



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 13 December 2011

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HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

18th Meeting 2011, Session 4

CONVENER

*Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con)

*Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)

*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

*Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

*Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Derek Grieve (Scottish Government)

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP) (Committee Substitute)

Shona Robison (Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Douglas Wands

LOCATION

Committee Room 6

Scottish Parliament

Health and Sport Committee

Tuesday 13 December 2011

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 11:03*]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Duncan McNeil): Good morning, and welcome to the Health and Sport Committee's 18th meeting in the fourth session of the Scottish Parliament. I remind all present that mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be turned off as they can interfere with the sound system.

I have apologies from Bob Doris. We welcome, once again, Dennis Robertson—he is always welcome—who is attending as a substitute.

Agenda item 1 is to decide whether to take in private items 6 and 7. Item 6 is consideration of the committee's approach to the scrutiny of the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1, and item 7 is consideration of the committee's work programme. Do I have members' agreement to take those items in private?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Subordinate Legislation

London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Advertising and Trading) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [Draft]

11:04

The Convener: Agenda item 2 is evidence from the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport on an affirmative instrument. Members have received a cover note that sets out the purpose of the instrument and a note that the Subordinate Legislation Committee had no comments to make on it.

I welcome Shona Robison, Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, to the Health and Sport Committee, especially as this is her first appearance in front of the committee this session. I also welcome Odette Burgess, senior policy officer in the games delivery team, and Mark Eggeling, a Scottish Government solicitor. I invite the minister to make brief opening remarks on the instrument, then we will move to the debate.

Shona Robison (Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport): Thank you, convener. It is nice to be here for my first appearance in front of the committee in the new session.

I am here to discuss the draft London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Advertising and Trading) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. As a contractual requirement of London's bid to host the 2012 games, the United Kingdom Government promised to introduce additional regulation to restrict advertising and outdoor trading in the vicinity of Olympic games and Paralympic games venues during the games.

The Scottish ministers agreed to respect that commitment at Hampden stadium, which will host eight Olympic football matches. As the Scottish ministers have powers under the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act 2006 in relation to such matters in Scotland, the draft regulations have been developed to meet that commitment. The regulations will apply only to a small area around Hampden for a limited time.

Unlike some previous Olympic games regulations that covered a kilometre outside venues, these regulations apply tightly to the event zone and go slightly further by only a few hundred metres or so to protect key places, primarily to accommodate spectators' transport walkways and places where previous incidents of ambush marketing have taken place. Like the event zones, the event periods are tailored to each games event, switching on the day before and lasting only for the few days of the football matches—that is, 24 to 28 July and 31 July to 3 August 2012.

Scottish Government officials have worked closely with their counterparts in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Olympic Delivery Authority to raise awareness of the regulations among organisations and businesses across the UK. The Olympic Delivery Authority issued a UK-wide general notice in June 2009 outlining plans for the regulations. A joint consultation on the draft English, Welsh and Scottish regulations took place between 7 March and 30 May this year. More than 600 people or agencies were directly contacted about the consultation. In addition, UK Government officials have spent a great deal of time meeting representatives of the national advertising and trading sectors and outlining the proposed draft regulations, including Scotland's.

In total, 51 written responses to the joint consultation were received from a range of stakeholders. There were no substantive responses specifically on the Scottish regulations. Those who replied generally supported the approach, and any suggestions tended to be of a technical nature.

The Olympic Delivery Authority will arrange training, and officers will be advised to take a light-touch approach to most infringements, but persistent offenders could face having offending items seized or destroyed. The law will be more vigorously enforced against deliberate attempts at ambush marketing or illegal advertising, as finance from official sponsors is crucial to funding the events and we wish to ensure that funding is secure in the future—for example, for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth games. Sponsors have to be satisfied that their interests are protected.

The Olympic Delivery Authority has recently published detailed guidance on the regulations, which provides simple information to ensure that those people who will be affected by them understand what is expected at games time. In addition, the authority has opened the application process for authorisation to trade in the restricted zone, and local authorities and advertising and trading bodies are engaged in the process of reaching the relevant individuals and businesses.

The English regulations, which mirror closely the draft Scottish regulations, were laid on 10 October and were made on 1 December.

I move—

The Convener: I am sorry—to save confusion, I should have said at the outset that members have the opportunity to seek clarification on any technical issues from the minister and her officials before she moves the motion. Do members have any questions for her or her officials?

As there are no such questions, we move to agenda item 3. I invite the minister to move motion S4M-01536.

Motion moved,

That the Health and Sport Committee recommends that the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Advertising and Trading) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.—[*Shona Robison.*]

Motion agreed to.

The Convener: Thank you. At this point, we will pause to allow the minister to change her team.

11:11

Meeting suspended.

11:12

On resuming—

Ministerial Priorities

The Convener: The minister has been joined by Scottish Government officials Derek Grieve, team leader, sport and physical activity policy; Karen Lax, head of games legacy and benefits team; and Derek Bearhop, head of games delivery. Welcome. I invite the minister to make some brief opening remarks, if she wishes to do so.

Shona Robison: Thanks, convener. It is a pleasure to talk more widely about my portfolio. I am sure that members are aware that next Wednesday I will lead a debate on progress to date on our preparations for Glasgow 2014 and the legacy that we aim to secure from the games. I hope to see many of the committee at that debate.

It is a great honour for me to be the first dedicated Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport. The creation of a specific post reflects not only the Government's commitment to a successful games but its recognition of the importance of sport in Scotland and the impact that it can have.

It is worth saying that, despite the difficult and challenging financial environment that we are all operating in, our investment in sport remains strong. Since 2007, we have invested £371 million in sport and physical activity through a combination of grant, lottery and cashback funding, which has delivered 12 new or upgraded swimming pools, 23 football pitches, including nine 3G pitches, and some great regional facilities, such as the Torglen centre, Aberdeen Sports Village and the Ravenscraig facility. We have invested around £25 million in sporting activities and facilities through the cashback scheme, which is delivering fantastic results throughout Scotland.

To support the Scottish team, sportscotland is investing £3.25 million, £5.2 million and £5.2 million in performance sport in the three years running up to Glasgow 2014. That is in addition to the £7 million that has already been provided. It is extremely important that our team is supported to give the best performance that it can in front of a home crowd in three years' time.

11:15

I am sure that the committee will want to know that our preparations for 2014 are well under way and on track. The Commonwealth Games Federation audit concluded that our preparations were good, on track and on budget, and such external confirmation is reassuring. Work on major projects such as the national indoor sports arena, the velodrome and the Tollcross aquatic centre

started earlier this year; more widely, the committee will be aware that the completion of the M74 in the east end is already delivering reduced journey times, which will benefit not just Glasgow but the whole of Scotland and will, of course, be very important for the Commonwealth games.

Our plans to leave a lasting legacy across key areas such as business capacity, job creation, enhancing our international profile, getting people more active and engaging with our communities are already developing and bearing fruit in every local authority area. Of course, we have a lot more work to do to achieve our ambitions for 2014, but we are proceeding as planned, on track and on budget.

I am happy to take questions from members.

The Convener: Thank you, minister. The first question is from Gil Paterson.

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): Good morning, minister. I know that many committee members are impressed by the concept of preventative spending and, in that respect, I want to look across the various budget headings and departments. Does the Government's overall agenda address that concept in any way? For instance, would you consider using funding for sport in schools to tackle obesity or other issues that affect health? Are Government departments cross cutting in that way?

Shona Robison: That is a very important question. John Swinney himself gave a presentation on that very subject to the cross-party group on sport. In many respects, our spend on sport is preventative. Although, as I mentioned earlier, we have invested in elite sport not least to support our team's performance in three years' time, the vast bulk of our investment in sport is being made at grass-roots level to benefit schools and communities.

Perhaps I should highlight a couple of areas where that spend is having a real impact. The £13.5 million that I believe we spent last year on active schools delivered around 5 million activity sessions for children before, during and after school. Although that was for non-curricular sport, it nevertheless opened a range of physical activity and sporting opportunity from dance to every sport and activity under the sun. I do not remember getting those opportunities at school but, these days, such an approach is important, because children expect to have that kind of choice. That is a very important aspect of preventative spend. After all, given the challenge that we face with obesity rates, we know that children need to be more active and it is important that we reach the captive audience in schools.

I am also serious about delivering the two hours and two periods of physical education. We are

working hard with our partners in the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on that policy, about which I will have more to say in the new year. It forms part of the jigsaw along with active schools and moves towards ensuring that children can access sports clubs in their vicinity. In that respect, many community sports hubs—of which there are 72 in the pipeline and at various stages of development—are centred around secondary schools with a view to opening the school estate and ensuring that not only children but the whole community can use facilities more of the time at night once the school day is finished and at weekends. It is all about trying to make it easier for people of all ages to be more active.

Gil Paterson: That is fine.

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con): First of all, I should say that there is no partisan political aspect to my question—I am just interested in finding out more information. More than any other sporting occasion that historically we have managed to organise, there has been a tremendous focus on the legacy from both the Olympic and the Commonwealth games. Everyone has obviously been very keen about it; indeed, many feel that it justifies the considerable investment that we are making. To what extent are expectations being raised? How difficult will it be to establish a sustained legacy? What evidence is there of a sustained legacy 12, 24, 48 or 72 months after the most recent Olympic and Commonwealth games? What lessons have you learned from recent experience? As previous contests have become more distant and experience has developed, have you adjusted your thinking about how we plan, to ensure that we succeed as well as or better than other cities have done?

Shona Robison: Those are good questions. We constantly challenge ourselves on the issue. We have, of course, considered the experience of other countries and cities that hosted major sporting events. It is fair to say that some have done better than others at achieving a lasting legacy.

Our legacy ambitions started early. Our legacy preparations began as soon as Glasgow was named as the host city, because legacy is about what happens not just immediately before and after or during the event but way in advance, during the run-up and, of course, way after the games have finished.

There will be a tangible, physical legacy, through regeneration in the east end of Glasgow. Much work is going into ensuring that there is not just extensive physical regeneration of an area that has one of the highest levels of deprivation—the area will be unrecognisable—but economic regeneration. For example, work is going on in the

east end of Glasgow with young people who are currently unemployed. There is direct targeting, to ensure that there is a personal, social and economic legacy and that people's lives can be genuinely turned round. The pilot personal best programme in Glasgow targeted people who are furthest from the labour market, and Glasgow City Council is pursuing the Commonwealth apprenticeship initiative.

Much of the work is bringing benefits. There are jobs in the construction of facilities—again, opportunities are being targeted at people who are furthest from the labour market. In the here and now, and in a difficult economic environment, jobs are being created and sustained, particularly for such people.

The challenge for us is the wider legacy—the legacy that reaches every community in Scotland. I have said consistently that I want every community to benefit from the Commonwealth games and that I want to ensure that that is a lasting legacy. That is why, for example, we decided to deliver at least 100 community sports hubs by 2014—I think that we will do better than that. Hubs offer a better and more sustainable way of delivering sport in communities, by bringing people together, opening facilities and getting more people active. All that has a beneficial impact on physical activity levels and obesity levels.

There are many programmes, some of which we are delivering through the games for Scotland programme, through which we have a legacy lead in every local authority, who considers how their authority's legacy plan is developing. The Big Lottery Fund funds a number of community programmes. Through different initiatives and funding streams, we are trying to ensure that we have as big a reach as possible into every community.

As for the hard-nosed evaluation of all that, we are embarking next year on what these days is trendily called a meta-evaluation. We will pull all the evaluations of the different projects and initiatives into one evaluation, so that we can say with some empirical authority that we have baselines from which we can measure progress. When we are discussing this in three years' time, I will be able to turn to some harder data and say, "Look, you can see that we have delivered on X, Y and Z," and those will cover the four themes of the legacy. We hope to be in a position next February to publish what those baselines will be. We want to be as open and transparent as possible, because it is in everybody's interest to be able to demonstrate a lasting legacy.

Jackson Carlaw: When you say, "When we meet in three years' time and we are able to say

we have delivered on this,” do you mean Scotland or the Scottish National Party Government?

Shona Robison: I mean Scotland, because this is a genuine partnership. It is a genuine partnership with Glasgow City Council and with the voluntary sector; these are not just our games, albeit that we are providing 80 per cent of the funding, and it should be everybody's legacy. No matter what the political colour of the local authority, I want every area in Scotland to benefit from the games. That is the ambition that we have set ourselves.

Jackson Carlaw: I was being slightly flippant. I agree with you. I commend you for that and we wish you every success.

On progress on the infrastructure and the budget for that, one of our national newspapers likes to characterise expenditure on the games as being wildly out of control. What do we mean when we talk about the budget? Do we mean the budget that was originally set, or do we mean a budget that has been revised at any point in time? Are you confident as we move forward that, although there must be variation in both directions in some aspects of delivery, the infrastructure will be in place to allow us to promote the games as a wonderful advert for Glasgow and for Scotland? Are you confident that we will be doing that on the basis of a budget that the public, in what will probably still be very difficult financial times, will look at and say was a credit to us?

Shona Robison: Absolutely. I think that it is very important that we do that, because these are difficult financial times. However, I reiterate that the benefits are already being felt in jobs sustained and created that would otherwise not be. The infrastructure projects that are going ahead are very important for the construction industry, which is obviously having quite a hard time. Those projects—not just the venues but the motorway infrastructure, which is very directly linked to the games—are very important.

You will be aware that there have been revised costings for the games, which gained some media attention. We are absolutely confident going forward—and it is not just us. The external evaluation by the Commonwealth Games Federation is good and important, as it shows that it is not just the Government that is saying that there are no red-line issues. Things are going forward on time and on budget, with the revised budget that was set. Of course, there is a contingency fund that was built in at the time, but we hope that that will not have to be used.

Jackson Carlaw: Interestingly, the basic costs of the Forth crossing—I convened the Forth Crossing Bill Committee—have come down, perversely, because of the recession. Tendering

for infrastructure development was more competitive than had been anticipated and costs started to fall. Has there been evidence of that in infrastructure investment relating to development of the games?

Shona Robison: You will be aware that the cost of the M74 extension was reduced, by £20 million, I think—I am trying to remember what the exact figure was; we can get that for you. The M74 project came in under budget. It remains to be seen whether that will be the case for the construction of the venues, but you are right that there are opportunities. There are some competitive contracts out there in the current climate that are helping to bring costs down. We hope that, when we see the final tally, we might be able to make some savings but we have to wait because the venues are still being constructed.

11:30

The Convener: Have any lessons, good or bad, been learned from Manchester with regard to legacy?

Shona Robison: Yes. When I visited Manchester, I had very useful discussions on this subject and officials, too, have been discussing it. Manchester was pretty good at using the profile that it gained to attract further major sporting and other events, and the signs are that Glasgow is already doing that. The world gymnastics championships have already been announced and the city is bidding for a number of other events. Glasgow, in particular, is starting to be seen as a major, world-leading venue for sporting events and all these fantastic facilities make the city pretty attractive to some of the federations that have events that need to be hosted.

As with our approach to the east end of Glasgow, Manchester had a heavy focus on regeneration, although it is fair to say that that is still going on there. I was taken on a tour of the area that had been strategically targeted for that work.

Manchester was also quite successful in galvanising the volunteer workforce, which became very experienced. Having such a workforce is very good if you want to attract major events; after all, you need not only the infrastructure but people and volunteers who have been involved in major sporting events and know what they are doing. We hope to make the 15,000 volunteers whom we are recruiting for the Commonwealth games a really good asset for Glasgow and Scotland in attracting major events.

The Convener: Are there any pitfalls that need to be avoided?

Shona Robison: I am not sure that there were any dramatic pitfalls in Manchester. Like us, it avoided having big venues that it did not make a business case for. If past major sporting events have illustrated a big pitfall that should be avoided, it is that you should not build venues for which you have not made a business case with regard to future sustainability. We made it clear from the start that 70 per cent of the venues were already in place and that the other new venues would come with a very solid business case and have a sustainable future. We did not want to have any white elephants and, to be fair to Manchester, I think that it largely avoided that pitfall as well. That has been more of an issue elsewhere but, as I have said, we were very clear that we were not going to have that here.

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): I want to ask about two subjects. First, I note that the security costs for the Olympic games have recently doubled. I know that the Commonwealth games are three years away but I am sure that you have given a lot of thought to this issue. Can you tell us about our security costs? Do we intend to follow the example of the Olympics and double them?

Shona Robison: We are having very close discussions with our Olympics counterparts on, for example, lessons that we can learn about managing security and, right from the beginning, Strathclyde Police has been closely involved to ensure that we consider the various eventualities. The fact is that, when threat levels are raised, our security arrangements have to respond in kind. There is not much that we can do about that but, as with the Olympic games, the factor has been built into the games' contingency arrangements. We must learn from the Olympics any lessons that can be learned about managing public safety, and the very close relationship between those who are involved in both games will ensure that we get the best advice on how to take the matter forward in the run-up to 2014.

Richard Lyle: I must compliment you on the 72 sports hubs that you have said are progressing in Scotland; indeed, you say that you want to reach 100. What are the criteria for any local area that might be thinking of applying? I mean no disrespect to any council but, sometimes, council officials will pursue only a set number of hubs in their own council area. Can individual areas approach the Government or does the council have to make a case for an area that wants a sports hub?

Shona Robison: The council has to be involved in any bid for a sports hub. We have been keen to send out the message that we very much want the voluntary sector and community sports bodies to be involved in the hubs but, as far as sustainability

is concerned, it is really important that the council is on board. After all, the hubs can be located in various places, including schools, community centres or even a voluntary sports club that might not be run by the council itself. Indeed, there are many good examples of that.

In any such area, we are looking for strong partnerships. We want hubs to be successful, but that will require strong communication between all the partners—the clubs in the area, sports governing bodies and council sports development teams—if questions about viability or sustainability are not to arise. We have tried to be flexible and are not laying down some one-size-fits-all model; as I have said, there are various models involving different clubs, schools and so on. We are looking for hubs that meet the criteria of delivering better and affordable access and increasing participation because, after all, they are all about making things better and getting more people involved. Beyond the basic criteria, however, we would certainly encourage people to come forward. Initially, a very informal note of interest can be made to sportscotland, which will be able to discuss with those involved what they have to do to get a viable business case off the ground.

Richard Lyle: So there is no set number per local authority. Each authority can have as many hubs as meet the criteria.

Shona Robison: Absolutely. I want a spread of community sports hubs in every authority, but we have not taken a view that, if a particular authority has too many, it cannot have any more. There is certainly no cut-off for any proposals that are good, viable and sustainable, fit the bill and will make things better, but we expect that, in spending the money for sports hubs, sportscotland will encourage applications from areas that might not be coming forward at the moment and have still to get hubs off the ground.

The Convener: Given that there are 70-odd hubs, every local authority should have at least one. Do any local authorities have none and, if so, how do we pursue the matter?

Shona Robison: I think that Derek Grieve is closer to that issue than I am.

Derek Grieve (Scottish Government): We can provide full details of the development of community sports hubs in all local authorities. In general, though, every single local authority has a community sports hub in development.

Shona Robison: Some might be more developed than others. Some hubs might be in the pipeline but further down it. Some local authorities were quick off the mark and got hubs up and running quickly. Sportscotland has worked with some of the others to encourage them. Those are perhaps the ones where the hubs are just in the

pipeline. It is reassuring that, as Derek Grieve said, every local authority has something in the pipeline.

The Convener: The issue was identified as important by the Health and Sport Committee in the previous session of Parliament.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): I want to go back to the active schools programme, which the minister mentioned. I was pleased to hear the minister's commitment to two hours of PE a week and two periods of PE a week, because that is key to youngsters maintaining a level of activity as they go into adulthood. In the active schools programme, are schools allowed to use their own initiatives, or are there set initiatives that they can adapt? If we gave a class of 16-year-old girls a choice of doing a set PE activity or a zumba class twice a week, they would take the zumba class. Can schools adapt the programme to encourage and maintain physical activity?

Will there be further investment in mentoring and coaching in schools? That is a key element in encouraging and maintaining physical activity. Will there be investment in increasing university places for sports science?

Shona Robison: PE is curriculum based and is separate from the active schools programme. The commitment is for two hours of PE a week in primary schools and two periods a week in secondary schools. The short answer to your question is that schools are being innovative in delivering PE. If it is more attractive to teenage girls to do a zumba class, many schools will be doing that for PE. In primary schools, PE is centred on getting the basics right. The focus is on catching, throwing, jumping and all the basic moves. By the time young people get to secondary school, they are beginning to be more interested in a particular sport or whatever. Schools are showing flexibility. To encourage young people to take part in PE and to get them to enjoy it, schools must try to respond to what young people want. I certainly encourage that and schools are doing it.

In the active schools programme, schools are free to develop and to be innovative. Some schools do fantastic stuff before school in the morning, during breaks and at lunch time and after school. There is a great range on offer to young people. In recognition that teenage girls can sometimes be turned off from physical activity and sport, many schools have had specific programmes for them. For example, the fit for girls programme has targeted teenage girls with the aim of getting them involved. We are considering how to do more to reach teenage girls to keep them active, because we know that there is a fall-off at age 12 or 13. Having said that, I think that some secondary schools do not allow folk to turn up with a note and sit out and do nothing. They

make young people take part, even if that is just refereeing or putting the net out—the young people still have to put their kit on and take part. Personally, I quite like that idea. It encourages participation and prevents people from opting out week after week. Headteachers have shown imagination in ensuring that PE is given a profile.

A lot of coaching is being done in schools through the governing bodies. Some fantastic programmes are offered. Football and rugby in particular have extensive programmes in schools. The Scottish Football Association and the Scottish Rugby Union have a lot of involvement with schools the length and breadth of Scotland. Other governing bodies are also getting involved. Basketball is another programme that has been expanded into a number of schools. We are encouraging other sports, as well.

11:45

One really interesting initiative is positive coaching in schools, which is run by the Winning Scotland Foundation and funded by the Scottish Government. The foundation has a bank of athletes, many of whom are household names or will be in future because they are up-and-coming athletes for 2014. Those athletes do a six-week programme in schools and act as role models and inspirations to young people and help them to set personal goals. Those goals might not all be in sport—they could be in anything. The athletes try to get young people to lift their horizons and their aspirations, which is fantastic. Some of those young people are encouraged to become coaches. There is a good programme of senior pupils coaching younger pupils and doing work in primary schools, which is great for their career development and their curriculum vitae.

There is a lot going on—too much for me to outline it all. We can certainly furnish the committee with more detail.

Mary Fee: I would appreciate that. Thank you.

The Convener: The previous session's Health and Sport Committee recognised that there was a lot of good activity, but asked whether the active schools focus should shift to tackle areas in which little or no progress had been made. While we know where good progress is being made, are we ensuring that that best practice is being spread across the country? How do we do that, and how do you keep a handle on that, given that delivery mechanisms are not exactly easy for you?

Shona Robison: I will say a word about PE. As I said, we are working hard with COSLA. We are gathering a lot of experience from headteachers and leaders in schools that have not only delivered two hours or two periods, but managed to do a lot of innovative stuff to make PE attractive to young

people. We are harnessing that to share that best practice.

I have met some fantastic headteachers who have turned schools around through the use of PE and who have used sport to sell the school's reputation. I have often felt that it would be fantastic if you could bottle that and give it to other schools. We are trying to bottle it by encouraging headteachers and other leaders in schools to be ambassadors and to partner schools that are maybe not as far down the road.

Bearing it in mind that sportscotland funds 80 per cent of the active schools programme, we have a fair amount of leverage over what is delivered. The active schools network has grown a great deal since its early days and delivers a huge range of activities. There have been challenges in some areas, but we have also shared best practice. Sportscotland now has a good handle on what is happening where. We use the active schools co-ordinators for information about what is happening in schools and local communities. They are a great source of information. The active schools programme is probably one of the big success stories from the point of view of getting young people to be more active.

The Convener: We have community sports hubs, the two hours of PE initiative, the active schools programme and many other initiatives. How do we ensure that the various agencies that are involved have bought into all that? Local authorities are important. Do you use the single outcome agreements to monitor the importance that local authorities are placing on physical activity? In relation to health boards' budgets—which the committee will consider—there is the important issue to do with the extent to which physical activity can play into prevention. There are also community planning partnerships. There is a lot of strategic information about what is happening on the ground. Can you provide the committee with such information? Have you looked at the issue?

Shona Robison: Yes. Sportscotland has been proactive in going round every area and having fairly robust discussions with each local authority, and indeed in linking its investment to issues such as whether an authority has a sports development plan, to ensure that if it is asked to invest in a particular local authority the authority can say what it is doing in relation to its sports development plan for communities and schools. Far more discussion is going on in that regard with the 32 local authorities than perhaps was the case in the past. Sportscotland is therefore able to tell me, on an on-going basis, where things are going really well, where work is going on and where things need a bit more attention. We can give you a bit more information on those discussions.

The Convener: Do all local authorities have a sports development plan?

Shona Robison: Most do—

The Convener: Some will be better than others, I presume. How do authorities action their plans?

Shona Robison: Most local authorities have a plan, which they action in dialogue with sportscotland. Sportscotland regularly finds out what progress is being made, and if the local authority is looking for investment sportscotland will want to know what is being done with the investment. It will ask about long-term sustainability and plans for strategic capital investment. It will ask what the authority is doing on the active schools programme. Given that sportscotland funds so much of the active schools network, it has quite a lot of leverage in the discussion about what is delivered.

The Convener: Sportscotland has produced its strategic plan for the period to 2015. Does it report directly to you? How do we monitor progress?

Shona Robison: Sportscotland reports to me, and I have regular discussions with it about how we take forward its investment plans to ensure that we are investing in the right places, whether we are talking about the national, regional or local level. There is on-going dialogue. In turn, I expect sportscotland to be in discussion not just with the 32 local authorities but with strategic partners in the voluntary sector who bring funding to the table and with health boards, particularly in relation to legacy plans, in which health boards are involved. We rely heavily on sportscotland to do the work that it should be doing not just nationally but in every one of the 32 local authorities.

The Convener: The committee might want to talk to sportscotland about its corporate plan, to see how everything fits in.

Shona Robison: I am sure that sportscotland would be happy to do that.

Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): Minister, you said that you could give the committee information on the discussions that sportscotland has been having with the 32 local authorities and other organisations. Sportscotland published a national audit of sports facilities in 2006. Are there plans for another audit, this time perhaps not of facilities but of practice around Scotland?

Shona Robison: We could certainly look at that. Sportscotland is keen to capture and share best practice. It meets with the local authority leads on sport, who are also keen to encourage the sharing of best practice. We want to get away from the notion of “not invented here”, which can be a challenge.

There are demonstrable benefits from the way in which schools have managed to deliver their two periods or two hours of physical education and to get a good active schools programme going, with links to local clubs. That is happening in many places in Scotland and it is about sharing best practice rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. We could talk to sportscotland about whether there is a need to bring that together in one place, but it works on best practice day in, day out and encourages local authorities to look at the particular challenges that they have to overcome in sport, physical activity or PE.

Fiona McLeod: We might achieve that just through your gathering information to give to this committee rather than through a formal document.

Shona Robison: Yes, we could certainly have a look at that.

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): Welcome, minister. We have probably all acknowledged in the past that some of our younger people, particularly young girls, do not have a healthy approach to PE in schools. I certainly welcome your comments about headteachers having innovative approaches to the two hours of PE. Are the young people engaging with that? Are we listening to young people who say what they want to participate in? I get the feeling that that probably is happening, but it would be interesting to know whether we are taking that approach.

Can you assure us that in rural Scotland, where there may be few facilities, we will put an emphasis on trying to ensure that there are community hubs?

We obviously welcome the steps that have been taken with the Paralympics, but can we ensure that all children, regardless of ability but particularly those with disabilities, are encouraged to participate fully in sports activities in schools and community hubs?

Shona Robison: PE has changed dramatically since my day when—let us be blunt—the choice of sport probably depended on the PE teacher's preference and it was done in a traditional way. When I compare that, which was a few sleeps ago, with what my daughter is offered in primary school, I see that PE is very varied and there is something for everybody. The fit for girls programme centres on asking girls what they want to do, in order to try to keep their interest, so there are activities such as zumba and dance. The activity does not matter as long as it gets them hot, sweaty and active.

Dennis Robertson: You are painting a wonderful picture.

Shona Robison: I know. Asking young people what they want to do is a good starting point, particularly when they are in secondary school. Primary school is a bit different, because the basic moves and skills need to be developed so that children are able to play any sport. However, when they get to secondary school, young people have preferences for particular sports or activities. Schools are getting better at responding to that.

As far as rural Scotland is concerned, the community sports hubs provide a good solution on community access to sporting facilities. With the best will in the world, it will be difficult to have an all-singing, all-dancing community sports facility around every corner, particularly in rural Scotland, so we must look at where the best facilities lie. Quite often, they are in schools, so the challenge for us is to get the school estate opened. The hub provides a way of doing that. I have visited a number of community sports hubs that have worked closely with local clubs and governing bodies to provide an excellent range of activities for all ages and to deliver great opportunities through the use of facilities inside and outwith the school. I see that as being a solution to some of the challenges that exist in rural Scotland.

12:00

The Paralympics are extremely important in encouraging young people and people of all ages with a disability to take part in sport. Scottish Disability Sport has been helping us to deliver such participation, and we are keen to ensure that there is a legacy from the Commonwealth games for everyone. I visited a primary school in my area at which a number of sports were being showcased. The fact that people could take part in them together, regardless of whether they had a disability, meant that the event was good for breaking down barriers and ensuring that people had opportunities to be involved. Swimming has been very good as far as involving people with disabilities is concerned. Some athletes have achieved fantastic things and are great role models in Scotland. We are definitely working closely with SDS to ensure that such participation is delivered.

Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): Good morning, minister. I would like to ask about investment in sport at grass-roots level and the role of community sports hubs. I have a good example in my constituency. The Inch Park Community Sports Club is the first club-based community sports hub in Scotland. It brings together three community clubs that cover rugby, cricket and football. The clubs work together to lease a public park and to provide a multisport complex that is managed and run by the clubs for the community.

When you and your officials conduct your evaluation, I encourage you to look at the Inch Park Community Sports Club as an exemplar of good practice that could be rolled out across the country. In addition, I invite you to visit the club with me.

Shona Robison: I think that Mr MacAskill visited the club, and I certainly hope to see it for myself. It was showcased in *Holyrood* magazine, in which Stewart Harris from sportscotland talked about it.

We want to encourage not just school-based hubs, but clubs that have shown great innovation to look at how they could develop the hub model. Inch Park Community Sports Club has been superb at doing that. Sometimes the voluntary sector and sport have a fantastic dynamism; Inch Park Community Sports Club has that in bucketloads, and we would certainly want to look at it as a model of good practice. There is a not dissimilar set-up in my patch, which involves the bringing together of the Dundee East community sports clubs. They have huge reach to hundreds of people across a range of sports in the community. Inch Park Community Sports Club is a great model, and I would certainly be happy to visit it to see it for myself.

Jim Eadie: I welcome those comments. I tried to keep my remarks brief, but Inch Park Community Sports Club is involved in a lot of activity, and I know that it works extremely closely with the active schools co-ordinators. As a result of that activity, two football clubs have emerged from local primary schools.

I want to ask about investment. You said that investment in sport remains high. How confident are you that we can maintain the required level of investment in sport? What discussions have you had with local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that funding is in place over the coming years to support the Government's priorities?

Shona Robison: First, you are absolutely right that we want to see the active schools pathway to clubs. Once a young person shows an interest in a particular sport, we want them to find the path to a club. It is a question of joining the dots, and Inch Park does that very well.

As I said earlier, these are challenging times for sports funding but, despite that, we have managed to maintain a good investment through sportscotland's budget for the next three years. In fact, if we look at the profile of investment in sport through sportscotland, cashback for communities and the physical activity budget—which is remaining consistent—we see that there is a significant rise up to 2014-15. That is particularly the case if we include the Commonwealth games funding but, even if we do not, there is still a good,

solid and increasing investment in sport up to 2014-15.

Local authorities are responsible for about 90 per cent of the investment in sport. There are clearly challenges in local government finance in the same way that there are in every other part of the public sector, but I am heartened by what I see in local authority plans. A lot of local authorities are keen to engage sportscotland in partnership funding. If sportscotland contributes to the development of a facility, it is a partnership between local authority and sportscotland funding. Those partnerships can also involve other partners. The Aberdeen Sports Village is a good example of involving the university sector in funding: not only do students get some cracking sports facilities, but the community gets a sports village and everybody benefits.

We have to be innovative. It is early days, but I am keen to encourage local authorities that do not see a future for a particular sports facility within council ownership and management to have a discussion with the local voluntary sector on whether it sees a continued role for the facility. As I said earlier, the voluntary sector, in taking on a sports facility, can bring a dynamism to a facility that was perhaps underutilised when the council was running it. Under the voluntary sector, it can suddenly take on a new life.

We have set aside a fairly modest amount of funding to oil the wheels of community ownership in sport because we are keen to push the boundaries and see more of the clubs that Jim Eadie was talking about take on the facilities and run them for the benefit of local sport.

Dennis Robertson: Do you envisage the universities and colleges having a bigger role? It could be an income generator for them, too.

Shona Robison: Yes, I do. The universities and colleges are keen to be active, and not just in looking at new sports facilities. When it benefits them—when they are considering their sports facilities in any case—it makes absolute sense to partner that work with the local authority's plans. That approach worked successfully in Aberdeen.

We are encouraging colleges to work in partnership with each other on the estate issue, but sports courses in colleges also provide a huge opportunity for the active schools network. The students in the college courses often go into schools to deliver some of the activities in the active schools programme. That is a win-win situation: it is great for the young people's training and development and for the active schools.

The Convener: If there are no other questions, it remains for me to thank the minister and her team for their time and for the evidence provided. Like our predecessor committee, we will take a

keen interest in this area, particularly as it impacts on health and wellbeing.

Petition

Silicone Breast Implants (PE1378)

12:10

The Convener: Item 5 is the committee's consideration of petition PE1378 for the second time. As members will recall, the committee agreed at its meeting on 13 September 2011 to write to the Scottish Government and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for further information. Responses have been received from both organisations and a further response—which is included in members' papers—has been received from the petitioner. In addition, a letter from Rhoda Grant was sent round late last night.

I invite the committee to consider whether it wishes to close the petition on the grounds of the information that has been received from the Scottish Government and the MHRA or whether members wish to propose an alternative approach. I invite comments from members.

Mary Fee: I recommend to the committee an alternative approach. The information that we have received is vague and misleading, and I think that it would be beneficial if we conducted an inquiry into the matter.

We do not have a huge amount of information. Silicone disease is not recognised as a condition, but it has profound and long-lasting effects on women, and yet there is no central recording of instances of leakage from implants. I think that we need more information and that we should conduct either a full-blown inquiry or a short inquiry into the issue.

Gil Paterson: Women's issues are sometimes ignored in society, but the Parliament has had an exceptionally good record since its inception of dealing with issues that have not been dealt with anywhere else. However, we need to take cognisance of Scotland's incident reporting and investigation centre, which

"advised that, to date, there has been one adverse incident involving a silicone breast implant which was reported in 2003."

Far be it from me to suggest that we close a petition—I am always reluctant to do that, especially on this type of issue—but, if the committee was to go down the route of an inquiry, I think that people would need to challenge that information. Are we being told that there are many more incidents and that the centre's information is not true? I would worry about that, to be frank. Before we make our minds up, I lay that on the table for us to think about carefully.

Jim Eadie: I would not be averse to holding an inquiry, but it would have to be short and tease out some of the issues that Mary Fee has identified. As Gil Paterson has said, it is the Parliament's role to take seriously petitions that bring genuine issues before us. We could have a one-off evidence session.

12:15

Richard Lyle: I go along with Gil Paterson's comment. Yes, there are points in the petition, but we have written to the cabinet secretary and to Sir Kent Woods, who said:

"Patients also need to take responsibility for their own health and understand the implications of any medical procedure they elect to undertake."

We have all seen on different television programmes what has happened in America and possibly what has happened over here. I take Gil Paterson's point that there is only one reported instance.

I also take on board Rhoda Grant's letter. She wants us

"to raise awareness of the dangers of silicone breast implants."

People should know the dangers—the same applies to the danger of smoking. You knowingly do it to your body. I do not take away from that, but then she goes on to

"urge the UK Government to ban the use of such implants and review the 3-year time bar rule for medical injury."

I do not take away from the petition. I think that there are some serious implications, but there are also some serious questions that I do not think an inquiry would solve. It would not be a short inquiry; it would be a long inquiry. I do not think that what we would discover at the end of it would satisfy anyone, because it is well proved that, sadly, when ladies have these things done to their bodies, these things burst. They do burst; we know that.

The Convener: We are trying to get a feeling around the table.

Fiona McLeod: As I did last week, I shall put my health librarian's hat on when reviewing the information. I did not have time to do a literature review but, given the information that we have had from both IRIC and the MHRA, which will have used peer-reviewed systematic analysis before they came to their conclusions, I am happy with the letters that we have had from the cabinet secretary and from the MHRA.

I do not like to say this, but I have some opposition to what Richard Lyle just said. We cannot equate the use of silicone implants with the dangers of tobacco use. The evidence is there on

the dangers of tobacco use; the evidence is not there on silicone implants. He used the phrase, "Well proved". The danger is not well proved, which is why I make the statement that I am making. As Mary Fee said, there is an alternative way of approaching this. One way that I suggest—again with my health librarian's hat on—is for the Scottish Parliament information centre to do a literature review for us on the weighted evidence on rupture and any health complaints, post-rupture, from silicone.

The Convener: That is an alternative. It falls short of what the petition requests, so we would dispose of the petition on that basis.

Fiona McLeod: The literature review could come back and give us the worry that there is evidence but, from my reading, the evidence is not there.

The Convener: I understand.

Dennis Robertson: Closure is important and sometimes closure means that the petitioner is not going to be particularly happy. It may be a very serious issue for that person, but sometimes the evidence is not there. It has been suggested that the evidence to support this petition may not be there. I whole-heartedly agree with the course that Fiona McLeod recommended to the committee and I hope that it will give us the evidence required to bring closure. I recommend that the petition be closed on the basis that, if the evidence is not there and the problem needs to be looked at over a longer period, we can always bring the issue back.

The Convener: Has everybody had an opportunity to speak?

Jackson Carlaw: I advocate that we close the petition.

Richard Lyle: In making my point about cigarette smoking and the use of silicone implants, all I was saying is that you knowingly do these things to yourself. Indeed, on pages 8 and 9 of the briefing, the petitioner says:

"Despite what you may read to the contrary, NO implant will last forever. Nothing can prevent eventual rupture. And nothing can remove the silicone gel that is set free to travel round your body. It will settle in your system and wreak havoc with your immune system."

Ignoring and denying the consequences of rupture is neither reasonable nor intelligent. It only needs common sense—

The Convener: Okay. The point has been made.

Richard Lyle: But here is the point that I am trying to make. As the petitioner says,

"Dismissing the facts and placing a device akin to (commonly described) a ticking time-bomb inside the human body, is completely irresponsible".

The Convener: I had a chance to read the papers last night as well. We have reduced things to the question whether there is evidence and have had an indication in that respect. I see that Mary Fee wants to come back in.

Mary Fee: I take it from what has been said that members are minded to support Fiona McLeod's suggestion and are minded not to have an inquiry. That is fair enough and I would go along with that view. However, I point out that on page 6 of paper 3, Kent Woods says:

"Good medical practice should mean clinicians communicate with their patients".

There are two reasons to get implants: for medical reasons after a mastectomy and for augmentation. I have two friends who have implants—one had augmentation after surgery and another wanted bigger boobs. After I received the papers, I asked them about the information that they had received from their clinicians. Both said that the sum total of information that they were given was a leaflet that they were handed.

The Convener: To be fair, I point out that that issue is also mentioned in the evidence.

To make progress on this matter, I will not go round the table again. Instead, I will simply ask the committee whether it agrees to dispose of the petition—in other words, to close it—and whether it is content with Fiona McLeod's proposal to seek from SPICe a literature review of the evidence. Given the current evidence, I suggest that we could put down a marker and write to the cabinet secretary and the MHRA, asking to be made aware of any significant facts or developments that might subsequently come to light. That package of measures should allow us to keep an eye on the issue. Does the committee agree to close the petition on that basis?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: We move to agenda item 6, which, as members might recall, we agreed to take in private.

12:23

Meeting continued in private until 13:06.

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