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Minute of the meeting held in the Scottish Parliament.

## PRESENT

Alison Johnstone MSP, Liz Smith MSP, Kevin Stewart MSP, John Mason MSP, Kim Atkinson, Colin Rennie, Jim Gunn, Brian Harris, Jim Fleeting, David McColgan, Stewart Harris, Alan Miller, Richard Jennings, Campbell Hornell, Gemma Gordon, Barry White, Patricia Horton, John Mason, Keith Irving, Stew Fowlie, Fiona Henderson, Scott Campbell, John Clayton, Caroline Bascombe, Julie Mason, David Millar, Hayley Wotherspoon, Geoffrey Platt, Ian McLaughlan, David Cullum, Hugh Hall, Rodger Evans, Liza Linton, Oliver Barsby, Sarah Pryde-Smith, Karin Jackson, Sharon McCluskie, Grant Jarvie, Jim Moffat, Stuart Gallagher, Freda Hutchison, Pam Scott, Douglas Bryce, Jennifer Sancroft, Andy Herd, Colin McMillan, David Wardrop, Jim McIntosh, Jeremy Gaywood, Joanna McLaughlin, Sarah Drury, Robert Gibson, Eileen Prior, Michael Chisholm, Laura Forster, Craig McMurray and Garreth Lodge.

## APOLOGIES

Margo MacDonald MSP, Neil Bibby MSP, Mark MacDonald MSP, Stewart Maxwell MSP, Tavish Scott MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP, Clare Adamson MSP, Richard Simpson MSP, Hugh Henry MSP, Mary Allison, Allan Alstead, Dougie Arneil, David Arnott, Tom Bishop, Craig Burn, Diane Cameron, Jane Campbell Morrison, John Clayton, Bruce Crawford, David Dundas, Margaret Ann Fleming, Duncan Hamilton, Scott Hastings, Yvonne Huggins-Haig, Derek Kelter, Rick Kenney, David Laing, Edith MacIntosh, Ian McCall, Beth Paterson, Charlie Raeburn, Brian Samson, Ronnie Sloan, Brian Walker, Roger Scrutton, Ron Sutherland, Cameron Watt, Helen Reilly and Lee Boucher.

## **Previous Minute:**

Matters Arising – None.

## Round Table Discussion

Liz Smith MSP (who agreed to chair the meeting in Margo MacDonald MSP's absence until Alison Johnstone MSP was able to attend) welcomed a full house to the session, in particular welcoming Kevin Stewart MSP, Patricia Horton (**sportscotland**), Barry White (Chief Executive, Scottish Futures Trust) and Campbell Hornell (Headteacher, Armadale Academy), to discuss 'Accessing the School Estate'.

**Patricia Horton, sportscotland** began by giving the background and aims of their recent School Estate Research. The 3 aims were to increase: school sport, sport for young people and access to the school estate. The outcomes of the research were to collect intelligence and data to inform national and local discussions by answering three questions. Firstly, what sports facilities exist within the school estate; secondly, what sports facilities are available for use within the school estate; and thirdly, what is the current use of these facilities for sport.

The data collected centred on: internal facilities, external facilities, community access and management arrangements. The internal facilities included games halls, gymnasiums, multi-purpose halls, swimming pools etc including their number, dimensions and condition. The research showed there were approximately 3,500 hall court spaces (bespoke games halls to general multipurpose indoor areas), 183 fitness studios, 116 dance studios and 106 swimming pools.

The external facilities included pitches, MUGAs, running tracks etc including their number, dimensions, surface and condition. The research showed that there were approximately 2,000 outdoor pitches, 621 multiuse outdoor areas, 156 running tracks, 188 basketball courts and 104 outdoor tennis courts.

The community access looked at the hours the facilities were available and the percentage used. In 1,751 primary schools 79% of facilities were available for community use and in 329 secondary schools this was 98%. The average hours available were 4-4.5 on weekdays during term time, 7-8 hours on weekends during term time and 8.5-12.4 hours during school holidays. The research looked at the uptake and use and found that 35% of available indoor space was used during term time and 17% during school holidays. With regards to outdoor space 19% of available outdoor space was used during term time with 11% during school holidays.

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The research investigated management arrangements in secondary schools and found that 63% were managed by local authority departments, 14% devolved to the school, 10% were managed by a trust or other independent body and 10% were managed by a PPI/PPP contractor. They also investigated the booking systems in secondary schools and found that 36% were paper based, 36% telephone, 8% online and 5% email.

Their key findings were that there is a wide range of facilities for sport within the school estate and a wide range of sports take place in these facilities. Also that the vast majority of the school estate is available for public use both in term time and school holidays. The majority of indoor space in secondary schools is used by the community but there is scope to increase use across the entire estate.

The overall results of this research are to be published at national level and can be found at [http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/resources/resources/school\\_estate\\_audit](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/resources/resources/school_estate_audit). The local data will be used to inform discussions within local authorities and partners.

Liz Smith opened the floor to questions by asking if the condition of facilities was qualitative eg did playing fields have changing facilities or not? It was confirmed that the research was not qualitative. The matter of cost of using facilities was also raised, as some people found the costs prohibitive, again the research did not look at this at this time. The lifetime cost of a grass pitch is the same as an all-weather pitch.

**Kevin Stewart, MSP and Convenor of Local Government and Regeneration Committee** began by apologising for his late arrival and also for having to leave early. He was elected in May 2011 having previously been a Councillor in Aberdeen City, therefore he understands the challenges associated with community facilities.

The key points for Kevin were the price of facility lets and the balance between this cost for community lets versus commercial lets. Kevin reflected that some of the PPP schools contracts had not been completed advantageously and this meant the facilities were difficult to access at affordable rates, meaning that wonderful buildings and facilities were empty. He stated that it was in everybody's interest that these buildings were used as it appeared that this meant there was less likelihood of vandalism. When these schools are used at evening and weekends they are less prone to vandalism than others and therefore there is an argument for local authorities that savings can be made.

The good practice that is out there needs to be exploited elsewhere; we should seek it out and pass it on. Times are tough and there is not a lot of money to go around so it is necessary to compromise for the benefit of all. For the Local Government and Regeneration Committee there is always a desire to find and distribute best practice.

The floor was opened to questions which concerned PPP contracts and whether there was evidence of local authorities changing contracts and if so how. Barry advised that there is an operational PPP support team with the Scottish Futures Trust working with contracts and making changes but as far as was known none of these involved sport at this time. Barry said he was happy to help local authorities but they should be aware that there may be cost implications in changing contracts. There was reference to the increased prevalence of Leisure Trusts as a factor in this mix. Kevin said that it is advantageous to have service users on board and there was a good cross section represented within Leisure Trust governance.

**Barry White, Chief Executive, Scottish Futures Trust** began by saying that Scotland was excellent at providing schools for the public and introduced Gemma as the Director running the Scotland Schools for the Future Programme. There has been a major investment programme; initially 55 schools were budgeted for within the allocated £1.25 billion – this has now been extended to 67 schools within the same budget. Within this figure, 9-10% of the spend is on indoor sports facilities – ie approximately £125 million. 10 of these schools have been designed as community campuses, especially in rural areas, these being smarter places which improves services by collocating services and increasing access at a sensible cost.

The HUB is a procurement route using asset management, building better local services together. The two key Scottish Government principles that apply in relation to the school estate are:

- Good consultation for better outcomes, and
- Schools that best serve their communities.

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Barry highlighted some examples such practice:-

Lasswade Centre is an example of how school facilities can be used by both the school and the community at the same time due to planning considerations for this from the outset. The swimming pool is capable of being used by both the school and the public at the same time, with pool lanes and changing rooms being divided to support concurrent use. The school was opened in the Summer and some clubs already have waiting lists.

Another example would be in East Lothian with Haddington Infants and St Mary's Roman Catholic School. These schools share facilities and the facilities can be separated to support both schools concurrently, this also has benefits for community access.

Eastwood High School was a further example highlighted by Barry – a new school built on playing fields, therefore a pitch was lost and the contractors agreed to add a running track in its place. Lasswade and Eastwood shared procurement by purchasing furniture and design collectively therefore there were cost benefits of approximately £4million. Lasswade Centre has concurrent use whereas Eastwood High School is used by the community out of school hours. Calling it 'Lasswade Centre' (which has 7 existing facilities under one roof) may have helped a culture change as community campuses suggest greater access giving out a community message.

St Bernadette's, Falkirk, is an example of designs working together, the gym and meal hall can be separated or combined depending on requirements.

Barry highlighted that there is scope to increase community use within new schools with a wide range of facilities. This access may not be across the entire estate, although this is commonly across the whole estate within rural schools. As such, there may be a need to view city schools differently, through undertaking a more targeted analysis of whole community assets, perhaps opening what is needed most. Anderson High School is an example of good asset planning with a new school built beside a leisure centre. Boroughmuir High School has a games centre on the roof.

In summarising the audit findings found that there were a wide range of facilities and sports on offer, available for public use with scope to increase, but whether this was across the entire estate was unclear.

Liz Smith MSP opened the floor to any brief questions by asking if there were any statistics that youngsters at school were more involved in competitive sports? Barry said there were no statistics but experience in England suggested that sport on Saturday afternoons is being better maintained within in Scotland due to good facilities and teachers (and parents) willing to help to enable participation in competitive sport. Barry noted a focus on facilities adjacent to schools in reducing access, travel and scheduling issues in this regard. The facilities themselves are not sufficient - good leadership is required within local authorities, schools and the parent community.

John Mason MSP raised the question of cost in relation to private contracts - if we pay more do we get more hours? Is it up to the council what they charge? Barry said the school set their own hours of use allowing them flexibility.

Keith Irvin asked what help could be given to provide more opportunity for children to cycle/walk to school. Barry responded stating that providing good facilities such as provision for keeping cycles dry, while Gemma said that local authorities do look at safer routes to school. Barry also pointed out that there were constraints with existing sites and to further enhance this it may be necessary to move some schools out of city centres.

Geoffrey Platt suggested that the same mistakes were being repeated and maybe one should learn from these mistakes. Barry reiterated that the sharing of best practice is a fundamental aspect of the Schools for the Future Programme, assisting with the learning from one project to another, setting up forums to hear the thinking behind it. It is vital in planning development to share information and look at what was done and why. It is also necessary to work with local authorities closely to avoid repeating mistakes to ensure better programming of access arrangements. Stewart Harris confirmed that **sportscotland** has spent lots of time meeting with local authorities to obtain an overview of all facilities and there have been positive discussions as to the location of new buildings. Stewart further noted that local authorities control both the policy and access

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arrangements in this regard and the question remains as to how better these can be programmed, as this is where the issue remains with existing facilities.

Liz Smith MSP left the meeting and Alison Johnstone MSP took the Chair.

**Campbell Hornell, Headteacher, Armadale Academy** stated that this was his fourth year as headteacher. The Community Sports Hub (CSH) was established in 2012. When Campbell first took over at the school, the school was not open for community access, or it was not perceived to be open. Through accessing funding and support as a CSH the school has worked to create a busy, open and vibrant community as Campbell believes that schools exist to serve the community and people respond to good facilities. Campbell was clear that school attainment would increase by building opportunities for achievement and pursuing excellence.

£32 million was the cost of the school contract therefore the school needs to be open beyond the school day to provide value for money. The students respond well to new facilities and vandalism is negligible. Having a busy school with good facilities increases attainment. Prior to the CSH it was not possible for lets to service the community, therefore a solution was needed to do something different to achieve this. From February 2012, the past 20 months has shown an increase from 9 clubs to over 30 clubs utilising the school estate with a huge range of clubs benefitting. The pupils have benefitted from learning coaching skills and some are about to train as cycle leaders. **sportscotland** measured the usage of facilities and in the last year this has increased by one third with approximately 60% facility usage. Every week 1,095 people, some students and adults from the community use the facility, this statistic is based on bookings and there are only 800 pupils at the school. It is busier in the winter than summer months. The CSH model has permitted a move from office staff and janitors trying to service community access to two full time staff equivalents - an officer and a receptionist. The students help, for example volunteering to support holiday programmes (including from the school's own 'Sport and Recreation' students), and two have been hired as part time receptionists. The projected income is projected at £62,000 from lets on an annual basis. The income from the lets used to go to the school but now covers wages to staff and the remaining goes to the local authority.

There have been noticeable benefits to the school with an enhanced PE curriculum, with over 30 pupils taking higher PE last year with a 96% pass rate at Higher level, showing that good facilities along with committed teachers equals improved attainment; the PE department is the best performing department within the school. Handball expertise exists within West Lothian and an excellent school partnership has been established where students receive extra coaching and handball is now part of the PE curriculum through teachers having been trained to deliver. Everyone benefits through sharing expertise, training and equipment.

Clear pathways have been established from primary through to adulthood with former students returning as football coaches. Linking sport to education and courses is a priority – hence a focus on coaching and volunteering has been established. Skills for work courses are running through sport eg leadership courses, hospitality courses, personal development courses, coaching courses and holiday programmes leading to employment for students. The school now has a perception of being welcoming and open and accessible to the community, providing positive publicity. With all of this has come increased attainment over the past three years and the school has gone from being in the bottom 20% to the top 25% rankings for comparative schools. Small increases in this were noted in the first two years with a significant increase noted in this third year due to the time taken for cultural change. The driver behind this remains a culture of ambition and achievement, of which the CSH model has played a big part.

Campbell highlighted a number of practical steps others can take, one being to establish the big picture along with desired outcomes, then having fantastic facilities which are busy all the time with links into the curriculum. It is also beneficial to involve regular school users, including involving local clubs, and encourage people to share resources. Another practical step is to get the right people involved eg a local authority person and an operational person to run the Hub who are determined, focussed, enthusiastic and use initiative. Also having the clubs involved through a forum avoids club issues, by speaking to people from the start they feel involved. The aim is to build clubs through a code of conduct and an incentive package providing brilliant facilities and an excellent experience by offering flexibility in pricing eg free lets for offering training, helping with fundraising etc. Assisting the clubs with their development has also been important as this drives up standards and supports the philosophy of a quality experience, celebrating success and always seeking to improve. Campbell also recommended considering who to involve and when; involving the landlords and if necessary employ staff eg receptionists.

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Alison Johnstone apologised for her lateness which was due to an over-running item business in the Chamber and thanked Campbell Hornell for an excellent presentation. Alison introduced the Panel and invited Richard Jennings to provide an introduction to the Group.

**Richard Jennings:** is from East Lothian Council and is responsible for assets and asset planning (which includes the school estate and heads of planning) and is a former Head of Education.

Alison then opened the floor to discussion.

Jim Fleeting (SFA) thanked everyone for great presentations and agreed that football clubs were undergoing a cultural change due to the opportunities of quality and size of facilities, but more information is needed. Patricia informed everyone that the information on quality, condition, size and surface of facilities is available and the report will be shared in due course.

Julie Mason (University of West Scotland) noted that there were challenges with access to facilities at universities and colleges during exam times meaning training has to be cancelled for 6/8 weeks. Campbell Hornell said they cancelled lets about 3 times a year but their sports hall was not also an exam hall but this was dealt with on a case by case basis. Would it be possible or financially viable to clear a sports hall? This had to be assessed on a case by case basis. Richard informed the floor that developing and designing schools when linked to new housing means high investment; it is necessary to use a holistic approach to get the bigger picture. Richard pointed to the cross council planning of facilities to release and unlock potential and opportunities. Richard then posed the question as to whether anyone has worked out the effort required to clear an exam hall to enable sporting opportunities for evening lets – surely it is worth the effort?

Sarah Pryde Smith (Scottish Swimming) asked if there is to be a follow up report to collect data to give back to local authorities to give them a starting point? Patricia responded noting that **sportscotland** is using the information to support local authorities on a one-to-one basis to better understand and interpret this information. Sarah reiterated Scottish Swimming's guidance which is available on usage and opportunities for collaborative working.

Freda Hutchison (Netball Scotland) noted that as a former teacher of PE in a PPP school with very limited facilities, she felt there was too much emphasis on outdoor facilities when the Scottish weather is what it is and a lot of schools do not have sports halls. This is likely to impact on students and turn them off sport if they are pushed outdoors during exam times. Barry stated that school design is about making difficult choices; the school has to function as a school first and foremost, but make the most of out of hours and be innovative with space – local decision making is the priority. Sport is one factor, one use of the facility.

Liza Linton (RYA Scotland) asked if the information from **sportscotland's** research was to be publically available? Patricia said it was only fair to give it to the local authorities first, as it is their information, and that she would circulate a link to the report. Richard agreed that partnership working is the priority.

Ian McLaughlin (Youth Scotland) asked about the number of community youth groups in schools. Campbell Hornell replied that there were none formally to date but maybe in the future, most youth activities take place elsewhere in the area but he will take the message away. Ian also mentioned cost challenges to youth groups. Campbell said he had agreed reduced access rates for the pipe band because they participated in a range of events. Ian suggested looking at the bigger picture as to what there was out there for youth groups to access.

Colin Rennie (Fields in Trust) asked if there was a breakdown of outside facilities usage between PPP and non PPP schools. Barry replied that local authorities set costs and subsidies vary. PPP and PFI schools have very different regimes; PPP schools are less flexible and to change this would be expensive. Local authorities have discretion over access regardless but that there is a desire for extensive facilities use by local authorities. Richard reinforced that the PPP issue needs to be sorted now – this has been going on for 30 years. We need to change the contracts so that they are at a flat rate charge for facility opening at a weekend, rather than a charge per group or charging for all groups. We also need to explain the amount required to cover the actual costs to help to find a solution. Richard recommended asking the PPP contractor how we can help them to grow their business – either collectively across Scotland or in a specific area. Perhaps a collective task force

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would be in a position to develop this local authority by local authority? Alison agreed that we need to find a practical solution.

David McColgan (SCVO) raised the matter of the challenge between commercial interests and those of the community. Campbell admitted he had turned down business because it had not been right for the school.

Dougi Bryce (Judo Scotland) asked if there were any top tips for clubs regarding how to better access the school estate? Campbell suggested offering something back (eg supporting after school clubs) leading to benefits for both the school and the club. The facilities are there - be persistent and you will find something, also make people aware of what you are looking for; if you want x, offer y in return. Barry agreed that persistence is key – although this is not as easy as it should be. Barry asked how local authorities can feedback information to clubs about the facilities that are available? Patricia suggested having conversations about access and raising issues without getting bogged down in affordability – start the conversation.

Andy Herd (Community Schools Fife) pointed out the need for sports people to be involved in design of schools - the necessity to do things with communities not to communities. 493 groups use community schools in Fife which operates a concession policy.; the income generated was £1.7million in 2012-13. In addition to this, they have 400 tutor contracts providing classes, coaching and training opportunities.

Alison questioned the expertise that is available to schools when designing facilities. Alan Miller (**sportscotland**) provided an update on the positive progress being made in partnership with the Scottish Futures Trust for the facilities team at **sportscotland** to provide this already held expertise; this is in addition to the **sportscotland** guidance which is already available.

Alison Johnstone MSP thanked each of the speakers again and all for attending, acknowledging that it was one of the best attended Cross Party Groups in the Parliament with the best discussion. She acknowledged the need to have more discussions and a joint approach.

**The date of next Cross Party Group on Sport meeting is 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 where the programme will discuss National Sports Facilities, principally the National Performance Centre.**

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