

Wayne Allsopp – Written evidence (NPS0001)

- 1.0 **How can local delivery, including funding structures, of sport and recreation be improved to ensure that people of all ages and abilities are able to lead an active lifestyle? For example, how successfully do local authorities and other bodies such as Active Partnerships, Leisure Trusts, local sports clubs and charities work together, and how might coordination be improved?**
- 1.1 For far too long the administration, governance and coordination of sport has been broken and too complicated. With limited collaboration at ministerial level the picture is duplicated at non-departmental level and grassroots sports level. A landscape that is over burden with various organisations all laying some claim to having the responsibility and often the funding for sport and physical activity. This has become a minefield to the untrained eye and a mess for those of us in the sector.
- 1.2 The problems start with the elephant in the room and that is the fact that sport and physical activity are very different and generally have different purposes. Sport has never been taken seriously enough to exist in its own right apart from when we hosted the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Other than that sport has had to lay claim to solving other social issues like health and wellbeing or used to create community cohesion. The reality here is that it has never been taken seriously by other departments either (DoH or DfE). You only have to look at the current health crisis that is COVID. The sport, recreation and fitness sector were shut down. When surely, they should have been left open as a means of fighting the virus. The name Sport England is misleading as majority of their delivery partners are so far removed from sport now. Take County Sports Partnerships. They have had to change their name to fit in with the latest direction of travel. It's not a great starting point when you don't know where you are going (purpose) as it makes it very difficult to get there.
- 1.3 The sport sector does not help itself due to the structures that have existed for many years. We have created a silo mentality depending on whether your responsibility is elite sport, community sport or school sport. This magnifies the connectivity problems and demonstrates the need for more collaboration within sport itself. We have never had a unified voice.
- 1.4 Over the years sport has been a political football, kicked from one ministerial department to the next, cross party disagreement and moving minister goal post make it near on impossible to create a single system that supports grassroots sports effectively. Who can forget some of the ministerial fall outs like the announcement by James Purnell in late 2007 announcing a sudden change in direction for sport pre the home Olympic and Paralympic Games. Moving away from Sport England Chair - Derek Mapp's active past times and towards traditional sport was apparently the answer to the 2012 legacy question. We had 2 funding cycles were

National Governing Bodies of Sport were the main beneficiaries of DCMS and Sport England Funding. However, the bit that they got wrong was the brief they asked NGBs to deliver. Trying to grow participation in sport amongst people aged 16 years and over didn't do justice to the then Sport England Strategy title Creating a Sporting Habit for Life. During this period sport seemed to lose its way in terms of what it was striving to achieve. DCMS and Sport England now seem to be a lot clearer in terms of the outcomes they are trying to achieve through sport. The questions I would ask are. Are they sport outcomes, are they the right outcomes and are they too woolly?

- 1.5 Alongside the moving ministerial goal post for community sport. In 2010 we also had a change in direction for school sport. The then minister responsible for education Mr Gove started the slow and painful process of dismantling School Sports Partnerships. Tessa Jowell and Sue Campbell had spent a decade in crafting a school sport system that was fast becoming the envy of the world. Gove's flawed rationale for change as created an inconsistent approach to school sport and if anything, it has fragmented our school sports system further. A problem that still exist today and even more amplified in the middle of this crisis as kids have become more inactive.
- 1.6 If ministerial departments were open to more cross departmental working we would have a larger number of good examples of where grassroots delivery is strong. The development of sport from grass roots to the very top of the podium should be a continuum, an unbroken chain. Indeed, there is something called 'the Sports Development Continuum' which has been overlooked by Government and our non-departmental sport bodies for too long.
- 1.7 The Sports Development Continuum provides a simple model to ensure sport is catered for at all ages, stages and abilities. If serviced properly, it covers all elements required. Current ways of working have seen little understanding of this basic principle as sport has been lumped into either Elite, Community or School Sport with no flow and no continuum. This has, in part, been due to the fractured administration of sport where UK Sport looks after their 'lump', Sport England theirs and now every primary school theirs. I have referenced this in the past as the 3-legged donkey, which Lord Moynihan may remember. Each has their own strategy, this is horizontal integration of strategy where vertical integration is clearly called for. That vertical integration or golden thread as it's known will be further aided when other Government departments, who have a stake in sport, such as Education and Health, find they only need to communicate with one body when coordinating plans. This is not revolutionary thinking it is a well-recognised mechanism that a high percentage of people working in the industry would sign up to. This is an industry that is full of passionate people all working tirelessly to make us world leading in the development and delivery of sport. If this passion can be harnessed in a

more joined up way with effective administration and governance at the very top it would truly make us world leading.

- 1.8 An example locally where we have achieved this is here in Leicester at New College. We are very proud of our excellent track record of collaborative place-based leadership and we have learnt an enormous amount about how to engage local people and the wider systems with authenticity and purpose. As such, the appetite for learning and building active, healthy communities is now shared by a growing network of partners and is demonstrated by our whole system approach.
- 1.9 Through our community-based work, we have recognised that traditional methods of creating change that involve 'top down' or 'bottom up' approaches lead to linear silos. Our approach of building communities from the inside out has avoided the silo effect and ensured common purpose towards whole system changes.
- 1.10 We have recognised that organisations and communities are interlinked and interdependent, therefore a system perspective is at the centre of all our work, not just within the realm of sport and culture but across the healthcare, social care and public health system as well as more broadly across the 'place shaping agenda'.
- 1.11 Our approach to place leadership applies equally to local leaders within communities and to organisational leaders, strategic influencers and political leaders. We believe and work on the principle that true collaboration has no hierarchy and builds on the logic that partnership is the union which enables all parties to do something together that they cannot do alone. Genuine collaboration within a complex system as required adaptive practice by all involved and we are developing this through all our strategies.
- 1.12 Working in such uncertain, diverse and complex communities where approaches do not yield their normal expected results. We have needed to work flexibly as we encounter unprecedented situations and as our understanding of the local community grows.
- 1.13 Over time we have developed our local knowledge and intelligence which we now share with partners from the Public Sector, Third Sector and, where relevant and appropriate, the Private Sector. Our asset-based community development approach is well recognised and we have started to share our success to create active vibrant communities and reducing health inequalities across the city.
- 1.14 We have started to create a whole system change by doing things together, by modelling leadership practice and behaviours and by encouraging and enabling leadership at every level, particularly locally where individuals and whole communities own the shift that they create, supported by our services, infrastructure and assets where appropriate.
- 1.15 Through 10 years of hard work we are starting to see a shift whereby regular sport and cultural activity is not just normal, but it is seen as

central to good health and wellbeing. We currently have over 2,000 individuals that use the colleges sports facilities out of school hours on a weekly basis. This cultural change we are driving is a long-term strategy that is changing hearts and minds through a marginal gains approach. The local community are now extremely proud of New College Leicester and see it as a go to place and a hub of the community.

- 1.16 For many years the sport sector has been let down by the lack of a professional representative body that really understood the diversity of the industry and its ever-moving purpose. The sport sector is made up of many different professions and very passionate individuals all stumbling round a system with no collaboration.
- 1.17 With no satellite navigation system or even a map I commenced my journey in the Sport Sector over 30 years ago. I was hugely committed to personal development to feed my hunger to progress, but even then, I still struggled to find the right support. Scrambling from one job to another to satisfy my appetite for more responsibility was my source of personal development. It is only now after 30 years of learning the trade that I really understand some of the skills required to do the job effectively. These skills don't seem to come easily available within any such industry recognised qualification so I have relied heavily on informal coaching and mentoring from senior officers along my way.

1.18 Conclusion

The simple answer to the question posed is that the governance and the coordination is currently not fit for purpose in our sector. Bureaucracy is slowly killing grassroots sport and we need to work very differently if we are to build resilience in local delivery. It is very important that the investment in to community sport and school sport continues to be at the current levels and if anything needs increasing. We need to see a system change to enable more resource find its way via the relevant expertise to a local level with reduced red tape. At a local level there needs to be more connectivity and collaboration to bring the various strands of the sporting landscape together. Sport cannot continue trying to be the answer to all of society's problems without any additional resource. We all accept that some of the outcomes of playing sport are that you will be healthier and less likely to get in to trouble. However, very often they are not the motivating factors why people engage in sport. We currently have an over complicated structure and disjoint from national policy to local delivery with lots of resource lost along the way. Sport is clearly a non-statutory service provided by Local Authorities and while the £100 million support for struggling leisure services is welcome the question is will it reach grassroots. Should sport be taken more seriously at local level by Local Authorities and a statutory requirement? The COVID crisis has certainly highlighted the cracks and issues within our system. I believe we can't avoid the difficult question anymore and that is what is our sectors purpose. Are we a bit part in the health sector or are we our own sector and a big player within Government with a minister with some clout?. This

is a problem that hopefully the new House of Lords Committee for Sport and Recreation will start and resolve or we will stay on this merry go round I have been on for another 30 years.

2.0 How can children and young people be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation both at school and outside school, and lead an active lifestyle? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.

- 2.1 OFSTED are currently running the risk of damaging the health and wellbeing of our young people due to poor inspections on how Primary Schools are using their School Sports Premium Funding.
- 2.2 It is well documented that inactivity is one of the contributing factors to a number of major health problems that the country are experiencing. The escalating numbers affected by type 2 diabetes or obesity is extremely worrying and a huge financial burden on our valued National Health Service. At the moment it is very difficult to disagree with Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson in that physical inactivity levels across the UK are a source of national embarrassment.
- 2.3 Given the current levels of inactivity it comes as no surprise that the new DCMS and Sport England strategies are focussing on encouraging people that do no or very little activity to be more active. However, like mentioned above it is worrying that more is being asked of our sector with very little additional resource. It is pleasing to see that the Government as changed the ridiculous criteria that prevented Sport England previously from focusing a high percentage of their resource on people below the age of 16. Now with the responsibility for young people from the age of 5, Sport England are mindful that while they don't have the Government remit for PE and School Sport, children and young people do not arrange their lives according to divisions of responsibility within government or between the education and sport sectors.
- 2.4 However the Grand Canyon size gap between education (DfE) and sport (DCMS) is a serious problem when it comes to making sure that our young people are physically active.
- 2.5 The Department for Educations appetite to retain the resource to improve PE and School Sport is extremely worrying given the autonomy they are currently forcing with schools. Ignoring all the expertise that exist within the Sport and Physical Activity sector and placing the resource in the hands of general educators is like giving a GP the money to perform brain surgery. To then apply very little criteria to this funding with virtually no assessment from OFSTED on how the money is spent is not addressing the inactivity levels within our children and young people. If OFSTED were conducting their inspections of Primary School Sports Premium Funding appropriately we would have more schools deemed inadequate due to their poor swimming data. The PE curriculum clearly states that every

child should be able to swim 25 meters unaided by the end of Key Stage 2. Unfortunately, in an enormous amount of schools across the country this is not the case. This extremely important life skill that could save a child's life is being ignored at the expense of over testing our kids within other so-called core subjects.

- 2.6 For far too long Physical Education has not been taken seriously by the Department for Education and a review of how schools apply this to their curriculum is needed particularly in Primary School settings
- 2.7 Outside the school day the responsibility for encouraging children to be active falls to Sport England and at least they have a strategy and an appetite to achieve this. They recognise the fragmentation that exists and they know they need better insight in terms of young people. Programmes with ridiculous names like Sportivate that have limiting criteria are not the answer to creating a behaviour change in young people. The School Games and competition is important, but again it is not going to improve the majority of children's lives for the better. Sport England need to think differently about this new market and they need to support young people with the transition to avoid the huge drop off in interest and engagement once young people reach secondary school age.
- 2.8 Where inactivity is concerned we need to put children and young people at the heart of the decision-making process and at the centre of the systems we create. It should not be a choice about whether we focus on competitive sport or sport for all. This should be first and foremost about the health and wellbeing of our youngsters.
- 2.9 We need a unified PE and School Sport Strategy that is owned by a single body that a number of other key organisations need to buy into. The focus for this strategy should be schools who in turn need to be given support and held accountable at the same time. While we have Sport England doing one thing and Schools doing their own thing the system will not work and neither will it make a long-term difference.
- 2.10 I don't blame Primary Schools directly for the current inactivity levels amongst children. They are under immense pressure and they also don't have the expertise to make the step changes required to improve Physical Education and School Sport. The Department for Education should use its Schools Sports Premium Funding to commission Sport England who in turn should engage the likes of the Youth Sports Trust and AFPE. Collectively these knowledgeable and experienced organisations should create a PE and School Sport strategy and manage the delivery directly with schools. The Department for Education can then monitor the success of their spending through more thorough OFSTED inspections rather than the lip service they currently pay to this potential lifesaving subject. This route for delivery would then enable Sport England to connect what they do outside of schools with the schools-based activity.

2.11 Conclusion

Unfortunately, there is currently no nationally coordinated and cohesive school sport and physical activity strategy. There are a number of programmes, initiatives and suggestions that create a very confusing picture for Head Teachers and Schools. Going from what was suggested as an over bureaucratic system to total autonomy with schools as created an even more complex and challenging system than before. The School Sport Premium funding is not the answer to long term cultural change where Primary Schools are better equipped to deliver PE and School Sport. The pandemic will have magnified the issue further as schools struggle to balance safety and wellbeing with the curriculum. IF PE and School Sport are to remain a part of the Primary Curriculum then they need to be taken more seriously. This needs to involve thorough inspections of this life saving subject area. The lip service paid to it at the minute by the DfE and OFSTED is unacceptable. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games was sold as an opportunity to inspire a generation and while we might have done that we certainly didn't turn that inspiration into participation.

3.0 What are the opportunities and challenges facing elite sports in the UK and what can be done to make national sports governing bodies more accountable? For example, accountability for representing and protecting their membership, promoting their sport and maximising participation.

- 3.1 The various sectors of the sporting landscape have their distinctive responsibilities whether that be elite sport, community sport or school sport. While it is important that this remains there needs to be more connectivity and the collaboration. We currently have horizontal alignment of strategies when vertical alignment is clearly called for. A golden thread that can capitalise on the sporting success and turn that Olympic bounce into meaningful participation for those that are not elite performers. Personal podiums in community sport and school sport are equally as important and the inspiration created by success plays a major part in improving these sectors of our sporting landscape.
- 3.2 When measuring elite sport, it can only be measured in one way and that is by how successful we are. Rewarding underperformance can create the acceptance of the underdog mentality, something that we have too often been associated with. Elite sport is not just about competing in high level competition it is about competing with a chance of success. Some would say that just having a national side is inspiring and creates role models that in turn enables sport to have a bigger impact on society. I would say that while this might be the case the remit of UK Sport is not the cross cutting social agendas and increasing sports participation. The impact that successful elite performance as on the other areas is recognisable but should not be the driving force behind elite sport funding. The ultimate goal for UK Sport is delivering success.

- 3.3 Accepting that the medal haul from the Olympics is largely made up of athletes competing in individual sports and not so much team sports does raise an interesting question. Is Uk Sport rewarding sports associated with private schools and therefore are the majority of our Olympians coming from privately educated backgrounds. If so are we not creating a culture where to stand any chance of being an Olympic medallist you have to be from within a certain sector of society.
- 3.4 The above would suggest that to be equitable the medal success cannot be the only focus of Uk Sport investment policy. Is a different outcome required that determines success or is individual measures of success on a sport by sport basis required?
- 3.5 I would suggest that the ability to deliver medals for some sports absolutely. Other sports where the dynamics are different namely team sports some thought needs to be given to alternative success measures. The No Compromise approach needs to remain whatever that definition of success looks like.
- 3.6 Uk Sport and Sue Campbell had it right in a No Compromise approach and the only tweak needed is in terms of what does acceptable success look like for all sports competing at international level. Medals should not be the only success measure, but an aspirational target is a must for elite sport funding.
- 3.7 Why do we need to review Uk Sports investment policy is simple. To stay ahead of the game. We have a number of Olympic cycles to learn from that have used the No Compromise approach. There is a phenomenal amount of information from what will be a long period of successfully delivering what it was asked to deliver. (MEDALS). The question regarding is medals the only outcome we want to see from the investment is worth considering. Some sports would say that medals are an outcome that would not represent a realistic goal. Basketball have obviously been the most vocal and argumentative regarding how the current financial model works. Then again you would be if you had all your funding withdrawn due to not showing any medal potential. The key is do they have a balanced argument.
- 3.8 Can Uk Sport realistically ask sports to demonstrate their medal potential in 4-8 years' time. This for some sports is inevitably going to be easier to forecast than others. Looking back at the medal haul from 2008 and 2012, team sports are where the outcome of medals does not seem to happen and where the biggest financial penalties have been applied. Taking Basketball as an example there are some key questions.
- a) Is the Olympic podium a realistic vision for them and if so do they have the necessary plan and expertise to deliver that vision.
 - b) Should we expect them to medal given any investment or should their success measure be different.

- c) Is bringing home a medal the only reflection on value for money or do we consider the value of the inspiration created by a national basketball team competing in an Olympic games.
- 3.9 I believe just taking part at international / Olympic sport level is not value for money when it comes to Elite sport funding. The argument that it inspires others to play the sport is an argument that needs to be directed elsewhere and not UK Sport
- 3.10 I believe Basketball have instigated a needed debate, but the angle of social and moral grounds should not have been the ingredients for raising their concerns regarding elite sport funding. Basketball would have been better weighting their case towards the fact that the dynamics of team sports do not allow them to demonstrate the medal potential as easily as individual sports.
- 3.11 Surely any sport wanting to compete in international competition should be aspiring to be successful. Where the Olympics are concerned that must mean aspiring to bring home a medal. If sports believe that this is a step to far in 4-8-years' time then they need to put forward a strong case for what reasonable success would look like. Suggesting just competing as it inspires others is not a suitable argument for our elite sport funding body
- 3.12 Its disappointing that one sport as managed to lobby the right politicians to bring in to question an element of the sporting landscape that as worked. What about the majority of sports this is working for and the fact that it is the formula that placed us third in the medal table in 2012.
- 3.13 Absolutely review as others will be catching us up and let's consider what future success looks like. Let's also reflect on the success it as delivered and applaud those that have been responsible for it.
- 3,14 We need to be mindful of the Whyte Review and the outcomes as we can't become a nation that values a win at all cost attitude. Some of the treatment of our young gymnasts is very difficult to read in the media. British Gymnastics need to be hold to account if there is any truth in the stories. This can be said of every National Governing Body of Sport.
- 3.15 If the focus for elite sport funding changes without any additional resource then we can expect a slide down the medal table back to the days of Atlanta. This would not be an accolade that any minister would want to be associated with. Neither would it be that inspiring.

3.16 Conclusion

If we are serious about sport being a policy area in its own right then National Governing Bodies of Sport are going to need to play a bigger part again. Their remit needs to include elite sport and success alongside growing participation in the community and in schools. A merger of Sport England with UK Sport and Youth Sports Trust to create a unified body for

sport has been debated before. This for me would make our sport structure much simpler and allow for all funding (DCMS, DfE and DoH) to be funnelled through a unified body. The Governing Bodies can then be held accountable for all 3 areas of our sporting landscape. No more 3-legged donkey.

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