



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3 March 2015

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HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

7th Meeting 2015, Session 4

CONVENER

*Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

*Colin Keir (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)

*Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con)

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)

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

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Kim Atkinson (Scottish Sports Association)

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP) (Committee Substitute)

Billy Garrett (Glasgow Life)

Stewart Harris (sportsotland)

Eamon John (East Lothian Council)

Ian Murray (High Life Highland)

Dean Wilkinson (Edinburgh Leisure)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Eugene Windsor

LOCATION

The James Clerk Maxwell Room (CR4)

Scottish Parliament

Health and Sport Committee

Tuesday 3 March 2015

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:45]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Duncan McNeil): Good morning and welcome to the seventh meeting in 2015 of the Health and Sport Committee. As usual, I ask everyone to switch off their mobile phones, which can interfere with the sound system, although it will be noted that some of us are using tablets instead of hard copies of our papers. We have received apologies from Dennis Robertson, who is not able to be with us, and I welcome to the meeting Graeme Dey as the Scottish National Party substitute.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. Does the committee agree to take in private item 4, which is consideration of an approach paper to our work on infertility? Usually, we take such papers in private.

Members indicated agreement.

Subordinate Legislation

Health and Care Professions Council (Registration and Fees) (Amendment) Rules Order of Council 2015 (SI 2015/93)

09:46

The Convener: Item 2 is consideration of a number of negative instruments. On the first instrument, no motion to annul the order has been lodged, and the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee has made no comments on it. If members have no comments, does the committee agree to make no recommendations to Parliament on it?

Members indicated agreement.

Fish Labelling (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2015 (SSI 2015/48)

The Convener: No motions to annul the amendment regulations have been lodged, and the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee has made no comments on them. Do members have any comments?

Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I welcome the amendment regulations, and I draw the committee's attention to the fact that they differentiate between fish that are sustainably caught and those that might be caught by unsustainable methods and to their requirements with regard to country of origin. Given that this is the Health and Sport Committee, convener, I recommend Scottish fish as a truly healthy food.

The Convener: Thank you for that contribution. If there are no other comments, does the committee agree to make no recommendations to Parliament on the amendment regulations?

Members indicated agreement.

National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2015 (SSI 2015/64)

National Assistance (Sums for Personal Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2015 (SSI 2015/65)

The Convener: No motions to annul these two sets of regulations have been lodged, and the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee has made no comment on them. If members have no comments, does the committee agree to make no recommendations on them?

Members indicated agreement.

Commonwealth Games (Legacy)

09:49

The Convener: Item 3 is our first look at the legacy of the Commonwealth games that were held in Glasgow last summer. We will have round-table evidence-taking sessions this week and next. The committee is committed to returning to this issue, because it relates back to our 2012 inquiry in support of community sport.

As usual with such round-table sessions, I will introduce myself first and then go round the table. I am the MSP for Greenock and Inverclyde and convener of the Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee.

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): I am a Glasgow MSP and deputy convener of the Health and Sport Committee.

Stewart Harris (sportscotland): Good morning. I am chief executive of sportscotland.

Mike MacKenzie: I am a Highlands and Islands MSP.

Billy Garrett (Glasgow Life): Good morning. I am the head of sport at Glasgow Life.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I am a North East Scotland MSP.

Ian Murray (High Life Highland): Good morning. I am from High Life Highland.

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): I am the MSP for Angus South.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I am a Highlands and Islands MSP.

Dean Wilkinson (Edinburgh Leisure): I am sport and physical activity development manager at Edinburgh Leisure.

Kim Atkinson (Scottish Sports Association): I am chief executive of the Scottish Sports Association.

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): I am a Central Scotland MSP.

Eamon John (East Lothian Council): I have responsibility for sport, countryside and leisure at East Lothian Council.

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I am a Mid Scotland and Fife MSP.

The Convener: Thank you all for that. I will begin with a softball for our witnesses. How do they see the bodies that they represent contributing to the active legacy of the Commonwealth games?

Stewart Harris: When the games were announced for Glasgow in 2007, the sector saw an opportunity. In particular, sportscotland sought to play a leadership role in bringing the sector together to build a world-class system for sport at every level and for everyone in Scotland. That system was to be driven by the performance of schools, clubs, people and places but would be underpinned by lots of very strong partnerships that included people who are sitting around this table.

We had two specific legacy commitments, although there are others that we have influenced. The first related to improving performance at the games through a sustainable performance system, and the fact that we won 53 medals and had 63 medallists speaks for itself. Our second commitment related to community and to working with partners to construct 150 community sport hubs. So far we have 137 active and evolving hubs and 167 are on the stocks. Some 58 to 60 per cent of the hubs are in schools. We think that there is potential to build on all that through to 2020.

We have made many other contributions through facilities and so on, but I will let other colleagues provide you with a more local picture.

Billy Garrett: As I have said, I am from Glasgow Life, and the Commonwealth games have loomed large in our work plans for a number of years now. As Glasgow's legacy plan covers five years before and five years after, we are still in the midst of the programme. The plan contained six key themes, which were to make Glasgow prosperous, more active, more international, greener, more accessible and more inclusive. At the moment, we are in the green on all those themes in terms of delivering on the actions that were set out all those years ago.

Stewart Harris mentioned facilities, and part of the legacy that we are continuing to work on is the games' physical legacy. Glasgow is very proud that all the venues that the Commonwealth games utilised were open at least a year before the games began and that the first people to use them were the community in Glasgow, which continues to use them very heavily.

There have also been a number of positive measures on participation, and we continue to work with clubs in the city on our community sport hub agenda, which we deliver in partnership with sportscotland, and on coach education, volunteering and capacity building.

Some of the statistics that are included in the submission are very encouraging, but we are not complacent. Every statistic tells us something, but we get a wider picture from household surveys and overall health surveys. From Glasgow's

perspective, we are certainly clear that a lot of work still needs to be done. However, the direction of travel is very positive.

Eamon John: You have heard from the national agency and from the host city, but one of the important things about the games was the idea that the games legacy was for all Scotland, with the 32 local authorities being part of that national celebration and being included in the opportunities that the games provided.

The springboard for us all was the games legacy. It was a framework that we were able to contextualise and then look at how to deliver at a local level. Our focus as part of that all-Scotland approach to the games was on key areas in relation to physical education and school sport, club development, coach teacher education, district squads, and our performance athletes in the county. We were servicing that performance opportunity and exit routes in our schools and communities.

However, a big part of our focus was always about having a physical infrastructure legacy. We were able to work with the national agency—the chief executive of sportscotland alluded to this in talking about partnership working—to look at facility infrastructure on the ground that our communities could benefit from in the longer term, leaving a legacy in place.

As a relatively small local authority, we were able to invest with our partners £8 million linked to games legacy in relation to active infrastructure. That was a big part of the focus for us. I will not go into detail on numbers and data just now—that detail may come out through questions later—but the early indications are that the numbers of engagement activities and school sport programmes through our active schools and our community sport hubs are going in the right direction.

Ian Murray: With the rural and scattered nature of Highland communities, our focus was less on the development of large facilities and more on helping communities to do more for themselves. It was always going to be about helping communities to do that.

Volunteering is at the heart of our legacy plan. We have building blocks in place. Older primary school kids are helping to run sessions for the wee tots at the bottom of primary schools, secondary schools kids are running sessions for primary school kids and are getting trained in sports leader awards, and so on. We were keen to take those building blocks and turn them into a leadership programme so that there was support for a whole fresh generation of volunteers coming through. Those people are coming through the system and, at the top end, they are now being introduced to

other achievement awards and volunteering awards. It is about hand-holding them into club situations so that a whole fresh generation of volunteers are going into clubs to help replace some of the older generation who are coming out of volunteering. That is what the real enthusiasm around the games has given us—it has given agencies a real enthusiasm to support volunteers better and it has given a whole new generation of people an interest in sport and volunteering that we hope can then feed through to the club system.

Kim Atkinson: In a sense, the biggest success of the games and the legacy of the games to date has been the partnership working that colleagues have mentioned—it has been that focus across sport and across the country on making a difference and leaving that lasting legacy. In no small part, the success has been about that partnership working, but it has also been about that focus of resource and the political will that has come behind that.

In the seven years since we won the bid, there has been huge progress and it has been really positive to read the great case studies and the great examples in everybody's submissions that show the legacy that has been built to date. Our members, as the governing bodies for the different sports in Scotland, have similar positive case studies showing growth in membership and in volunteering—as Ian Murray mentioned—with people getting involved in officiating at events and in coaching and so on.

In my mind, part of the point of today's meeting is to look at where all those successes have come together at some of the legacy strands of the programme. In terms of what our members would like to see happen with the legacy in the longer term, what comes out in the case studies that have been presented by partners today is that, if we all work together, we can get that bit further and be successful in achieving that legacy. There is further opportunity within that, without question.

It has been seven years since we won the bid and there has been an awful lot of progress. In the minds of my members, it is about looking forward and saying, "Great—so where can we be in seven years, in 14 years, or in 21 years if we continue with that resource, that political will and that partnership working?"

10:00

Bob Doris: There is clearly a very good story to tell here. However, the line of questioning will not just be about giving opportunities for people to tell that good story; it will also be about the next steps and looking over some of the numbers. As I am a Glasgow MSP, you would expect me to pick

through some of the Glasgow Life numbers, many of which are impressive.

I am keen that more people get active, and by that I mean people becoming active for the first time and not just people who are already active becoming more active. The Glasgow Life submission gives information on the type of people who have Glasgow club membership. They are put into five categories. The one that jumps out is the “Hard Pressed” category. If I am reading the submission right, across Glasgow, 49.2 per cent of people are in the “Hard Pressed” category, while 41.8 per cent of those who use Glasgow Life facilities are in that category. Obviously, there is a bit of work to do, but I hope that the gap between the figures is closing. I would be interested to hear from other providers about how they are getting on with that kind of issue. Has that gap been closing? Obviously, 41.8 per cent to 49.2 per cent is not brilliant, but it might show progress. This is an opportunity for Mr Garrett to say whether there has been progress in getting people from the most deprived communities to access Glasgow Life facilities.

Do you monitor? Obviously, some of the 41.8 per cent who are from the most deprived areas may make only one, two or three visits to a Glasgow Life facility a year, whereas people from the “Wealthy Achievers” or “Comfortably Off” categories—those are the categories that are used in the Glasgow Life submission—may make 10, 15, 20 or 30 visits a year. I want to find out about the nuances in the figures from Glasgow Life. How do some of the other providers monitor that situation? It is good if people who are kind of fit and healthy get even more fit and healthy, but we are really interested in people who have been less active or not active at all getting involved.

I have a follow-up question for Glasgow Life, if that is okay, convener.

The Convener: Yes. We are interested in this issue. Perhaps we could focus on the “Hard Pressed” category, as that is a new definition for the committee. We usually deal with poverty, absolute poverty and deprivation. That is a new one on us, so a wee bit of explanation of that would be good.

Billy Garrett: The categories are from the CACI statistics, so they are not ones that Glasgow Life has determined.

The questions that Bob Doris asks are good ones, and ones that we discuss extensively in Glasgow Sport. As I said in my initial comments, from a Glasgow perspective, it is important that we are not complacent about some of the positive statistics in the submission. The issue of representation and ensuring that our service users—the people whom we work with and

engage with—represent the community of Glasgow is key, and we try to focus on it. In some ways, the latest set of statistics on the demographics of Glasgow club members took us slightly by surprise. We thought that the gap between the figure for our membership and the figure for the overall population would be slightly bigger, so in a sense we were encouraged. The gap has closed, as the overall membership of the Glasgow club has expanded.

We are clear about what that means and what it does not mean. We have roughly 65,000 Glasgow club members in a city of 600,000. That is a positive figure and it tells us something about people being involved in physical activity. However, it could be that only a small number of people are very active. Also, an element of the population is still non-active. Just so that we are clear, our absolute focus is on getting the disengaged engaged and getting the inactive active. To that end, we have recently launched a number of initiatives, some of which Bob Doris might know about. The most significant one is the good move programme, which we manage in partnership with the national health service and a number of housing associations in the city. We describe those as adoption programmes, as they are designed and tailored for, and targeted at, people who are inactive. We look across every conceivable barrier to activity. Those can include affordability, location or the nature of programmes.

We are trying to break out of the leisure facility model and take products into a community context and community facilities, such as school halls and church halls. We are trying to be innovative in our marketing and advertising. We have had staff go out to visit bingo halls and have marketed in local supermarkets.

There is a range of initiatives, some of which will work and some of which might not. However, they are designed to touch people whom we are currently not touching. That is a priority for us and it is important to be clear that there is still work to be done on it.

The Convener: Are there any other comments on participation and who we are reaching?

Stewart Harris: I will pick up on the theme of projecting forward. We talked about having more of a system for sport. The active schools programme has been in place for 10 years now and community sport hubs for four years. We are now considering how we plug additional resources into that infrastructure, which is quite exciting. We can look at the areas that have the greatest need and how we further support community sport hubs in developing people.

Underlying all that is the theme of giving the power back to the communities, which is positive.

That is the essence of the community sport hubs. It is for local people to decide what they do and to manage their own programmes, not in isolation but with support from professionals across the piece.

It is a bit of a changing landscape and, as I have said before, a mixed economy, in which there is not only provision through trusts and other local bodies but communities that are in control of what they do. In bringing those communities together, we have seen some very positive movement.

We have made a commitment to the active schools programme of £50 million over another four years. The commitment to community sport hubs could be never-ending. There is huge potential to bring communities together and put a hub in each community in Scotland. We are well designed for that with small towns and communities. Bigger cities are more of a challenge. If we use the infrastructure to target more taking a partnership approach, it could be fruitful.

The Convener: Does anyone else want to comment? I am trying to elicit some more responses because I am looking for outcomes. We are touching on the outcomes: some data has been presented, but we still await some of the initial reports.

Ian Murray: Our area operates a cheap, all-inclusive membership scheme that is aimed specifically at the band of people who are below the benefits line and the band of families who are just above the benefits line. We do not regard the well-off middle classes as our target market; the target market is the people who need a healthy lifestyle the most.

Like Glasgow Life, we are very much trying to get away from just waiting for people to come in; we are going out to other community facilities to see people. One of the big strides forward that we are making is in our relationship with the NHS. It has its health improvement, efficiency and governance, access and treatment targets to hit and sometimes has difficulty in getting people active—in relation to avoiding cancer, for instance. Instead of waiting for people to come in the door, we are having real success with the NHS in holding people's hands and getting them through the door—people who otherwise would never want to take part in activity in a local authority facility.

Bob Doris: You gave some statistics, Mr Garrett, and said that the gap had closed. Are you able to quantify that? I do not want to get hung up on the numbers; it is more about making sure that the gap is measured and that the statistics are available—I am not asking because I want to debate the figures. You said that 41.8 per cent of Glasgow club members are in the hard-pressed category. What was the figure before the games?

Billy Garrett: One issue is that the analysis in the submission used the most recent language and categories whereas, previously, the information was recorded differently. I cannot remember the statistics, but I can certainly get them to you—

Bob Doris: That would be good. My apologies—I am not trying to cut you off.

Billy Garrett: No—that is fine.

Bob Doris: It is just that there are a number of little stepping stones in what I am trying to draw out. Are you able to provide information on how many of the 41.8 per cent who use the facilities are using them less than five times a year, less than 10 times a year or less than 15 times a year? Do you have that information?

Billy Garrett: We do, yes. Every time a member utilises one of our facilities, that is recorded. We can break that information down. The committee might be interested to know that we have a significant amount of data about the Glasgow club, and not just about frequency of use. There are some interesting statistics about our facilities. Something like 85 per cent of users come from within a mile or a mile and a half of the facility. There is very much a local usage pattern at each of our facilities, which is sometimes surprising.

Bob Doris: It would be quite good to have that information.

I am not asking the questions of the other providers, but—

The Convener: We should be asking the panel—

Bob Doris: I know, but—

The Convener: This is not just a Glasgow session.

Bob Doris: The point that I am making is about how we can make a comparison. The figures need to be collected in a structured way across the country. The witnesses did not know what we were asking for, but it would have been helpful if that information had been in the submissions.

My final point—following which I will let everyone else in—relates to affordability, which Billy Garrett mentioned. I have a constituent who stays in the Summerston area of Glasgow and who is on a local boys football team. There is a Glasgow Life facility at John Paul academy, which sits empty much of the time, and the other day my constituent told me that the team cannot afford to use it, although it has sought to do so. I have only just been given the case, Mr Garrett, and I do not expect you to respond to that particular example, but could I perhaps get a commitment from you to talk to me directly about how we could do

something to ensure that my constituents can use a facility that is sitting empty?

Billy Garrett: On that specific issue, absolutely. In general, and as I have mentioned, we recognise that affordability is one of a number of barriers. As you might know, we offer a significant number of services completely free of charge. However, we charge for other services, which we try to make as affordable as possible. Usually—this is supported by some of our usage statistics—the community, in partnership with us, finds ways to utilise the facilities.

I know Summerston well. There is a real tradition of community football in that part of Glasgow, with a number of very well-organised local clubs such as Maryhill Harp and Summerston juniors. I would be quite happy to have that chat with you.

Bob Doris: If I did not raise the matter, my constituent would have asked me why I did not raise it when I had the opportunity.

The Convener: We will excuse you for that dander into Summerston.

On the important issue, let us eventually get back to the committee's focus in its report, which was more strategic and concerned support, volunteers and so on. Of course, we are interested in the numbers, how they are collated and what drives them so that we can be sure that gaming is not going on and that things are not linked to money or whatever—we have seen that in other cases when the numbers have been presented.

Graeme Dey wants to ask a follow-up question. I will then give the panel an opportunity to respond.

Graeme Dey: I will take your guidance, convener, and try to broaden this out. We are seeking to get the disengaged engaged. Are there charging regimes in place across a range of facilities throughout Scotland that are pitched at people from deprived backgrounds? If so, can we have some examples?

Edinburgh offers a 10-for-eight deal on swimming at the Royal Commonwealth pool. That is very good, but it is still £48. Is that too high a charge for many pockets in Edinburgh?

To broaden it out further, can Joe Public walk up to sport hubs on spec seeking to utilise the facilities? Do people generally have to be members of participatory clubs?

The Convener: Mr Garrett, I will give you a break just now, but I will come back to you, because you will have a strategy in Glasgow.

Does anyone else want to comment?

10:15

Dean Wilkinson: The 10-for-eight pricing is one of a number of pricing points that we have. It relates specifically to membership, which is popular. We have 22,000 members overall, and 1,500 of them have taken up the 10-for-eight opportunity.

Generally, on making our services and facilities more accessible, we have a number of pricing points, ranging from free access for a number of weeks to get people into the system, to £1 a week, moving up to half price and then full price.

That almost takes us back to the original question about what we are doing to act on the legacy of the Commonwealth games. Edinburgh Leisure's purpose is to make a positive difference and create opportunities for people to take part. Our predominant task is to manage a portfolio of about 30 facilities, but we also have a proactive sport and physical activity development team. To pick up on some of my colleagues' earlier comments, that involves getting out into the community and working with hard-to-reach groups and with partners across Edinburgh.

It is important that we know our position and our place. In delivering the new sport and physical activity strategy across Edinburgh, we have a great opportunity. Through that, we can sustain some of the programmes that were put in place because of the drive, enthusiasm and commitment behind the games. One of our challenges is to keep those schemes sustainable. A great example of that is the high flyers wheelchair sports club, which is one of the first wheelchair sports clubs in the region. It was kicked off on the back of that enthusiasm, and is still in place. That is quite a small "legacy"—I put that in inverted commas—from a coalface delivery perspective.

I come back to the point about how important it is to understand what the barriers are and how we can remove them and increase access in a range of communities.

The Convener: Can we broaden the discussion out to get back into the strategic issues? One of the committee's recommendations back in 2013 was on the sport strategies that were beginning to emerge alongside the sport hubs. Are sport strategies in place right across local authorities, and do they reflect the issues of access, equality and participation? As we found at the time, the access issue is not necessarily to do with price; it can be to do with the fact that up to 60 per cent of facilities are closed during the holidays. Public investment has been put into new schools and the facilities that are in them, but sometimes they lie there unused, with wee boys outside, looking through the gate. It is not just a question of money. Are the strategies in place and are they

addressing the issues of access, including cost and whether facilities are open at weekends and on public holidays or whatever? Perhaps we could broaden out the discussion to cover that question.

Eamon John: I will home in on that and on Bob Doris's point. Glasgow has been highlighted, and it absolutely is the case that the challenges for it will be significant and on a greater scale. However, the principles are consistent across the 32 local authorities. Moving people from being inactive to active is an absolute focus across local government just now. We are all being challenged to do that, and it is linked to our single outcome agreements and so on. We will design interventions to try to meet that significant challenge, because we know what the wider benefits are in the longer term to individuals, communities and the public pound. Those interventions will take place.

To give some specifics, right now, through our self-evaluation tools and using "How good is our culture and sport? A Quality Improvement Framework for culture and sport provision", we are taking a closer look at what we are doing on inequalities. In my authority, people at one end of the county die earlier than those at the other end. We are looking at programmes and interventions that we hope will have a positive impact, and we are trying to measure the increase in people accessing facilities. That will apply whether we are talking about Glasgow Life's facilities or our own. We recently engaged with a citizens panel to try to capture that data. We are also looking at interventions that will allow people in certain categories, such as those on benefits and their children, access to facilities free of charge at certain times and at concessionary rates at peak times.

When we design new sporting facilities such as 3G pitches, we also look to design payment structures that cater for clubs that are trying to connect with children, youths and adults in communities and give them concessionary rates—what you might call a club rate—instead of simply giving an evening let to people like us around the table who can afford to pay. We are trying to design things to meet some of the challenges that you have outlined.

The Convener: The question is whether your sports strategy lays all of that out clearly.

Eamon John: We call it a business plan, but let us forget about titles and whether these things are strategies or whatever. The question is whether we in local government have got the documents in place to capture all of this, and the answer to that is yes.

The Convener: Do those documents set out your ambitions, your targets, where you are looking to go and so on?

Eamon John: That would be in our service business plan.

The Convener: Is that common to every local authority throughout Scotland? I will hear from Billy Garrett first and then give Stewart Harris an opportunity to comment.

Billy Garrett: Glasgow Life has what is called a business and service plan. Underneath that, Glasgow Sport, for example, has an individual business and service plan. Your point about having an overall strategy is a key one, and in Glasgow Sport, we take a strategic approach to the issue of access—and I use that term in its widest sense. We certainly do not believe that moving people from inactivity to activity is all about the number of people coming into our facilities; that is just one part of a really big story.

I have already mentioned good move, but I should point out that a major review of the utilisation of the school estate is also live in Glasgow just now. Overall utilisation of Glasgow's school estate is low, and we are looking at ways of maximising it in partnership with education, active schools and others. That is a real priority for us at the moment. Our work with clubs in the city is also part of that access strategy, because clubs are another route by which people can get involved in local physical activity and sport. In short, we are trying to take a holistic look at the issue of access.

Clearly, affordability is important to the committee, and I assure members that it is also a key issue for elected members in Glasgow. It is a difficult issue that we need to navigate our way through, and managing things in what is a reasonably challenging financial landscape is a challenge that we face across the country.

Going back to a comment that I think Graeme Dey made, I point out that the Glasgow club membership scheme is only one way to access our facilities. You can literally walk up to any Glasgow sports facility and either utilise whatever free offers are available or pay for whatever needs to be paid for; there is no requirement to be a Glasgow club member. What the scheme offers is quite attractive, but it is certainly not the only way to get in.

We operate a number of things that are free in the city—for example, we offer free swimming, free five-a-side football, free tennis and free bowls—and, if the finances allowed, it might be possible to do more. However, although we have operated some of those schemes for a number of years—I cite free swimming as an example—we have not over that time been able to find out

whether making them free has resulted in a significant increase in participation.

Again, it is important to look at all the barriers to participation. We and our social work colleagues are focusing on access for disabled communities and disabled participants, because physical access is another barrier, as is the location of facilities. There is also the threshold anxiety that is felt by people who think that such facilities are not for them. We are trying to work on all those matters in a strategic way.

The Convener: It has been brought to my attention that having free football on free parks does not necessarily make it free for the kids who participate, as the clubs still charge the same fees that they charged when they were paying for pitches. The free element is not necessarily being passed on, although I am sure that the clubs are using the money wisely.

Kim Atkinson: Although the school estate, which you will have heard us talk about before, remains an issue, it is also an opportunity, if that makes sense. We have heard some good figures on availability, which is what you would expect, but we think that more could be done.

We are several steps on from where we were in the past few years. The report by sportscotland gave everyone a lesson on what is open, what is not available and where there are opportunities to work more collaboratively. There is a focus not only on programming in and management of those facilities, but on how use of the facilities can best be optimised through partnership with local clubs and others in the local area. Again, there are any number of great case studies on that. There is a positive story of progress. As you would expect, however, given what our members have said, there are further opportunities, and partnership working is the key.

Some of our members would raise the point about affordability that Graeme Dey picked up on, particularly in relation to some team sports and access to facilities in cases where there remains a challenge. As you picked up, convener, there can sometimes be a positive impact on the membership of a club. If there is more affordable access to facilities, the club might do more with the money, such as invest in the infrastructure—the people who make the club operate. There are a number of ways in which a club might invest to provide the best-quality experience or the best number of experiences, with taster sessions and other bits and pieces. It is a slightly more complex landscape from that point of view.

The budget challenges continue for our local authority partners, and they can speak about that better than I can. You have heard me say before that cross-budgeting remains a challenge for

sport. We hear a lot of discussion about that, and I would be intrigued to hear more from partners. Ian Murray has some great case studies, which I am sure the committee would be keen to hear about—and there will be examples from other partners, too. There is an issue to do with where the prevention agenda sits in the relationship between health, mental health and sport. If we are to consider cross-budgeting strategically, the picture looks slightly different for sport.

Billy Garrett talked about the percentage of Glasgow Life members who use local facilities. There are huge opportunities there, but if budget pressures jeopardise those facilities, what will participation look like? We need to be a bit more strategic about some of that budgeting.

There could be an opportunity for the committee to contribute further to that discussion. I am sure that it is no accident that the committee is called the Health and Sport Committee. The committee could support some of that work and gather evidence around the benefits for people of participating in sport and being active. What are those benefits? Where can we hear some of the great case studies that colleagues have? How can we use them as evidence? What can the committee do to add value to that and to champion the research that I am confident would emerge? I hope that there is an opportunity for that.

The Convener: Perhaps Stewart Harris will comment on public access to school facilities. That issue is still being tackled. We can take evidence on it, but we raised it as a big issue about two and a half years ago and today we hear that it is still an issue, although progress has been made. Stewart is going to tell us how much.

Stewart Harris: We have just completed strategic conversations with all 32 local authorities and their partners. There are three focal points to those conversations. The first point is about ambition. How ambitious are authorities and partners?

The second point is about the key outcomes of participation and progression. People are moving on, and they are getting engaged in sport. It is a matter of trying to ascertain what is possible in those areas.

Thirdly, there are two key elements that will either provide traction towards success or just provide stability. The first of those is resource allocation. What resources are available to which we, as a national agency, can add some value? All we can really do is add value to what is going on locally. The second, I guess, is integration. When we spoke a few years ago, convener, there were lots of disparate strategies. At sportscotland, we now insist on combining sport and facilities.

Every local authority has a strategic context that is connected to its own level of ambition and resourcing, but authorities are very different. It would be fantastic if they were uniform—we would all probably be out of a job. However, there is still work to do in certain areas, depending on the level of resource and the ambition that authorities are aiming for.

We have quite a lot of data. Others can talk about this for themselves, but I think that there is probably more data in place now than there was a few years back. The school estate is a good example. The data about how much space is available and how much demand there could be to use it is accurate, up to date and in the public domain. There is a resource ask and a programming ask.

People are getting into this. Following the Commonwealth games, there is momentum, but that is not all down to the games, because much of this work was started way before the games. Strategically, there needs to be more integration. We are beginning to tackle the hard questions—on access to the school estate, for example—and we are beginning to make progress. We are working with Glasgow City Council, and East Lothian Council and other authorities are involved, too.

We have a lot of data. It would perhaps be interesting to have a conversation offline about how much of it would be useful for members. There is a lot of stuff around pricing and so on.

10:30

The Convener: We would appreciate that. Although we have examined some of the numbers and the issues here today, our focus has been the report that we produced in 2013, which was not necessarily about that; it was about capacity, access and how we would sustain the increased interest in sport that we expected during and around the games, and about whether we could capture that enthusiasm and ensure longer-term participation. It is a bit disappointing to hear that we are still struggling with issues of access. When we produced our report, we did not think that any of those matters were easy; we knew that there were big issues.

We hope also to consider the volunteer resource. We said in our report that it was essential to understand the workforce, who would carry on the enthusiasm, and to understand the split between sports clubs and schools on where sport is delivered.

Dean Wilkinson: I wish to add to the comments about access to the school estate. I know that local authorities have a huge commitment to improving access. That is an on-going project: they have been working on the community access

to schools—CATS—programme. We are keen to support that.

For trusts, it could almost be seen as a risk to open up access to facilities that might be close to a trust-run facility. However, we see it more as an opportunity. There are pinch points in our programming. At peak times, it can be difficult for some communities, some clubs and some users to access facilities. Strategically, working together on the programming of school facilities—for instance, a school swimming pool as opposed to one of our swimming pools—will be of benefit to communities and users. We will be taking that forward.

Ian Murray: In the Highlands, there has been definite progress over the past three years on two fronts. One of those is facility planning. There is now a definite policy whereby, whenever a new high school is being built, all the community facilities for a reasonable distance around are grouped on the new campus. In Wick, for example, the town pool, which is ageing a bit—it was probably built in the 1980s—is being shut down, and the local library is being closed, but with assistance from sportscotland, fantastic new facilities are being opened up on the school campus. High Life Highland will be running them on behalf of the local council.

That is happening across the board. Even some of the bigger primary schools are getting that treatment. That breaks down the barriers that make people feel that, once they have left school for the day, the last place they want to go back to is the school. It means a return to the days when schools were hubs of the community. There has been real progress on that in our area.

Progress has also been made with schools that are not big enough community facilities to have staff on site to operate them. The council is moving towards handing over the overall bookings for all 29 secondary schools—all the community facilities—to High Life Highland. That will allow for some of the movement that Dean Wilkinson was talking about—for example, when one facility is very busy and another is quieter. Perhaps it is a matter of taking two or three facilities and grouping them together into one local facility, which is efficient and it makes the money go a lot further. Money is always an issue.

Dr Simpson: I have two questions. In our 2013 report, we said:

“25% of children leave primary school unable to swim.”

That is a fairly hard figure. Has it improved?

If that does not get an answer, I will go on to my second question.

Eamon John: That would be a national figure.

Dr Simpson: Yes.

Eamon John: I can speak only from a local level.

The Convener: I suppose that it relates back to some of the initiatives that we discussed earlier, such as the free swimming that my council and other councils offer. Have the initiatives improved the figure?

Eamon John: I will speak about an earlier question, but I will link it to statistics on swimming. It is a question of how you design access. I will give an example from East Lothian, where our figures would not be at the level that was mentioned.

We have school curriculum swimming, in which people who pass set criteria are awarded 10 free swims: someone who passes their school swimming gets into their local sports centre free of charge, and can go swimming in their local town pool. Those people tend to be from hard-to-reach communities and might come from homes where they do not get to go swimming. First, they have that block of swimming and secondly, if they fail to make the target, they have some top-up swimming lessons, which we have been able to provide in partnership with the national agency. Thereafter, if they still fail to meet the swimming criteria—remembering that we are a coastal authority area—they have free access to our community learn-to-swim programme. There is core provision in school, which is topped up in school. If people still fail to meet the target, they get free access to a community learn-to-swim programme.

Dr Simpson: That sounds like best practice to me. Is it being spread out?

Stewart Harris: It is not. Arrangements are very different across the piece. On what Eamon John was saying, in some authorities swimming is no longer part of core provision. That is just a fact—that is what people in education are telling us.

Others around the table will be able to tell their own stories, but sportscotland finds it useful to work with individual authorities in their context to try and make improvements. Political and management will be required to deal with some things—we cannot always have top-up provision, such as Eamon John talked about.

The resources are welcome, but they do not really deal with the core issue—this is almost about entitlement to swim for every child. That is probably where things used to be, but they are not there at the moment. However, we will continue to work with local authorities and their partners, including Scottish Swimming, to improve things.

Dr Simpson: My second question is in relation to the NHS and social prescribing. I should declare an interest: my son is a director of a company that is developing one of those smart watches to

measure physical activity, and which has received a significant grant to consider the psychological aspects of ensuring that physical activity continues with those smart watches.

The NHS, working in partnership, is fundamental. The health service is the only area that is getting an increase in funding. How is the NHS supporting you? What is it doing in relation to the evidence from the groups that are represented here today? What is it doing to support the development of physical activity, in particular among obese people or type-2 diabetics? It is a fundamental necessity for those people to become, and to continue to be, physically active.

What is happening when it comes to general practitioners writing prescriptions? Is that being looked at or supported? I invite the witnesses to comment on that general area.

Billy Garrett: That is a really important question. I referred earlier to our partnership with the NHS. It is fair to say that we have a really positive relationship with the health board and the city council in Glasgow. That strategic partnership goes back some years now, and it continues to expand and to be enhanced.

In Glasgow we already operate the biggest—I think—GP referral scheme in the United Kingdom. From a medical point of view, that is about creating within general practice a culture in which physical activity is one of the key prescription tools. That has been a long road; not so long ago GPs simply would not contract into that kind of process, but that is changing. We work strategically with the NHS to influence training of GPs and of clinical and medical staff, at the same time as we work with the NHS to develop programmes that are designed to deal with the issues that Dr Simpson mentioned.

In practical terms, we have a number of posts within Glasgow Sport. They include development staff, counsellors and coaches, who are entirely funded by the NHS. We operate in partnership with the NHS that has proved to be extremely successful, and is going from strength to strength. Given some of the health indices in the city of Glasgow, we are really keen to invest more and more in that partnership—I do not mean investing money, but resource and management time.

We are also working with the NHS to try to create innovative approaches. I do not know whether you are familiar with Dr William Bird and the beat the street programme, but we have brought him up a couple of times to talk to a group of stakeholders, including the NHS, and we are now working on developing some kind of population-level saturation physical activity programme through which to pilot that in one or two parts of the city. That includes a technology

aspect; people have to be able to measure their physical activity on a day-to-day, minute-to-minute basis. We are talking to a couple of organisations and companies about how we might do that. We are very much thinking along the lines that Dr Simpson suggests.

The Convener: I found that response interesting—I am sure that other members did, too. Maybe the committee could take some time to go and see some of that work. I do not know whether you could organise that. You said that you operate the biggest GP referral scheme in the UK. That is good, but how big is it? How many people is it reaching?

Billy Garrett: I should not have mentioned that. *[Laughter.]*

The Convener: In terms of the exchange of funding, how much—

Billy Garrett: I said that it is the biggest GP referral scheme in the UK, so you might be thinking of 50,000 referrals, but it is nothing like that. There may be 10,000 to 12,000 referrals per annum.

Dr Simpson: That is still a lot.

Billy Garrett: Yes. Over the years, we have refined and amended the scheme to try to make sure that it still meets the needs of service users. Interestingly, the percentage of referrals with mental health issues has increased significantly over the past couple of years. We have had to amend the way in which we train our counsellors to take that into account.

The Convener: As Kim Atkinson rightly said, this is the Health and Sport Committee, so that is a natural link for us and one that interests us. Maybe we can set something up, if people can give us some time.

Billy Garrett: I am happy to arrange a visit for the committee.

The Convener: That would be good.

Ian Murray: The big progress that we have been making locally in Highland is in having a better understanding of what the NHS is looking for outside partners to deliver for it. It is not about going along to the NHS and saying, “We’ve got a good idea. Can we have some money to deliver it?” It is about going along and saying, “We see your targets. Did you know that we can help you to deliver them?”

We have, for example, a number of projects on falls prevention. Every broken hip costs £67,000 before we blink an eye, so the more we can help to avoid them, the greater will be the saving to the NHS further down the line. We are now delivering falls prevention work in care homes, day centres and some of the community hospitals, and we

have recently been invited into the biggest area hospital, Raigmore. It is about breaking down professional barriers and moving from a position where people say, “Only physios can do this” to one in which we have trained exercise people who are sensitive to the older population and understand what they need.

Anecdotal feedback from care home managers includes people telling us, for example, “My goodness! You’ve given those ladies three years of their lives back.” They used to be wheeled out in the morning and plopped into a chair, have lunch on their laps and watch telly all day. Now they are up and walking and they go through with others for their lunch. We start to get that kind of evidence very quickly.

I am sure that we are not alone in this, but we are also doing lots of work on cardiac rehabilitation. The allied health professionals come into a leisure centre and bring the people with whom they are working. Gradually, the medical side diminishes and the sport and leisure or active lifestyle side continues. The aim is for the person to make a seamless transition from being somebody who has had a heart incident to being somebody who has a more healthy and active lifestyle in the long term.

There are lots of great case studies across the country in councils and arm’s length organisations.

Dean Wilkinson: Examples in Edinburgh Leisure include the healthy active minds programme, which is a mental health intervention, and steady steps, which is a falls intervention.

I want to make a point about Dr Simpson’s comment on prescription. We are trying to develop a single-point-of-referral process in order to make the system more efficient and effective. I go back to what Billy Garrett said about the funding that comes down from our health partners, which pays for members of staff and development officers. A project assistant is usually required, as well. We need to be more effective and efficient in how we administer delivery, because we are all working at managing, administering and recording admissions and referrals. Obviously, there are data-protection implications that we need to overcome, but a single point of referral would be a massive boost and would help strategically.

10:45

Kim Atkinson: I am always delighted to hear about great case studies and best practice, but there is a challenge and frustration in that. We hear about a lot of great case studies: I have heard Ian Murray speak before about examples of the work that is done, Stewart Harris could talk about the investment in active schools, and our colleagues in Scottish Athletics could talk about

the health investment that has gone into the jogscotland programme. There are any number of great case studies, but I am unsure where they are shared. Nobody does that sharing; none of us has the capacity or remit to do that. That is why we make a plea to the committee. I hope that we can say, as a collective, that there is a huge opportunity there.

We are working with health charities on that, and we nick their figures. We are having a little chat with Breast Cancer Care. We say “We know that people being active can reduce breast cancer by between 20 and 40 per cent, but we never talk to you—we just borrow your figures and you talk about that.” We are also working with the Scottish Association for Mental Health, the British Heart Foundation and other such big health charities.

Commonalty of message is powerful. Those organisations are saying, “We want people to be more active.” Richard Simpson is a doctor, so he knows the benefits of people being active. A shift in the conversation is needed. Many health charities are really up for a discussion about the benefits of people being active, and they want to have a different kind of conversation. A little bit of facilitation is needed to make that happen, but there is certainly will there.

We should go back a stage when we talk about a radical shift in prevention, in order to understand better the real cause-and-effect relationships. We talk about social care and the link with the health budgets in respect of hospitalisation. We understand the link between people having a fall and the impact on hospital admissions and social care. Obviously, falls often result in hip fractures. I think that half of women over 50 will have a fall that will result in a hip fracture, or will have a hip fracture. When we track those cause-and-effect relationships, we are good at getting back to the fall causing the breakage and the impact on social care but—to go back to Ian Murray’s point—we are not so good at tracking back and saying that people are 30 per cent less likely to have a fall if they are physically active. We do not necessarily take the cause-and-effect relationship back to the stage at which the link between health and sport—people being active—really comes into its own and where the opportunity is. There is significant opportunity.

I go back to the point that it is about people living longer, healthier and happier lives. Sport’s link to that is remarkable at both individual and population levels.

There is an opportunity for the committee if it is minded to take it; there is a gap. There is no automatic choice in respect of who would pull together the great case studies and examples, and the figures that have been quoted and say, “Okay—here’s the evidence on the contribution of

sport and being active and on why sport and being active are so good for health.” It is a matter of working with health bodies and charities and championing where a difference can be made. I hope that there is a real opportunity there for the committee.

The Convener: Nobody is doing that, so who should do it? Who should ensure that best practice is followed? If it is not sportscotland, who should it be?

Stewart Harris: I have an alternative view, as you would probably imagine.

I welcome what the royal colleges said recently, which was the first time I had heard from inside the profession such a strong statement about the benefits of physical activity. There are many really good local case studies around. I can add the healthy options initiative up in Oban, which is fantastic, but is struggling for longevity because there is no real policy.

I would be up for some form of national conversation about the matter, because there is a void. Maybe the committee can help us with that. Great work is going on, but we need to get into the prevention conversation. The sport sector needs to be able to say, “This is what we can help with. We can’t sort it all, but we can help.”

We have to be mindful of the statistic that, in the 122 community sport hubs from which we have data, there are 8,881 deliverers, 92 per cent of whom are volunteers. That is a big commitment in those communities, and taking on more is difficult, but it can be done if we can find a way to share resource. The Oban example is a great one—the committee should go there if it gets the chance. The community health partnership works with the social enterprise that runs the sports activities and with a little social enterprise that employs a couple of people. People with chronic conditions are helped to become active in their homes and out in the open.

There are some great and inspiring stories, but they are very localised, so we would certainly be up for some form of national conversation. The Scottish Government’s investment in sport of £36 million plus lottery funding pales when compared to the NHS budget. A national conversation is required, because there must be some way in which we can work together better.

The Convener: That is another point to leave with us.

Mike MacKenzie is looking at me. I am happy to take him now, but only if it is a supplementary on that discussion, because Richard Lyle is glowering at me.

Richard Lyle: I am waiting patiently.

Mike MacKenzie: I have one quick question. There has been a lot of academic medical work forging a pretty strong link between active lifestyles and health benefits. From the discussion that we have had this morning, it seems that what is perhaps not so well understood is how increased participation in sport—we have heard great evidence on that, and the legacy effect is quite strong and apparent—translates into a more general active lifestyle among the general public.

With the best will in the world, despite all the good figures, those who actively participate in sport are only really the tip of the iceberg. The health benefits are well understood, but what is not so well understood is how the pound that is spent through your organisations translates all the way through the pipeline into a preventative spend figure in our health boards. Are you aware of any work that has been done on that? Perhaps the committee can help with finding out about work that proves that correlation robustly.

The Convener: I ask for quick responses to that, because we are in our last 20 minutes and Richard Lyle has been very patient.

Mr MacKenzie, perhaps you can explain that supplementary to Richard Lyle after the meeting.

Kim Atkinson: I will try to be quick. There is a real issue about the value that people place on the benefits of being active. There are any number of benefits, whether that is skills acquisition, learning, increased employability, physical health or mental health, and there is also reduced risk. There are many different ways of cutting it up, but let us make Scotland more active. If we were 1 per cent more active every year for the next five years, we would save £85 million to the economy. That financial statistic is part of it, although I am not an economist and I cannot tell you more about that. We would also save 157 lives a year. For me, that is the more powerful statistic, because it is about people living longer, healthier and happier lives. I am an idealist, not an economist, and I accept that there is a difference.

It depends on how we want to cut the cake. Absolutely—there is research on the issue. There is research on the financial stuff, but the quality of life stuff is where we are not winning.

I challenge your point that we understand the benefits of people being active and taking part in sport. Perhaps the people who are here understand that, but I do not think that the general public understand. If we are talking about self-directed care, I have a suite of figures that I could quote all day. I do not think that the public are aware that increasing activity is probably the best thing that they can do to improve their health. We have had campaigns on smoking and other issues, and people understand those, but they do

not have the same understanding of the benefits of being active, so there are significant opportunities there.

The Convener: That was a good summary. If nobody has anything to add, we will move on to Richard Lyle.

Richard Lyle: Thank you, convener. I knew that I was far away from you, but I did not know that I was on Princes Street.

I was a councillor for many years, so I know about the commitment of leisure departments and officials. I know about the commitment of Stewart Harris and sportscotland and about all the hubs. By the way, we are applying for one in Bellshill, so I hope that Mr Harris will support us on that. The proposal involves several clubs that will encourage members of the public to come along.

I will refer to the Scottish Sports Association submission, so I am sure that Kim Atkinson will answer, but my question is for the other witnesses as well. We heard about schools not being used. The percentages that are being used are absolutely terrible. The SSA submission points out that it is

“35% of indoor space during term time and 17% in school holidays”

and

“19% of outdoor space during term time and 11% in school holidays”.

Schools are not being used. There are many clubs out there, and many excellent facilities such as third-generation pitches have been built over the past few years through sportscotland involvement, lottery funding and council involvement. There is a suite of facilities, but they are not being used.

I have to say this, because it was thrown at me. A number of years ago, I got funding from the then Scottish Office for a community centre, to bring in kids. We charged them nothing and loads of people came. I want to ask about the affordability of facilities that receive public investment through councils or whatever. The SSA submission states:

“Facilities which receive public investment should provide easy and affordable (a rate which is not financially prohibitive) access to community sports clubs”.

We have all these free taster sessions, but are we advertising enough and are the prices suitable for people in Summerston or Bellshill, or up in Inverness or wherever? Could we do better?

Dean Wilkinson: I can speak on behalf of local authority colleagues. To go back to the community access to schools programme, I note that there are three price bands—a professional fee, a voluntary fee and a concessionary fee. That tries to reflect the different types of users. Linkage work is being done to try to offer clubs that use school

facilities some concession if they are part of a local community sport hub. There are benefits to being part of the different aspects and programmes.

As I said, that is on behalf of my local authority colleagues, but I am sure that they will be able to expand on that answer if you want them to do so.

Billy Garrett: We have already touched on the affordability issue. In this conversation and others, we always come back to that, because it is such an important point. In Glasgow, there are a number of reasons why the school estate is not utilised to the extent that we would all want it to be. Affordability might be one of those reasons, but I am not sure that it is the principal one.

For example, Richard Lyle mentioned 3G pitches. In Glasgow, we are lucky to have a significant estate of 3G football pitches. Most of them are managed by Glasgow Sport, although a number of them are part of the school estate. The prices for the pitches in the school estate are lower than our price tariff, yet utilisation of the Glasgow Sport pitches is much higher, even though we charge more.

We talked earlier about the fact that it is important to look across the broad range of issues. There are programming and management issues related to the school estate. Glasgow Life administers the letting of schools outwith school hours, but education services manage the estate and another organisation employs the janitorial staff—in fact, it is another two organisations, if we include primary and secondary schools. There is a complicated landscape, and that is probably a greater impediment to genuine community use than the price, although I do not for a minute suggest that price and affordability are not important.

We are trying to grapple with that in Glasgow. As I mentioned, there is a review. We are looking at ways to streamline things to make it easier for the public to understand how to get access to the school estate, as that is not always easy. Of course, the review will involve looking at affordability issues.

11:00

Kim Atkinson: Can we do better? Yes—there is always the aspiration that we can.

Speaking on behalf of our members and the voluntary sector more widely, I guess that a lot of the rhetoric around the school estate is that these are public facilities and they are often at the heart of the community. To go back to Stewart Harris's point about community hubs more generally, what an opportunity that presents, not just for sport but for the wider voluntary sector, which is the

underpinning fabric of so much of our civic society. What an opportunity it could be for all sectors. Do sports clubs quite often want use of the games hall? Absolutely, but that does not mean that there cannot be an environmental group or a knitting group in one of the classrooms next door, for example. We could make more of that huge opportunity.

Our members would point out the opportunity that clubs represent and the added value that club sport provides. We touched on that earlier. I guess that that is where access to facilities—whether in the school estate or other public facilities—presents an additional opportunity. People who participate in sport as part of those clubs benefit from additional volunteering opportunities and skills development. People who participate in sport through clubs also participate more often and for longer than people who participate outwith that environment so, again, we can see the added value and benefits there. The connections, networks, friends and social integration that that brings are really important in their own right, so part of the focus on the benefits of clubs should be on those areas.

Our governing bodies say that affordability is a challenge for some clubs in some areas. That will vary across local authorities—we have already heard about different pricing structures. There are some fabulous relationships between local authorities and clubs, so there is a lot of great practice. Is there more that we can do? I am absolutely sure that there is. The idea of a portfolio of facilities, which has been discussed, is really important. We need to ensure that there is no competition between local authority trusts and the school estate, and that is a massive challenge. It is about that portfolio and about people working together.

Can we do better? Yes. Do we get the sense that there is a will to make those public facilities—which the public should have access to—available for civic society? That discussion is progressing. Are we quite there yet? No, but there seems to be a lot of good progress. Again, our local authority partners will be closer to what is happening on that.

Richard Lyle: If the convener will let me, I will move on to my other question, since I have waited patiently.

The Convener: As other members have waited, Richard, I might remind you.

Richard Lyle: Yes, I know.

Stewart Harris made the valid point that we are dealing with 32 different councils—which, in my experience, have 32 different ways of doing things. We need to have a national conversation

about how we can involve sport, schools, councils, the NHS and so on, right across the piece.

I will ask the question that I have been waiting to ask. Many councils have set up trusts, and some have been successful. When North Lanarkshire Council—my council—set up a trust, I was the SNP group leader and I was vehemently against it, but I have been proved wrong. That trust has been highly successful, but in some cases its charges are too high—take note, North Lanarkshire Council.

Where councils have set up trusts, are they performing better than the leisure departments were in the old days? Are they giving value for money?

The Convener: Can we get some quick responses from people? Stewart, I think that the question was partly addressed to you. Ian Murray also wants to comment, and Eamon John wanted to respond to the previous question.

Eamon John: Yes—I was going to come in on the estate question.

Stewart Harris: To me, the picture is different in each trust. It is not so much about the structure as about what the plans say they are going to do and how they are going to do it. I would take issue with some trusts about how they do some of that work—that is well known, and it is on the record. However, at least we are having a conversation about it.

There is no doubt that trusts have more fleetness of foot and more commercial nous, as well as a bit of freedom to make decisions that are in the best interests of their constituent groups. However, we need to be mindful of integration with regard to the conversation with education locally and to ensure that that aspect is not forgotten.

It comes back to the strategic position in each authority. What is the ambition, and how is it organised and resourced? It is about that interaction and integration. I think that there are now 23 trusts, and most councils are going down that route. If they do that for the right reason—not because it means a financial saving but because it will lead to better delivery—I am all for it. If a trust is set up for the wrong reason, it will probably store up trouble.

Ian Murray: I am from an arm's-length organisation, so for me, the answer to the question is yes. We are relatively young—we are three and a half years old. Being a trust has allowed us to be much more focused on the job in hand. Senior managers in any council service tend to get diverted off to corporate issues within the council. Previously, I was head of service within the education, culture and sport department. I picked up the culture and sport bit and went into High Life

Highland, and I now find that everyone in the management team has much more focus on getting the job done as well as a great deal more freedom and speed of operation.

An interesting point that has struck me is how we are viewed by others. Previously, the NHS really struggled locally to get into discussions with us because its attitude was, "You're the council; you do what the council does." Now the attitude is, "You're not the council; you are something different." It is somehow easier for the NHS to come and speak to us and for us to get the doors open. That is one example, but there are lots of others.

I agree with Stewart Harris that some trusts are perhaps overly focused on income and money, but I would not blame the trusts. I would blame the host councils. The rules of engagement have to be absolutely clear when trusts are established or changed and councils have to be very clear about what they expect of a trust. Trusts are either council-owned companies or the councils are the major funders, so if there is a lack of focus on people who are hard pressed and cannot afford to get into facilities, it is within the council's gift to say, "This is what we expect of you—please do it and we will measure it in the future."

Eamon John: On the trusts question, Ian Murray is absolutely correct—the landscape can be a bit patchy, but there are trusts out there that are clearly evidencing their social responsibility with regard to public money. There is evidence of how they are delivering that social responsibility element. We have three trust representatives at the meeting who can tell you that they can evidence that.

On the question about access to the school estate, I thought that there was a misperception, as there were comments about it not being used. I think that sportscotland dealt with that when it commissioned the school estate audit. The bigger question for me is about need and capacity. In East Lothian, it does not matter to me whether our organisations and our communities are accessing the school pitches or our community sport pitches and facilities. Strategically, it does not matter. We have now had a closer look at the school estate with our partners and audited use, and that has highlighted where we have some windows of opportunity if we need to move things around strategically.

To me, the school estate is sweating those facilities through the physical education curriculum, after-school sport and inter-school sport. If we are really serious as a nation about the school estate, we fundamentally need to home in on school sporting activity. After that, we can look at community sport top-ups, but in an East Lothian context, our need and capacity are being met with

a balance of strategic provision in the heart of communities—both school and community provision. Taking a closer look at the school estate has allowed us to think about how we can use it in the future. As a growing authority with a potential population uplift of 30 per cent, we know that that estate is going to become really important to us, strategically, in future years. It is about how we sweat both those assets—community provision and the school facilities.

The Convener: Nanette, did you want to come in?

Nanette Milne: I will hear what others have to say first.

The Convener: Okay. I will take people who have not been in yet first, starting with Rhoda Grant. We have a maximum of 15 minutes left.

Rhoda Grant: I have two questions, one of which has not been touched on at all. I found the point in the Glasgow Life submission about the creation of employment and apprenticeships and the like really interesting. People's mental health and wellbeing has a lot to do with work, and although it is not part of this committee's work, I was keen to hear a wee bit more about that aspect and what opportunities there are, especially for the more deprived areas.

Billy Garrett: You are right—we mentioned that in passing. I did not regard it as part of the remit for this discussion.

I return to the argument about taking a holistic approach. In Glasgow Life we have conversations in which we use words such as wellbeing and wellness. That involves individuals across the full gamut.

There has been a focus, in both Glasgow Life and Glasgow Sport, on the employability agenda. We operated Commonwealth apprenticeship schemes in Glasgow, and we continue to do so. The schemes have been extremely successful. For example—touching on the point about disadvantaged communities—we now employ in a number of different posts 27 local youngsters, who came through the employability programme that we put in place at the Emirates arena. That is permanent full-time employment, which those individuals got as a positive outcome from a larger employability programme that we manage in partnership with Clyde Gateway, the local economic development company.

We are always looking for opportunities to do such things. Another example—it might be covered in our submission, but I am not sure—is our operation of a programme called coach core, which is funded through the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry and the Tom Hunter Foundation. That

programme takes youngsters who have not gone into full-time employment or training—who occupy that difficult landscape—and provides opportunities for them to be trained as sports coaches. The first cohort from that programme has recently completed, and I think that 95 per cent of the participants went on to positive outcomes, either in employment or in education. Glasgow Life has taken on some of them as coaches.

In our strategic approach to these issues, we do not see any distinction between employability, mental health, support and physical activity. That relates to Mr Lyle's question about what we see as the value of Glasgow Life as an arm's-length organisation. One of the advantages is our ability to pull together within Glasgow Life youth engagement, community engagement, physical activity and a range of other things including libraries and museums. The power that that gives us to take a holistic view, to work collaboratively and to break down the distinctions has given us a real advantage compared with a more traditional local authority structure.

I hope that that answers your question.

Rhoda Grant: That was helpful.

I turn to my second question. The Commonwealth games gave us a focus on listening to what people are saying, and they were hugely successful in getting people to be more active. However, we all know that we have to do an awful lot more. I wonder where the next goals are. What are people aspiring to? What will drive those aspirations, given that the Commonwealth games are over? There is a legacy programme, but the focus can go off. How do we keep the focus on activity and wellbeing? How do we build on the legacy and set goals?

Stewart Harris: For me, it is about continuing to be ambitious. There are 32 geographies with a host of partners inside them. We are working well with the majority of them, although it could be better. There is definitely a national conversation to be had, which would allow us to develop in those areas from a national perspective. There is a strategic group for sport and physical activity, which has real potential. It has brought health, transport, education, sport and justice round the table, and it could really get into the big issues. There is an enthusiasm from the volunteer workforce, and lots of major events will be happening. The medals and the success will still be there.

It would be good if we could all work better together and—as the convener mentioned—focus on the outcomes, which are about participation, engaging and keeping engaged and progression. It will take ambition, resources and an integration of those resources locally, but I am really hopeful

that we can build on what we have done as a nation and be ambitious for our communities.

11:15

Kim Atkinson: I absolutely agree with Stewart Harris's point about ambition. Our submission touched on the point that Rhoda Grant made about building momentum and working beyond the legacy.

There are a couple of other matters that we have not yet touched on today. PE and school sport is always a favourite topic. There has been significant progress, as I am sure we are all well aware, and that is absolutely to be celebrated. The focus on quality is still the main priority. There has been a huge investment from the Scottish Government through sportscotland and Education Scotland on continuing professional development for teachers. That is enormously welcome. However, if we do not address the prioritisation of PE in initial teacher training, we will be plugging the £6 million gap that that investment represents between now and the end of time. There is a priority there, and we can make a significant difference. That would be an ask of our members.

The convener mentioned volunteering earlier, and there is still a huge latent opportunity for a legacy there. We have spoken previously about employer-supported volunteering and the massive opportunity of the games. Do people consider the benefits of volunteering differently, not just for sport but in the wider voluntary sector? Lots of organisations are involved. Additional special leave was given during the games, but that has gone back to a day or two a year. Help has been given to run events, but that does not underpin volunteering in civic society. A significant opportunity remains.

The last issue that we have perhaps not picked up on is performance. Stewart Harris touched on the enormous success of the games. Added to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic cycle, this has been the most successful period that we have ever seen for performance sport in Scotland. Again, that is to be celebrated enormously. At the time of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, the UK Government made an announcement of continued resource towards the Rio games.

It is my understanding that the additional investment that went into performance sport was for the games and is no longer. Where is the legacy around performance sport? Stewart Harris mentioned the world-class structures and systems. Our systems have proved to be the best that we have ever had from a performance point of view. There is continuity of ask there, and we want to continue to build on that.

Nanette Milne: I was going to ask about employer-supported volunteering, and Kim Atkinson covered that point. How do you see the way forward for that? How can you get back to where you were just ahead of the Commonwealth games and get more interest from employers? Do you have any ideas for doing that?

Kim Atkinson: There are a number of different opportunities for that. People have seen the excitement around volunteering. There has been a change in language when we talk about volunteering. We were very good at saying, "Please, Nanette, volunteer. We need somebody to do this. Please, please will you help out?" as opposed to changing that conversation to say, "Nanette, we need this to be done, and here's what you might get out of it."

In our written submission, we make the point that there is a 20 per cent reduction in premature mortality when people volunteer. That is not quite as much as it is if people are active and participating in sport, but it is significant. Some of that is galvanising the voluntary sector and we have had this conversation, saying—as our members have said all along—that that would be the biggest volunteering legacy.

There were 50,811 volunteering applications for the games. They were obviously not all from Scotland, but that figure broke records. Where are we breaking records in relation to a legacy for volunteering? Yes, some of those people will be focused on an event legacy, and they will want to volunteer for further events. There are mechanisms for that. However, where are we turning that round into a conversation? In what respect do we consider the Scottish Government and other organisations as exemplars in that regard, saying that we value volunteering, both as a benefit to individuals and as a benefit to organisations in recruitment, retention and productivity, and so on through that list? I do not think that we are having that conversation.

As a nation, we have great conversations about the rights of individuals to do flexible working for reasons of childcare, and rightly so, but there should be an entitlement for people to contribute to their society. We talk so much about the empowerment of communities, and rightly so, but where is the point of empowering communities if we are not enabling them? So often, the least active people are in our most deprived communities. That is so often where there is least volunteering and where people are most time deprived.

The Convener: We all appreciate that—it was a key factor in our 2013 report. Everybody loves volunteers. The people who deliver sport in our communities are the best people, and so on. Our ask as a committee to this community and more

widely was, “How do we define a volunteer? How many volunteers are out there? How do we ensure recruitment and retention? How do we identify the gaps in volunteering?” You mentioned deprived communities. We have too many volunteers in some communities and not enough in others. How do we fund and resource volunteering?

Basically, the committee asked for an audit. We said to people who are involved in sport and the delivery of sport, “Give us an audit. How many volunteers do we have out there? How many do we need?” As Stewart Harris said, we can throw open the doors of every sports facility and pay people to go in—never mind making it free—but we do not have the capacity to deal with the ambition that has been described round the table today.

How do we do that work on volunteers? Is there an audit? Do we know how many are out there? Do we know where the gaps are? Are the strategies and business plans addressing those issues, as the Health and Sport Committee asked way back in 2013?

Stewart Harris: I talked earlier about a more systemic approach to sport, and people are a key part of that. To get participation and progression, we need to enable that, and people, places, profile and telling the stories are important.

Last time I was here, convener, you and I had a conversation about the value of a national figure for volunteers. I think that the figure was 192,000 at that time. I am happy to share with you where we have got to with the clubs and the community sport hubs. The data that we have on that is now pretty detailed. It is way ahead of where it was before, and it tells us the health of the community and the number of volunteers.

I gave you the national picture. In the 122 community sport hubs, there are 8,881 distinct deliverers, 92 per cent of whom are volunteers. We have a partnership with governing bodies. From memory, there are 110 sport-specific development officers whose job is to work with community groups and clubs, and they have data as well. We also have 90 clubs in direct club investment, and again we have data on that.

We prefer that kind of information, which we are adding to what people have locally to try to determine capacity. As the guys round the table will tell us, it is all demand led. We cannot just throw open the doors and think that it will all happen, for the very reasons that you mentioned. We need to focus on demand and gradually build the infrastructure and the economy of provision by local authorities or trusts, with communities doing things for themselves. We are making a lot of progress in taking that forward and building that capacity.

Eamon John: I was going to respond to another question, but first I will pick up on Stewart Harris's point. I am looking at some information on exactly what you asked about, convener. The community of Prestonpans in East Lothian—some of you might recognise that name—has 148 coaches, 1,600 participants, 12 different venues and 10 clubs. We need to drill down into the national information that Stewart Harris mentioned to see what it looks like in a community. How many volunteers are there? How many clubs are there? What venues are they using?

They are around one table, because the approach that we have taken with community sport hubs is not about one site, one venue or one school. It is actually community planning for sport. It involves all those clubs, physical educationalists in primary and secondary schools, sport-specific officers who represent the community and planners, all of whom share their expertise in a collegiate way for sport in the community. Why are we having football and rugby sessions at the same time? We should look at the timetabling of that to give choice and variety within the community. It is about having that type of conversation.

I also want to respond to a question that was asked earlier. There is a real nervousness about the games being a tipping point, and about what comes next. Is there a risk that we will lose sight of things, or that our sight lines will change? What are the priorities? I think that, locally and nationally, people would concur that we need a sporting infrastructure that creates opportunities for participation and ensures that we have progressive systems to allow people to come through.

I think that a message is coming loud and clear from all of us that we need to focus on the shift from inactivity to activity, wider physical activity and targeting inequalities. If you asked us what the priorities are, those would be the three things.

The Convener: I call Graeme Dey, and then Bob Doris will ask the final question.

Graeme Dey: Eamon John made the point at the beginning of the evidence session that the games were essentially Scotland's games and that they took in all 32 local authorities. To what extent has the facility infrastructure for widening access to sport been delivered in rural or semi-rural settings, accepting, of course, the associated challenges and bearing in mind that those communities have as many deprivation and health and fitness issues and aspirations to compete in sport as the major cities? In conurbations, we can cater for many people by building a huge facility, but in a rural setting, we need multiple swimming pools, athletics tracks and indoor facilities spread across a range of population centres to provide the same kind of access to a similar number of

people. Of course, smaller rural schools do not offer facilities such as 3G pitches that can be tapped into. How well are we responding to that challenge? For example, how many of the hubs that we have talked about today are located in such settings?

Ian Murray: The creation of sport hubs has been one of the lasting enthusiasms of the games, and it is one of the good things that sportscotland has done over the past few years. I confess that I was not really sure how that approach would work in our area, but in Thurso, which is right on the north coast, the Queen's baton relay was used as an excuse for a great big celebration of local heroes and local sporting volunteers and a great big party—a sporting party, if you like. It also served to break the ice between a number of clubs that had existed in the town for generations, but between which there was a great deal of suspicion. Five hundred-odd people came together to create this sporting party, with the result that people have begun to realise that they can share resources, lend equipment and have joint training sessions. They are saying to each other, “When you are having this or that training session, can we come along, too?” The Thurso sport hub is the result of that, and it is forging ahead with great enthusiasm. The games have left a very good legacy with regard to sport hubs in our area; we are now on to our fourth one, and there are another four or five in the background.

As I have said, the council's view and policy are that we cannot afford to have swimming pools everywhere. We have to choose their exact location, so when a new secondary school is built or an existing school is refurbished, we take the opportunity to say, “That's where the pool's going to be”, make that the focus and bring all the community facilities into that location. As a result, we have a few strategically placed facilities across the area. I would not dare to suggest that that is part of the legacy of the games; it is just a case of common sense and partnership working coming together at the right time.

The Convener: Does anyone else wish to speak?

Richard Lyle: If you do not mind, convener, I would like to ask Mr Harris a quick question.

The Convener: Right now, Richard? Before I take Bob Doris?

Richard Lyle: Yes.

Mr Harris, you mentioned conferences and so on. I used to be the chair of a sport sub-group for the Association of Public Service Excellence, and I attend the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities annual general meeting every year. I know that sportscotland always attends those meetings, but has sportscotland ever had a conference to which

it has invited 32 councils or associated groups—say, the people in this room—in order to discuss a national policy?

Stewart Harris: We have done a lot of that sort of work but, to be honest, I have to say that COSLA has done quite a bit of it for us and, indeed, it is quite well placed in that respect. The conversations have been had, and COSLA brings together all the senior representatives from local authorities four times a year at a meeting that is jointly chaired by the minister and Archie Graham from Glasgow. However, I find it a wee bit frustrating, because I think that that group could do more; it could, for example, investigate itself a bit more with regard to this consistent agenda that we all have.

The fact is that we can have all the conferences that we like, but they will probably not matter much if whatever is discussed at them is not reflected in local actions, plans, ambition, resourcing and interaction. That said, you can rest assured that there is good sharing of practice.

11:30

Bob Doris: We have had a long session, and I feel that we have come full circle a bit. We are talking about different local structures and partnerships, and I asked at the start about how we measure some of these outcomes. I just was not sure whether all 32 local authorities had some consistent means of capturing whether people are becoming more active and, if they are, whether that is happening through Glasgow Life or other agencies, the club system, the community sport hubs or local cycling or walking groups, or even local dance groups, which are a huge growth area for women in particular. Do they cross-reference things to find out who is doing what, and when and where they are doing it? I accept that there are privacy considerations in that respect, but that information would help us to work out where the black spots are and ensure that we can put in additional resources and achieve the targets, as we all want to do.

The people who are doing the job in those areas are usually youth workers, not formal sports clubs. Groups in north Glasgow such as Young People's Futures and Royston Youth Action are doing a great job in linking in with sports groups where they can. When we look at the funding streams for physical activity in local communities, do we also need to look at some of the criteria that are insisted on, consider clubs that have not necessarily gone through the clubmark system or do not have the relationship with national governing bodies that you might expect and think more cleverly about investing in youth work as a gateway that feeds into clubs? After all, you have to engage with young people in the way that they

want to be engaged with before you make them, say, join a badminton club. Those things are great, but you have to gain young people's trust and develop their capacity as human beings before you channel them into all the other wonderful stuff that is out there.

I wonder, therefore, whether you can give me some reflections on consistent data collection across the country. Of course, that opens up a whole new conversation, but it is an important issue in itself. How do we think a bit more cleverly about this? Should we consider using youth work provision or those who do not necessarily have the closest relationship with national governing bodies and give direct funding to local community initiatives?

Billy Garrett: With regard to statistics, the only consistent national information comes from the household surveys. There is a wealth of data, but, as you have said, it is inconsistent. Moreover, we can capture all the data that we like, but the challenge is to take it into account in the design of services.

As for your second question, we in Glasgow Sport probably agree that we need to think about non-traditional and innovative ways of getting people engaged in physical activity. For instance, we work very closely with Scottish Sports Futures, which has developed from what was initially a youth engagement agenda, and there are a number of agencies in Glasgow that do not come from a traditional sports club context and which are quite rightly challenging us to engage with them more proactively. You have certainly raised an important point.

Bob Doris: Does no one else want to comment? I think that we must have worn our witnesses into submission, convener.

The Convener: As we have come to the end of the session, I must thank all our witnesses for their precious time, their contributions this morning and their written submissions. We very much appreciate them. Your enthusiasm for your work has come across again this morning; we have enjoyed working with you in the past, and we look forward to working with you in the future on some ideas that we have on this matter. We will use the additional information that we have received to ensure that there is an on-going legacy not just from the Commonwealth games but from all the investment that has been made across Scotland.

11:34

Meeting continued in private until 11:48.

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