to youngsters in the city to ensure that they have access to the facilities. A number of years ago, we introduced free swimming for juveniles in the city, and there are some 240,000 to 250,000 admissions a year through that programme. We have put a lot of effort into swimming over the years.

Ian Hooper: Free transport under the class connections programme is also available for schools to visit museums; it is not just for visits to sports facilities and swimming pools. The programme overcomes one of the key barriers for schools, pre-school groups and community groups in Glasgow in accessing cultural and sporting facilities, including swimming pools.

The Convener: Is it like my bus pass?

Ian Hooper: We provide the transport and it is all free of charge.

Jackie Baillie: You just need to be young, Christine.

The Convener: I do not mind. There are other people on the committee with a bus pass. I am not alone. I am not looking at anybody in particular.

Michael Matheson has some questions for East Renfrewshire Council.

Michael Matheson: I am keen to get a response from East Renfrewshire Council on how it uses the health and wellbeing strand of the curriculum for excellence to improve sporting provision or physical education in schools. Also, I presume that there are some physical barriers with your primary schools as well, and that you experience similar problems to those in Glasgow that we heard about. Given that all your primary schools meet the target of two hours of quality physical education per week, how have you overcome the physical barriers?

12:00

John Wilson: We have the same view on swimming pools as our colleagues in Glasgow. We do not have swimming pools in our new secondary schools. The figure that was quoted to us was £55 for every swim—not for every swimming lesson, but for every swim. Every time a pupil entered the pool, it would cost £55. I mentioned sustainability earlier, and I do not believe that that cost could be met in every secondary school in the country. We certainly could not afford it. We have four community swimming pools for a population of about 90,000.

We try to keep the pools as well maintained as possible. We have the same model as others, in that our schools use the community facilities quite extensively.

We have at least two hours of PE per week in our primary schools. We started off by issuing a directive that two hours of PE will be provided. Issuing a directive means that the issue is monitored—members asked about that earlier—to ensure that at least two hours are provided. That approach has been so successful that some schools have gone beyond the two hours. Another success is that there have been spin-offs in other areas, because the children, being more active, respond better in other more traditional areas. For me, that is a bonus.

In secondary schools, we restructured the timetable. In the majority of schools throughout the country, the timetabling model is quite inefficient in that, in the main, teachers are allocated more non-contact time than is required under their contract. Councils pay for that time without getting access to it. We looked for a more efficient timetabling model to give us access to that additional half hour in which teachers were not in front of a class so that we could utilise that time for the benefit of pupils. That enabled us both to save money on staff numbers without any redundancies and to invest that saving in additional PE teachers. Three years ago, in preparation for the introduction of the new timetable, we took on more PE teachers than we required. We did that within existing resources and we still managed to make a saving.

By using a structure that has 33 blocks in the week—I will not go into the technicalities, but a 33-period week is an asymmetric week—we have access to all of the time that we pay for in teacher salaries, which is an important point. In our council, which is smaller than Glasgow City Council, the restructuring generated a quite considerable saving of £800,000. I was allowed to reinvest £400,000 of that in additional PE teachers, which has helped the programme to take off in the secondary sector. Timetabling on a 33-period model generates the additional periods that are required over and above the curricular subject PE to ensure that all pupils—even those who do not take PE—are involved in physical activity. We achieved that in the secondary school by changing and improving the structure.

Michael Matheson: I also asked about the curriculum for excellence.

John Wilson: People who are better educational philosophers than I will ever be could talk to the committee about the curriculum for excellence. For me, it contains a lot of words. I believe in practicalities and making things happen. That is one of my difficulties with certain aspects of the curriculum for excellence. Quite honestly, I

do not understand aspects of it. To me, it is just education jargon.

The Convener: I think that you have won friends with that statement.

Michael Matheson: How were the barriers overcome, particularly at primary school level?

Ian Pye: Let me answer the point by mentioning just two instances of practical steps that East Renfrewshire Council has taken to try to tie things together. Each cluster within East Renfrewshire has a sport and physical activity cluster plan. The active schools co-ordinator, the management teams from the primary and secondary schools, the PE teachers and the link teachers for the active schools co-ordinator sit down each year to devise that plan. They consider what they will do and what forward momentum they will have in different areas over the year. The sport and physical activity cluster plan is regularly monitored by the active schools co-ordinator and active schools manager, who report on progress to the management teams within the cluster. That is just one instance of how we try to tie everything together.

Within East Renfrewshire—this might be because of our size—we also set up sport-specific development forums for all of our active 8 sports. Each forum involves representatives from active schools, sports development, PE and the local clubs in that sport. For example, in the case of tennis, we have a representative from all the tennis clubs and a representative from the governing body, which for us is Tennis West of Scotland. The representatives sit down at a meeting four times a year to develop a sport-specific plan. That plan deals with school-club links, coach education, capacity building within the club and out-of-school-hours programmes.

We provide a clear direction. Children in our primary schools are exposed to the sports in the curriculum. We give them a taste of those activities, so we must be mindful of the exit routes into the community. We have set up specialised forums that meet regularly to plan and monitor that process, but it is not a strategy that sits on someone's desk. We are talking about practical, day-to-day relationships between schools and clubs and all the people in that partnership.

As regards your other point, some of the primary schools in East Renfrewshire are not of the standard that we would like, but the teachers have to get on with it. They are mandated to deliver two hours of PE. We give them support in the form of curricular resources and training, but they still have to deliver two hours of PE, even though the facilities might be, if not substandard, not of the same high standard as those in brand new schools.

The Convener: I take it that if a headteacher wants to use the gym for something else that will block its use for physical activity, they cannot, because the priority is the provision of PE.

Ian Pye: The priority is the delivery of two hours of PE. In many cases, PE lessons in our primary schools are out in the playground. Traditionally, that has not been the case in primary schools, but it is necessary in schools that have only one hall that is also used as a dining hall.

The Convener: As the Health and Sport Committee, we appreciate that health and sport are completely different challenges, to use the political jargon, for a large authority such as Glasgow City Council. We appreciate that Glasgow faces particular issues as regards the health of some of its citizens and their children.

Has the programme that East Renfrewshire Council delivered measurably benefited the health and wellbeing of the primary children in the area? How are you monitoring that? We would like to know about it.

Ian Pye: There are two aspects to that. Over the past two years, but particularly this year, secondary school PE teachers have reported to us that levels of physical literacy among S1 students are far higher, with the result that they have not had to spend a whole term delivering physical literacy lessons. In the past, such lessons were necessary, because the children who came out of primary school did not have physical literacy skills. Children in East Renfrewshire now have those skills, because they have gone through three or four years of the active 8 programme, which is an intensive programme that is based on the acquisition of physical literacy skills. No specific sports are taught before P4. The programme runs from nursery school right through to P7, but from nursery school to P3 it is all about fun and movement and games. Only from P4 to P7 does it involve specific sports. The programme is extremely progressive and is based on physical literacy.

In addition to that anecdotal evidence, for the past three years our active school co-ordinators have assessed the skills acquisition and fitness levels of all pupils in P6. There has been a steady increase not just in the average physical fitness level of the children who have been assessed but, more important, in their level of physical literacy. All the pupils who emerge from the assessment as poor performers in the sense that their level of physical literacy is below average are offered a place in a school-based movement and skills club. There is a movement and skills club in every primary school, so there are 24 of them in total. All the pupils who need support to get their skills up to an average level are provided with that

opportunity. The clubs take place at dinner time or out of school hours.

We also have responsibility for gifted and talented children, whom we want to nurture. We have multiskill academies, and the children who are assessed as having very high levels of physical literacy are offered the opportunity to attend them so that their talents can be nurtured and fostered. Clubs from East Renfrewshire visit the academies, because we want those children to exit into clubs. Over the past three years, it has been interesting to see the number of gifted and talented children who have never been members of, or associated with, local sports clubs. A big focus of ours has been to try to get those children into local clubs, because they will be the stars who will wow us and entertain us in the future.

The Convener: I will ask a general question about parental involvement. We are all aware of areas of deprivation in various parts of Scotland. When we visited Stirling, we were told that energy and enthusiasm for physical activity, physical education and sport could be generated in more affluent areas, but there were difficulties with parents in other areas. I am aware of parts of Glasgow, East Renfrewshire, the Borders and the Highlands, for example, where it might be difficult to generate such heat. How do you get parents behind what you try to do?

Ian Hooper: I will give you a flavour of what is happening in Glasgow, because much of what has been talked about happens there. We have focused on the links between clubs, the community, the PE curriculum and after-school clubs. That work is about joining up resources and activity. In practical terms, at a local level, it is about getting our active schools co-ordinators together to plan with our sports development officers and our PE specialists. That planning takes place across our 10 community planning partnership areas.

We are also trying to build clubs' capacity. Involving parents in clubs, the link between clubs and what happens in schools and the pathways between schools and clubs are among the key issues. In the recent past, the active schools initiative has been criticised for failing to create an effective bridge between what happens in school, what happens after school and what happens with clubs in the community. We have been building clubs' capacity by training volunteers and coaches; getting the clubs better access to our schools and school facilities; and getting them to work more closely with our active schools co-ordinators and PE specialists.

We have been doing that at a practical, local level by asking what the key sports are in the local area and how they can link in with the local schools. For example, Clydesdale hockey club in

Glasgow has been working with primary schools and class teachers in Castlemilk, which is one of our peripheral housing estates, and doing after-school sessions. It has been operating those as a satellite club with great success and highly effectively. The kids who took part in that satellite after-school club are now moving into the main junior section of the club and some of them are becoming talented performers and moving into the Glasgow school of sport. The project has also encouraged parents from Castlemilk to become volunteers and, in some cases, volunteer as coaches. We are seeing parallel activity; the parents have been stimulated by their kids' interest in the sport outside the curriculum and after school.

We have spent a lot of time addressing the clubs' capacity and their ability to provide coaches in sports such as hockey that have not traditionally been available in areas such as Castlemilk. Some of our poorer and disadvantaged areas do not have strong club infrastructures. In the west end of Glasgow, there are clubs for every sport, as you can imagine, but in areas such as Easterhouse and Castlemilk, the club infrastructure is not strong. Therefore, we have to either build new clubs in those areas or get some of the existing clubs to move out of their traditional homes and bases and work with schools in such areas more effectively.

We have to build clubs' capacity and provide access in the schools, which have the facilities. Secondary schools, because they have been rebuilt, all have new sports halls. The rebuilding of the secondary school estate in Glasgow has given us the hardware—the sports halls and pitches—for the clubs to start doing development activity. It goes beyond standard lets; clubs are doing development activity in the after-school periods, working intensively with schools and bringing the parents along with them at the same time.

12:15

The Convener: I presume that parents and carers see your assessment report. Is there any resentment from them? They might be miffed if they think that there is some sort of criticism of them.

John Wilson: That is a good question. A key issue here is parental involvement. To date, the best vehicle that I have found for that has been positive coaching Scotland and the Winning Scotland Foundation, which have changed the culture and the way in which parents look at sport. They have taken the fear of young people performing away from the people who are barracking them on the sidelines and so on. Our meetings with parents to promote the positive coaching approach have been tremendously

beneficial, especially in deprived areas. We are changing the way in which those individuals look at sport and helping them to encourage and work with their young people to develop further. Ian Pye has had a lot of meetings with parents.

Ian Pye: We are a pilot authority for the positive coaching Scotland programme. Over the past year, we have been rolling out a programme of workshops for parents. A month ago, we had a workshop with one of our biggest clubs in East Renfrewshire, Giffnock Soccer Centre. We had more than 250 parents out on a wet Wednesday night at Hampden. That is testament to the power of sport. Parents want their children to be involved in sport. The feedback from parents shows us that there is a problem, which has been our view in East Renfrewshire for a number of years.

We were happy to have a partnership with the Winning Scotland Foundation, because we realise that it is not just an issue of getting children involved in sport. On the whole, local authorities have been quite good at getting children involved in sport, but the issue for us is that, by the time those children are 13 and 14, about 80 per cent of them have dropped out. A measure of success for us is whether a club or out-of-school-hours programme that has 30 kids at the beginning of term still has 30 at the end of term. Has the club made the activity exciting enough for the children to keep participating in it?

The positive coaching Scotland programme has been a tremendous vehicle for us in getting access to parents, and discussing with them the issues surrounding sport. However, we are on a learning curve with that. Some of the things that we have done have been very successful, but some of our parental workshops have not been as successful in terms of turnout. We are learning and growing as we go.

The Convener: What does a workshop comprise?

Ian Pye: A workshop comprises consideration of the issues surrounding sport. We ask parents to reflect on what motivates them to get their sons and daughters involved in sport. Is the aim to win the match on a Saturday? That is the traditional model, which is the motivation of some but not all parents. Is that all-important for a seven-year-old, or is it more important that a child learns the skills of an activity, enjoys themselves and participates in that activity throughout their life? Where is the balance?

The balance in Scotland has shifted towards the win-at-all-costs mentality. All our coaching, structures and philosophy is based on that—on winning the league or winning the game on Saturday. In East Renfrewshire, we want to reverse that. We believe that learning and the

social and emotional development of children are far more important. We are talking about youth sport here; we are not talking about professional sport. Professional sportsmen have to win the game on a Saturday and a Wednesday. They are paid to do that and they are paid to entertain us. That is not what youth sport is about. Youth sport is about the social and emotional development of young people. Let us get back to basics in youth sport. That is what we are trying to do in East Renfrewshire. That is why we are in the partnership.

Mary Scanlon: I have one question for East Renfrewshire and one for Glasgow. I read the East Renfrewshire submission and have listened carefully to what you said, a lot of which inspired me, but I am not sure that I have heard much about what happens in nursery schools. Will you tell us what happens there?

It is clear from the East Renfrewshire submission that PE is a priority and a high-level strategic outcome, there is a can-do attitude and it will happen. If I had only read that submission and had not heard from the witnesses this morning, I would have confidence that it was going to happen. However, the Glasgow submission says that children should do this and they should do that; in one paragraph, the word “should” appears four times. Reading it, I feel that there is a lack of commitment. I know that Glasgow has come to the committee today and spoken of there being many barriers but, unless there is a commitment to overcoming those barriers, full PE provision is never going to happen, which is the feeling that I get from reading the Glasgow submission. We do not need an all-singing, all-dancing approach; children can do PE in the playground—even schools in the Highlands and Islands have playgrounds, a field, a hill or something. After reading the East Renfrewshire submission, I am confident that PE provision will be made there, but am I right to interpret that there is a lack of commitment in Glasgow?

George Black: I am glad that you asked that question because I was invited here to speak about the leadership that is being shown in Glasgow to improve pathways into sport. The starting point for that is in the council, which has five key objectives. Forgive me if this sounds a bit like strategy, but one of those five objectives is to improve health and wellbeing. The others are around learning, the economy, the environment and efficiency. As one of the five is to improve health and wellbeing, there is a commitment at that level.

In Glasgow, the community planning partnership has five themes, one of which is health. Its overriding objective is to address drug and alcohol addiction in the city. Sport participation has a key

role to play in addressing the health objective as well as in addressing drug and alcohol addiction.

We have a leadership role in the Clyde valley. We participate with the other councils in the area and work closely with them on the Commonwealth games. Although we have excellent facilities in Glasgow at the moment, we will have a new national indoor sports arena in the east end of Glasgow, which will be available to participants in that area where many of the challenges are. We will have a velodrome in the east end, which will be not just for high-profile cycling but for community use. We will have a new extension to the swimming pool at Tollcross. Next month, we will open an indoor training facility at Toryglen. We will have a new arena at the exhibition centre and we have upgraded Scotstoun stadium. If you come back in 2011, you will see that the facilities in Glasgow have been vastly improved. The key challenge, to which we are committed, is to ensure that the facilities are used not only by high-level participants but by local people who want to participate on a daily basis. We are also committed to having 15,000 volunteers in place for the Commonwealth games. That will include parents, wider families and local clubs.

I say most earnestly to you that we in the council are wholly committed to addressing health and wellbeing and pathways into sport. I do not want to hang that commitment entirely on the Commonwealth games, but if we cannot make a success of the games and address the challenges in Glasgow, I do not think that we ever will. Therefore, I would like to talk about opportunities, not just challenges.

Mary Scanlon: Do you understand my point about Glasgow's submission, in which I read about what should happen? It does not exactly convince the reader that there is a can-do attitude and that things will happen.

George Black: My point to you is that there is very much a can-do attitude in Glasgow, which would never have won the Commonwealth games for this country if it did not have a can-do attitude. The Commonwealth games are not given to cities or countries that will not deliver.

Ian Pye: East Renfrewshire makes no distinction between primary schools and pre-five establishments. The active 8 programme and other sources of support, resources and training are available as much to pre-five teachers and support assistants as to primary schools.

The Convener: I underline to the witnesses from Glasgow City Council, who have had a bit of a tough time this morning, that the committee is well aware from evidence that it has received on children living in families that suffer from drugs and alcohol abuse of the huge challenges that you

have to deal with in your area. I realise that these issues can to some extent be chalk and cheese in different authorities.

I should also caution you about another challenge—it seems to be the word of the day—that you might face. As far as the legacy of international sporting events is concerned, we have heard about benefits to infrastructure, but we have heard no evidence to suggest that they improve the take-up of sports or other activities, even those in which gold medals have been won. I wish you every success and hope that the Glasgow spirit proves us wrong. I have to say that I am on the side of anyone who allows something like the squinty bridge to be built; I think that that was the best thing that has ever happened.

George Black: My point is that these are opportunities to address challenges.

The Convener: I understand that. I am simply trying to make clear to you that we appreciate that different local authorities have to deal with different issues as a result of the size of the area and the population that they have to deal with.

The committee is keen to hear about the issue of physical literacy in nurseries in Glasgow, which has not yet been addressed. Long ago, toddlers could become physically literate simply by playing and running about; now they have to be taught it.

George Black: Without straying too far into strategy, I point out that the pre-12 strategy takes an holistic approach to primary, nursery and early years education in this respect. As a result, my comments about primary education apply equally to nursery education. Indeed, our new build under the pre-12 strategy has incorporated that approach.

Michael Matheson: One might be forgiven for thinking that the strategy for implementing the pathway in East Renfrewshire must be quite expensive. If I said to people from another local authority, "Why can't you emulate what East Renfrewshire is doing?", would they say, "Because we can't afford to do that"? Is it costly to implement the strategy?

John Wilson: Obviously, it costs more than not implementing it. However, as I pointed out, economies have been made by restructuring the council and the curricular provision in secondary schools, and part of that money has been allowed to be reinvested in something that we believe to be important. The strategy is affordable within existing resources; indeed, even then, some money is still available. Either we decide to use those resources inefficiently or we decide to invest the money in something that we believe in and look at various opportunities—to use that word again—that we can fund.

Ian Hooper: I think that the issue is less about finding resources than about partnership and bringing existing resources together. We have to join up our work with national sports federations and sports governing bodies with, for example, resources that have already been invested through the active schools programme, capacity in the club and voluntary sectors and the sports development workforce that exists in many local authorities. Some of the thinking behind the community sports hub concept that is emerging from legacy discussions on the Commonwealth games reflects the need to pull together existing resources and ensure that they work in the most effective way. Indeed, such hubs are beginning to emerge in some of our schools in Glasgow.

We must not only join up such resources but make the best of them. For example, we have introduced a club mark accreditation scheme to encourage clubs and support them in improving the quality of coaching, parental involvement and links with schools. As a result of that kind of support, an increasing number of clubs have reached and indeed gone beyond that benchmark. Once clubs are accredited, they can maximise opportunities for children and young people across a much wider area of Glasgow.

The Convener: I will conclude on that note. We are now well versed in partnership working, joining up resources and taking a pragmatic approach to delivery.

I thank the witnesses from the two local authorities for their evidence.

Meeting closed at 12:30.

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