

## **Ealing Hockey Club – Written evidence (NPS0047)**

**From:** Jeff Moores, Chairman of Ealing Hockey Club

### **Subject: National Plan for Sport and Recreation:**

1. The local authority can support and assist scalable and registered sporting clubs to take Metropolitan Open Land back from speculative property developers. Currently much such land in the London Borough of Ealing is not actively in use and certain sites unused since purchase. For instance, Ealing Hockey Club was recognised as a club needing its own sporting facilities in the National Playing Field study. Ealing HC has partnered with Ealing Eagles Running Club to seek a common site to secure both clubs future and their continued growth in participants. Together the two clubs provide over 1000 borough residence regular activity safely and engagingly.
2. The main issue holding back participation in sport is the lack of facilities. State Schools lack resources. Playing fields have been sold off, community use has to be shared between schools, and playing fields and Metropolitan Open Land has been sold off and land banked by property speculators.

Ealing Hockey Club has grown from zero members in 2013 to 350 juniors (of which 50% are from State Schools) plus adult teams. From our experience there is the desire to be active within the youngster when they give a variety of sports a try. The key challenge is engagement and the right facilities, where parents are not burdened. In the Netherlands and many other towns on the continent have proper facilities, the right sporting clubs and encourage participation. Too many initiatives are sound bites, short term fads and sticking plasters. The key is to encourage and support sustainable sports clubs who want to expand so they can provide the options (be in competitive or social where no one feels judged). We have ignored many national initiatives as a club as they would burden the volunteers so we have grown using our initiative(s). The only thing that hinders our growth is the lack of facilities eg. two of our teams were to compete in the national indoor competition over Christmas but the borough does not have a sports hall that is suitable for indoor hockey! Shocking!

The key is to get participation is at the earliest age and engage them with as many different sports until they find the sport they love. Then keep them engaged (get them young, keep them long).

3. Ealing HC has created a program to encourage and re-engage older members to remain active. The Ealing Hockey Social Hockey Program has 60 regular participants and if we had additional facilities we could expand this 3 times over. We wish to launch a walking hockey programme but alas we don't have any facilities to play this.

4. Ealing Hockey Club and Ealing Eagles Running Club consider much of the Government's 2015 sports strategy as words. Just as London wants to be the most active city! Laudable

statements don't cause action. The Satellite Club and Sportivate projects were positive initiatives and did help us to gain numbers.

We have managed to raise private money to help families who have lost work due to COVID and provide life membership to families who have suffered bereavement during these times. The last thing we wish is for anyone to stop playing sport because of lack of money. Sport and physical activity need facilities and a **safe space**. Ealing HC and Ealing Eagles Running have signposted land banked sites without support from the Government and Local Authority our hands are tied.

Because we use two school site parents at Ealing Hockey can safely drop their children at the start of the session and collect them afterwards knowing the children are in a safe, organised and regulated environment. Parents cannot do that in a park!

A key to Ealing Hockey Club and Ealing Eagles Running Club, is the social side of sport. The engagement is more than sport and physical activity it is the support and extended friendship circle. "The new extended family". This is born out by seeing children in the town after matches and Sunday training and other occasions. They may be from different private and state schools and it is so rewarding from a personal prospective seeing young people socialising outside of the sports club.

5. I doubt the government's participation data is correct. The returns Ealing Hockey Club give to England Hockey are more than likely skewed with other Clubs in the Borough. I know many of the children play multiple sports, ie running, tennis and cricket in the summer etc.

How to improve the data capture? I do not know!

6. Firstly discrimination of all types needs to be dealt with harshly in the main sport that has the widest reach on national TV and media! Here those in power need to be held accountable. Then work down. Most offences I have witnessed is a mimic of another. When stamped on and dealt with I have witnessed prompt behavioural changes to make amends.

Ealing Hockey Club and Ealing Eagles Running Club have not had issues recruiting members from all communities in the Boroughs. We may be lucky to live in a cosmopolitan borough of London. All we want is to properly represent the borough we love.

7. The only area I can highlight from Ealing Hockey Club is the facilities. I know from Ealing Eagles Running Club the running in the Parks require a large amount of marshals to look after the participants.
8. The athletes who have the opportunities to represent the country at the Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games predominantly come from private schools. Also, too many from private school burn out due to over coaching!

Some of the best members of the Hockey Club I am seeing are from the state sector. We have to ensure they continue to feel valued and ensure they reach their highest potential.

Please look at the GB Olympic gold medal-winning men's hockey team of 1988 to the GB women's gold medal team of 2016 and notice the difference as well as their socio-economic background! Ealing Hockey Hockey and Ealing Eagles Running Club are committed to rebalancing without compromising on the quality of coaching.

9. There should be a national plan for sport and recreation because it teaches young people to work within teams, understand it is fine to fail but teach them to pick themselves up and try again. Success and reward have become too easily given and not earned.

We all hear and see the mental toll caused by lack of physical fitness within society and sport does help towards mental fitness. A healthy body - healthy mind do go together.

Finding the right activity needs sufficient opportunities for future generations to get involved in to find their activity.

*28 January 2021*