



## **SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, HEALTH & SPORT COMMITTEE**

### **VOCAL RESPONSE TO REPORT ON INQUIRY INTO SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SPORT MARCH 2013**

#### **Summary of Recommendations**

1. The Committee was surprised at the lack of detailed information on the scale and skillset of the volunteer “workforce”. Given the emphasis placed on the legacy of Glasgow 2014 and its potential for bolstering participation, a stronger sense of “where we are” might be expected. The Committee therefore recommends that sportscotland, in conjunction with the relevant sporting associations, co-ordinate an examination of capacity as a matter of urgency
2. The Committee was concerned that very few governing bodies have developed volunteer strategies. Strategies are not a panacea, but given a recurring plea for volunteers to be better supported, the Committee recommends renewed encouragement from the national sporting agencies for development of robust strategies by all governing bodies – to fully address and provide a lead on crucial matters such as recruitment and retention.
3. The Committee encourages the Scottish Government and all those in the sporting sector and beyond to show leadership by supporting volunteers in sport more actively and by promoting a culture of volunteerism.
4. To this end, the Committee requests that the Minister for Sport and Commonwealth Games provide an update, with input from sportscotland and other key players, on all aspects of volunteering in sport before the Parliament moves into summer recess in 2013. The Committee is particularly interested in qualified coaches and the state of readiness for the increase in demand for club sport that it is hoped will materialise on the back of Glasgow 2014.

#### ***VOCAL Response recommendations 1 – 4***

*VOCAL recognises the critical importance of volunteers in supporting community sport and welcomes any proposals to develop and support this area of work.*

*Following the experience of the Olympics in 2012 it is clear that the capacity of clubs to cope with any upsurge in demand created by Glasgow 2014 is an important consideration. Growing the capacity of local clubs and supporting a culture of volunteering is an important aspect of work already supported by many local authorities. A number of Councils already have volunteering strategies and specific club development strategies or accreditation schemes which help to support community sport and this should be encouraged.*

*VOCAL supports the new investment stream into developing the regional infrastructure for sport and related club development.*

5. The Committee asks to be kept informed of sportscotland's initiative with local authorities to develop a national framework to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of local sports clubs.

6. The Committee issues a plea on behalf of those clubs outwith the Community Sports Hub system that they are not forgotten or lose out on funding or other support.

#### ***VOCAL Response recommendations 5 & 6***

*VOCAL recognises the need for better information about sports clubs and will continue to work with **sportscotland** on a national framework to assist with this. VOCAL also welcomes the recognition of clubs out with the Community Sports Hubs system.*

7. The Committee reiterates a recommendation in its predecessor's 2009 *Pathways into Sport and Physical Activity* report that local authorities produce local sports strategies, including implementation plans, and that those with existing strategies ensure that theirs are up to date and implemented.

#### ***VOCAL Response recommendations 7***

*VOCAL notes this recommendation and will continue to work with **sportscotland** to encourage the development and review of local sports strategies.*

8. The Committee took evidence on the Cashback for Communities programme but wished to learn more about the correlation between where money is recovered from and where resources are deployed. The Committee therefore awaits the report of Inspiring Scotland's evaluation of the programme with interest.

#### ***VOCAL Response recommendations 8***

*VOCAL supports a further evaluation into the impact of the Cashback for Communities Scheme. VOCAL recognises the potential contribution of sport to assist in delivering wider social policy objectives such as tackling anti social behaviour, drugs or alcohol issues.*

9. Evidence the Committee heard highlighted a range of barriers to greater use of school-based facilities – from contractual difficulties to cost issues. The Committee will await the findings of sportscotland’s audit of current access, expected next spring, and consider then what bearing this may have on plans for opening up the school estate.

### ***VOCAL Response recommendations 9***

*VOCAL supports the work **sportscotland** has commissioned by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University into sports facilities provided as part of the school estate. We await the outcome of this work and hope that any recommendations can assist local authorities in improving existing access arrangements.*

10. The Committee notes that local authorities play a crucial role in the provision and running of facilities. It is hoped that, as part of their sporting strategy, they maintain an awareness of what assets are at their disposal and that this would cover the standard and condition of facilities.

11. The Committee commends the practice of “sweating assets” and encourages local authorities and others to make it a cornerstone of their approach to sporting facilities

12. It would also be of benefit to the public, and help to encourage participation, if local authorities could provide clear and consistent information on charging and opening hours for all facilities in their area. Sportscotland might wish to consider this further in light of its audit of the school estate.

### ***VOCAL Response recommendations 10 -12***

*VOCAL supports the development of local sports facility strategies for both indoor and outdoor sports. These should be updated on a regular basis and linked to local development plans to ensure that future planning for sports facilities is considered alongside any projected growth in demand created by new housing and requirements for additional educational provision and as part of the overall planning of the local authority, and wider public estate.*

*At a local level a critical issue facing local authorities is the cost of maintaining the existing estate and VOCAL recognises the need to take a strategic approach to current and future provision and to consider where appropriate the rationalisation of facilities. The Committee are asked to note the potential difficulties faced by local authorities when the closure of facilities is proposed.*

*The desire for communities to take on an increased responsibility to own and/or operate public ‘assets’ is also recognised by VOCAL however there needs to be an adequate level of support to those communities to ensure success, coupled with continued wider public access.*

*Local authorities and Leisure Trusts already participate in an annual review of charges which is published by **sportscotland** and information on pricing and*

*facility opening hours is made available to the public in a number of different ways including web sites and written publications.*

13. Further to the Equality Network and Scottish Transgender Alliance in the *Out for Sport* report, the Committee seeks further information from the Scottish Government and sport's national agencies and governing bodies on what steps are being taken to challenge and eradicate homophobia and transphobia in sport.

14. The Committee also seeks further information from the Scottish Government regarding how Community Sports Hubs are sharing best practice in the area of equal opportunities.

***VOCAL Response recommendations 13 & 14***

*VOCAL supports equality in all aspects of aspects of community sport.*

15. Swimming is a key component of “physical literacy” but the Committee was concerned to learn that 25% of children leave primary school unable to swim. The figure is likely to be even higher in deprived areas. The Committee welcomes the views of Save the Children Scotland and Scottish Swimming (who relayed the statistic), the Active Schools Network and the Scottish Government on what can be done to remedy the situation.

***VOCAL Response recommendation 15***

*VOCAL welcomes the additional Scottish Government investment in the Swimming Top Up (STU) programme to support the improved delivery of swimming lessons for primary school children across Scotland. Local Authorities and Leisure Trusts work closely with Scottish Swimming on the delivery of this programme.*

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