

Date : 26 February 2003
Time : 9:00 – 12-30
Venue: Committee Room 1

AGENDA ITEM 4 – POLICY REVIEW OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE - “FIRST DRAFT” VERSION OF DRAFT COMMITTEE REPORT

At its last meeting on 5th February the Committee discussed the draft outline structure for the report and made a number of comments which have been incorporated into the attached “1st draft” version of the draft committee report.

For most of the priority areas in the report possible recommendations have been included for Members’ consideration; but for a number of other areas suggestions have not been included at this stage and committee members are invited to indicate what recommendations they might wish to include on those points.

Sections Three and Four of the report has not yet been drafted. Members’ views are invited as to whether a section on “roles and responsibilities” is required.

In the light of Members’ comments the draft will be expanded and a “2nd draft” version produced for consideration at the 12th March meeting. That version will be bilingual. A slot for a plenary debate on the report has been scheduled for 1st April, requiring the report to be tabled by Tuesday 25th March.

MEMBERS’ RESEARCH AND COMMITTEE SERVICES

CULTURE COMMITTEE

**POLICY REVIEW OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND
PHYSICAL EXERCISE**

1st DRAFT

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[drafting note – for consideration]

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[drafting note – to follow]

CULTURE COMMITTEE : POLICY REVIEW OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE

SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 THE REVIEW

1.1.1 The Culture Committee began its review of participation in sport in July. The terms of reference for the review were:

To review the levels of participation in sport in Wales and how they might be increased, looking in particular at:

Barriers to Access

- The obstacles which result in lower levels of participation in sport in Wales than other comparable countries
- Opportunities for women and girls, including in the voluntary sector
- Opportunities for older people, disabled people, and ethnic minority groups

Infrastructure and Facilities

- The role of local authorities, taking account in particular of the Audit Commission report “Sport and Recreation: Learning from audit, inspection and research”
- The impact of major events on participation levels. Provision for major sporting events in Wales, including lessons to be learned from the 2002 Commonwealth Games

Elite Sports

- The impact of elite sports on participation levels. Whether the process of identifying, developing and sustaining elite athletes in individual and team sports can be improved.

1.1.2 As the review developed the Committee agreed that its focus should not be limited to participation in sport but include other relevant forms of physical exercise (such as dance).

1.1.3 During the course of review the Committee invited written submissions on the following questions:

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1. What are the barriers to participation in sport for the following groups: women and girls; young people; ethnic minorities; disabled people; older people; socially disadvantaged groups?
2. How can access to sports, and participation levels, be improved generally, and for these groups?
3. What contribution do volunteers make to improving participation levels? What can be done to promote and support the role of volunteers?
4. What impact do the following have on participation levels: infrastructure and facilities; major events; elite sports?

1.1.4 A summary of the written responses is at annex [?]. The Committee received oral presentations from the organisations and individuals listed in annex [?]. The Committee also consulted on the review via the Assembly's regional committees. Extracts from the minutes of the regional committee meetings are at annex [?]. A copy of the position statement on sport in Wales provided by the Assembly Minister is at annex [?].

1.1.5 During the course of the review we learned of the following recent developments, having a bearing on the subject area, which were announced or ongoing while the review was in progress:-

- The Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services consulted on the Wellbeing in Wales strategy; the Health Active Lifestyles Action Plan; and the Strategy for Older People (which was subsequently launched);
- The Cabinet Office published their sports strategy "Game Plan";
- The quinquennial review of the Sports Council for Wales was in progress; and
- The Assembly Minister for Culture and Sport has secured research assistance from the University of Glamorgan to assist her officials in developing a sports strategy for the Welsh Assembly Government.

1.2 KEY THEMES

1.2.1 A number of key themes quickly emerged from the review:-

Benefits

- The serious risks to people's health of inactivity / the important health benefits of regular physical activity;
- The potential social benefits of sports participation (crime reduction, social inclusion, educational attainment) when part of a package of other social measures.

Participation rates

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- The lower levels of regular participation in sport and physical activity in Wales than in the UK and compared to other countries;
- The gap between male and female participation in sport and physical activity;
- The drop-off in sports participation and physical activity after leaving school and continued decline with age.

Barriers

- The wide range of factors affecting sports participation.

Structures

- The importance of access to appropriate facilities and of provision suited to specific groups' needs;
- The different sectors and groups involved in sports provision, including the private and voluntary sectors, and its links to other areas (health, education, local government and even transport);
- The number of initiatives (as noted above) already in place or planned to encourage sports participation and physical activity.

The Benefits

1.2.2 There is firm evidence of the health benefits of sport and physical activity. The Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan indicates that a more active population would experience significantly lower rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease and type two diabetes, as well as reductions in the incidence of some cancers, greater mobility and fewer injuries associated with ageing in the elderly and fewer mental health problems. Evidence suggests that the potential health benefits in adults can be achieved through a total of 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity (brisk walking, cycling, swimming, dancing) at least five days per week. For children and young people up to the age of 18 the recommended rates are 60 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most days. The evidence suggests that greater health benefits arise from encouraging non-active people to take up exercise than from active people taking more strenuous exercise.

1.2.3 There are some indications that there are social benefits of sport in terms of providing an alternative to anti-social behaviour for disengaged young people. However, the Cabinet Office strategy "Game Plan" reports that the evidence seems to suggest that sport can be a positive element within a package of social measures but will not necessarily, by itself, deliver social benefits such as crime reduction and social inclusion.

Participation Levels

1.2.4 Various surveys indicate that both sports participation and physical activity levels are:-

- below the recommended levels to promote good health for 70% of adults;
- lower in Wales than in the rest of the UK and than in other countries;

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- lower among women than men;
- lower among certain ethnic minority groups (asian women);
- lower among socially disadvantaged groups than among economically advantaged groups;
- and decrease with age.

Sports participation (any activity other than walking in previous month)

	Male	Female	All
Wales	46%	31%	38%
GB	54%	39%	46%
<i>[Add int comparator]</i>			

30 minutes of moderate activity five times per week

	Male	Female	All
Wales	36%	19%	28%
England	37%	25%	31%
Australia	58%	56%	57%

[Drafting note – tables to be added for other groups]

[Insert Figure 1.9: Ethnic Minority Participation]

[Insert Figure 1.8: socio-economic group]

[insert table comparing participation rates for various age groups: Wales, Scotland, Australia]

1.2.5 Higher participation levels in other countries can be attributed to cultural and social factors (for example sports activities being the main leisure activity in Finland) but also to government intervention (the successful “Fit for Life” campaign in Finland aimed at improving participation levels among older groups -discussed in more detail later in the report).

Barriers

1.2.6 A number of barriers were mentioned repeatedly by different organisations and individuals. They can be divided into barriers relating to lack of opportunities (“supply side”) and barriers relating to lack of motivation (“demand side”).

Motivational barriers

- sport not seen as a priority, or even suitable, for certain groups;
- lack of role models;
- lack of supportive family environment;

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- negative experiences of sport when young;
- lack of prowess in competitive games leading to low confidence/enthusiasm;
- time constraints, especially for women with work and family responsibilities, and those required to work long hours;
- concerns about personal safety travelling to facilities.

Opportunities

- facilities - lack of local facilities (e.g. netball courts);
- personnel - coaches and volunteers;
- cost of facilities for some groups;
- lack of transport to facilities in rural areas.

Structures

Providers

1.2.7 The Committee heard from a range of sectors and organisations involved in sports provision: the Sports Council for Wales, sport governing bodies, local authorities, the private sector and voluntary bodies. These bodies have differing remits and priorities and accordingly have a greater or lesser interest and involvement in increasing mass participation in sport. This represents a fairly complex picture and the levers for government intervention in this field – particularly as local authorities are not under a statutory duty to provide sports facilities - are not necessarily either direct or straightforward therefore. However, most of the organisations we heard from were united by enthusiasm and commitment, although a number expressed funding concerns.

Funding

[1.2.8 *drafting note – consider scope to add text on current funding position*]

Current Initiatives

1.2.9 During the course of our review we of course heard about initiatives falling within the Assembly Minister for Culture and Sports' portfolio relevant to increasing participation - for example the Sports Council for Wales' Dragonsports, Girls First, and Disability Sports Cymru programmes. But we also heard about initiatives within other Ministers' portfolios which are also of relevance to participation in sport and physical exercise:

- Physical Education and School Sports Task Force report
- Welsh Network of Healthy Schools
- Safe Routes to School Initiative
- Walking and Cycling Strategy
- Wellbeing in Wales
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles Action Plan

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- The Strategy for Older People in Wales

A number of these strategies cross-refer to each other.

1.2.10 It is important that the Assembly adopts a holistic approach to encouraging our overly sedentary population to be more active. But with this plethora of initiatives, there is a risk of initiative overload: confusion, duplication, and - dare we say it - more documents being produced than there are impacts being achieved. *We recommend that a single minister takes lead responsibility for co-ordinating, monitoring, and reporting on their ministerial colleagues' progress with all the initiatives in place to increase participation rates in sport and physical activity.* It may be that the best vehicle for this would be the Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan and that the Minister for Culture and Sport's forthcoming sports strategy should be brought within the Action Plan, which is currently being updated in the light of the consultation exercise. However this is a matter for the Assembly First Minister to consider.

1.3 OUR APPROACH

1.3.1 Given the range of existing initiatives which are already in hand, this report seeks to:

- bring together and build on the activities already underway or planned in the sports, health, and education sectors;
- identify what the Committee considers the priorities to be;
- endorse those existing activities which it supports; and
- identify any gaps/areas where the Committee considers further action is required.

1.3.2 A summary of our recommendations is at annex ?.

SECTION TWO - AREAS FOR ACTION

2.1 PRIORITIES

2.1.1 We understand that the Assembly Minister for Culture and Sport is currently developing a sports strategy for the Welsh Assembly Government and that this will be launched in early April. *We recommend that the strategy should focus on increasing participation in sports and physical activity and cover the following priority areas:*

- i. Scope - the approach should focus on the broader issue of encouraging all forms of physical activity, not just competitive sports.
- ii. A strategic co-ordinated approach – ensuring effective links between sports, health, local government, education and transport policies, and with the private and voluntary sectors.
- iii. Children and young people – ensuring that children have experiences of sport and physical exercise which are high quality, varied and fun and teach them the skills they need to participate in a range of sports.
- iv. Tackling the drop-off in participation rates amongst adolescents and after leaving school.
- v. Improving sport and physical exercise participation rates amongst girls and women.
- vi. Encouraging increased activity levels among more mature age groups, for whom there will be particular health benefits.
- vii. Identifying and tackling barriers to participation for those ethnic minority groups for whom participation rates are particularly low.
- viii. Continuing support for initiatives to assist disabled people to participate in sport.
- ix. Improving access to sports and activity levels amongst socially disadvantaged groups, for whom there will be greater potential health benefits than for more advantaged groups.
- x. Research and evaluation – ensuring that reliable research and evaluation mechanisms are in place. Monitoring of participation rates should include participation at the recommended level of 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 times a week as well as the current monitoring of sports participation on a monthly basis.

2.1.2 The following paragraphs set out our recommendations in relation to specific target groups. Cross-cutting issues which affect participation rates for a number of the target groups are discussed at the end of this chapter.

2.2 INCREASING THE APPEAL OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE

2.2.1 If people do not wish to get involved in sport and physical exercise, the quality of the sports facilities across Wales will be irrelevant. The high numbers of people who join private sector health clubs in a rush of New Year good intentions and then use the facilities on only a handful of occasions illustrates this point. It is important therefore to look at what motivates people to want to participate in sport and physical exercise, what deters them, and what mechanisms might be available successfully to encourage people to participate more.

2.2.2 While it would be useful for people to understand the health benefits of regular exercise, enjoyment is likely to be more of a motivating factor for many people. Conversely, negative experiences of PE in school and low fitness levels (perceived or real) can deter people from participating in sport in later life. Time constraints, travel difficulties, costs, and personal safety concerns repeatedly emerged as barriers to participation for a number of groups (women and girls, with time being a particular difficulty for women with family responsibilities; children and young people; older people; socially disadvantaged groups, for whom cost can be a particular issue).

[2.2.3 Counteracting the increasingly sedentary nature of our modern society is a challenging task. It will require: a sound understanding of what motivates and what deters people from taking exercise; evidence of which interventions work and which do not; sustained and co-ordinated effort at national and local level, involving a wide range of organisations; an effective series of information and marketing campaigns; and sound evaluation arrangements.]

2.2.4 Action to increase general activity levels in society – by encouraging people to walk instead of drive and take the stairs instead of the lift – will be of benefit in itself by improving general fitness levels in the population but also could potentially contribute to increased participation in sport and formal exercise by boosting individuals' confidence in their fitness levels.

2.2.5 To provide the groundwork for increased participation among adults, action to encourage young people to increase their general activity levels – for example the safe routes to school initiative - and to ensure that they leave school with a view of sport and exercise as an enjoyable and appealing leisure activity which they wish to keep up in later life rather than as something to be avoided once they have the freedom of choice to do so will be key.

2.2.6 To compete with the various time and financial pressures which face individuals in our modern society, sports facilities and programmes need to be

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accessible at times and in locations which are convenient and at a price people can afford.

2.2.7 Local programmes to increase participation in sport and exercise will need to:

- Emphasise the social and fun aspects of participation;
- Offer a variety of activities to cater for a wide range of tastes;
- Cater for a range of ability levels so that individuals can participate at a level which suits them;
- Provide particular support and encouragement to those who lack confidence in their fitness level and physical abilities;
- Offer activities at times which suit participants' needs.

[2.2.8 Consideration could be given to involving private sector providers (who have an interest in people becoming more interested in sport and exercise) in information and marketing campaigns.]

2.3 TARGET GROUP - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

2.3.1 The Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan states that the recommended activity level for children up to 18 years is 60 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most days. Given the pressures on curriculum time in schools and constraints in relation to facilities and teaching resources, it is unrealistic to expect these activity levels to be delivered entirely through curriculum time. A holistic approach is needed - covering travel to and from school; curriculum time; extra-curricular activities; community opportunities for young people; and family time.

2.3.2 The Committee recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government places a high priority on increasing participation levels among children and young people. Sports Council for Wales' figures indicate that [?] of boys and [?] of girls participate in sport and exercise at least once a month. *[insert figures] [We recommend that a target of ? % should be set.]* We are concerned that participation on a monthly basis is inadequate to promote good health and that information on more frequent participation rates are also needed. While monthly participation rates should continue to be collected so that comparisons can be made between current and future participation rates, *we recommend that the SCW also collects more meaningful information on participation rates – linked to the recommended activity rates for children and adults.*

Sport and Exercise in Schools

2.3.3 The PE and School Sports Task Force was established in May 2000 and reported its recommendations in June 2001. The Assembly Education Minister accepted the six headline recommendations, and asked the Sports Council for Wales to take the lead on action in relation to curriculum development centres, initial teacher training, and continuing professional

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development. However some of the specific recommendations have not yet been implemented. The Committee welcomes the findings of the PE and School Sports Task Force and welcomes the progress made to date. However, given the time and the expertise which went into the Task Force report we believe that, where specific recommendations (for example the proposal that PE be made a core subject within the National Curriculum) are not to be implemented, the reasons for this should be made clear to Assembly Members. *We recommend that the successor to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee undertakes a scrutiny session on the implementation of the PE and School Sports Task Force report to review progress and clarify why certain recommendations will not be implemented.*

2.3.4 Having listened to the views of a range of organisations during our review, we believe that there are a number of issues relating to sport and exercise in schools which require particular attention: -

2.3.5 **Facilities** We are concerned that in many schools the sports facilities are inadequate: dual use of sports halls and gymnasias for other school activities limits the time available for, and the number of children who can participate in, sport; facilities which are in poor condition are also a problem. Unpleasant changing rooms can be off-putting to those who already have low motivation levels. New Opportunities Fund grants of £48 million are available to local authorities in Wales for improvements to facilities for PE and school sports, with a requirement that there should also be community benefits. We welcome this investment in school facilities. It is important that the investment leads to increased participation rates by all pupils, not just to an improved experience for those who are already highly motivated to participate. *We recommend that the Assembly Minister seeks to ensure that evaluation mechanisms are built into the NOF programme to measure its impact on participation rate in the schools and areas affected. We recommend that the successor to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee reviews the success of the programme.*

2.3.6 **Time** The PE and Schools Sports Task Force recommended that schools allocate 2 hours of curriculum time for PE each week for all pupils at all key stages. Although no specific time allocations are prescribed for any curriculum subject, the Assembly Education Minister has given her support to this recommendation. We also support this recommendation and recognise the difficulties that can face schools in making best use of the time available for PE - for example, lack of facilities and dual use of facilities can mean time is lost on travel and preparation of equipment. *[We recommend that support is provided to schools and headteachers on making best use of curriculum time for PE.]*

2.3.7 **Choice** A number of organisation argued that the choice of sports activities available to pupils is too limited, tends to be conservative and traditional, and can be off-putting to those (particularly girls) who are less likely to enjoy competitive team games. We heard that Golf Development Wales has developed a golf game suitable for use in primary schools, together with training material for teachers. We welcome this initiative [and

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were reassured to hear that they would not use their funds to work with golf clubs which were unwilling to accept young players]. *We would like the Sports Council for Wales to extend the range of its Dragon Sports initiative by working with other sports bodies to explore whether other sports which are not traditionally available in schools could be adapted for school use. We also recommend that the work which the SCW has in hand following the PE and School Sports Task Force report on Curriculum Development Centres, initial teacher training and continuing professional development also focuses on how the range of activities on offer in schools can be broadened.*

2.3.8 Extending Opportunity A number of respondents expressed a view that school sports tended to be targeted at the most able pupils and that efforts should be made to ensure that pupils of all ability levels are encouraged to participate. *[We recommend that the Sports Council for Wales investigates the factors which discourage less able youngsters from participating and how these could be overcome.]* Issues to consider might include:-

- the transition from primary to secondary schools;
- the opportunities available to pupils who played in their primary school teams but are not selected for secondary school teams;
- extending the Dragon Sports initiative to secondary schools;
- the scope to build on the Code of Practice for Out of School Hours Learning recently produced by Education Extra, in order to increase extra-curricular sports and exercise activities.

2.3.9 Support for Teachers Many of the proposals discussed above will require the support and enthusiasm of teachers to succeed. We are conscious of the many demands placed on teachers and we welcome the work in hand to improve initial teacher training and continuing professional development in relation to PE and school sport. *[We recommend that the Sports Council for Wales uses the experience gained in its Dragon Sports initiative to identify what additional support teachers require and reports to the Assembly Minister with its advice].*

Opportunities for Young People in the Community

2.3.10 School-based activities must not be the only opportunity for children and young people to participate in sport. It is important that young people consider sport and exercise an integral part of their personal lives and not as something which is restricted to the school day. A number of respondents expressed concern at the lack of 'exit routes' for school leavers to community participation in sport.

2.3.11 [Recommendations.....???

2.3.12 Support for family sports Some organisations suggested that there can be a lack of family support for some children to participate in sport. In contrast we heard that, in Finland, sport is the main leisure activity for children

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who take part in sport: with their families; through sports clubs run by volunteers, who are mainly parents; and in after school clubs. Increased family involvement in sport and exercise would benefit parents as well as children. *[We recommend that actions to encourage family participation in sport should be a key element of the work to increase children and young people's participation.]*

2.4 TARGET GROUP - WOMEN AND GIRLS

2.4.1 The rates of participation in and exercise are lower for women and girls in Wales than they are for men. While this pattern is repeated across the UK and in a number of other countries, it is not inevitable: in Finland participation rates are higher for women than for men.

2.4.2 *We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government places a high priority in its sports strategy and its healthy active lifestyles action plan on bridging the gap between men and women by increasing women's participation rates. [We recommend a target of [?%] participating at least once a month and [?%] participating the recommended 5 times a week within 5? 10? years].*

2.4.3 Many of the barriers to participation which affect other groups in society also apply to women (access to facilities, transport, costs) while some barriers are of particular relevance to women (child care, time constraints, preconceptions about women and sport).

Cultural Factors

2.4.4 **Media Image and Role Models** A number of respondents commented that sport in Wales is perceived to be male dominated and that there is minimal media coverage of women's sports and a lack of positive role models for women in sport. It was felt that the problem of women's sports and women in sport being 'invisible' even extended to the home where it was suggested that girls often receive less family support in pursuing sporting activities than boys.

2.4.5 It would help if local initiatives to increase girls' participation in sport did not find themselves swimming against the tide of society and media images of women and peer group pressure. While media representation of women and sport is not within the control of the Assembly, we believe it is an issue which should be addressed. It is incumbent upon organisations which receive public funding to ensure that the services provided are representative of, and fair to, all groups in society. *We recommend that the Sports Minister work with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Sports Council for Wales, DCMS and the broadcasters to improve the media coverage of women's sports and the profile of female athletes. We also recommend that consideration be given to*

the role that publications aimed at girls and young women could play in presenting positive images of women's sports.

Increasing Opportunities for Women

2.4.6 Facilities Concerns were expressed to us that there are fewer facilities for traditional women's sports in Wales than for traditional men's team games. It was argued that rugby, football and cricket pitches are in plentiful supply in local communities, whereas hockey pitches and netball courts are less common, requiring players to travel. *We recommend that SCW works with local authorities and women's sports associations to identify areas where gaps exist in the facilities available for women's sports and produces a costed action plan to remedy this situation, for consideration by the Assembly Sports Minister.*

2.4.7 In addition to the availability of facilities, there is also the question of the quality of facilities and their attractiveness to women. Respondents identified the following factors which affect women's willingness to use sports and leisure centres:

- crèche facilities;
- well lit and signposted secure carparks with CCTV;
- privacy - individual cubicles and showers.

2.4.8 [The Sports Council for Wales has issued guidance on quality standards at leisure centres and requires local authorities applying for lottery funds to upgrade their leisure facilities to specify how the improvements will address the needs and concerns of various target groups - **check this with SCW.**] *We recommend that SCW continue to work with local authorities to improve the appeal of sports facilities to women and other groups with particular needs.*

2.4.9 Structures We also received views that the structures in place for organised women's sports are limited and the exit routes from school sports to community sports are not as strong as for traditional male sports. [Recommendation - ??????????]

2.4.10 Choice We heard evidence that women and girls are less likely to enjoy competitive team games than boys and men, and that women are more likely to choose dance and fitness activities. One respondent drew attention to the significant increases in participation in aerobics in recent decades and pointed out that by targeting women the sport had attracted women to participate who would be deterred by mixed gender sports. We heard from the Football Association for Wales that they have targets for the expansion of girls' football: to increase the number of players from 600 to 4000 and create 25 new leagues and 300 new teams by 2007. We welcome this new opportunity for girls to participate in traditional male sports. However, we are also anxious that resources should be directed to enable women and girls who find such sports unappealing to participate more by having a choice of more varied activities. We welcome the Sports Council for Wales' Girls First

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initiative, which is directed as girls in secondary schools and is still in its early stages. *We recommend that the Assembly Sports Minister increases funding for the programme to enable it to be expanded. We have recommended earlier that the Dragon Sports initiative should broaden its scope to cover more non-traditional sports; in doing so it should endeavour to include sports and activities which are more likely to appeal to girls.*

2.4.11 Time A number of consultation responses drew attention to the time pressures faced by many women with family responsibilities and pointed out that activities need to be available in short chunks and at a convenient time. [recommendation - ????]

2.4.12 Given the time constraints faced by women, travelling to and from leisure centres to participate in sport may be unrealistic, and facilities in the workplace may be a more practical option. *We recommend that the Assembly Minister for Culture and Sport examines the scope to encourage employers to provide fitness opportunities in the workplace.*

[**Safety concerns** - *dealt with sufficiently under facilities?*]

2.5 TARGET GROUP - OLDER PEOPLE

2.5.1 Participation rates decline with age while exercise helps to prevent conditions associated with middle and older age - cardio-vascular disease, type 2 diabetes etc. *In the view of the health benefits for this group, we recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government place a high priority on increasing participation rates among older people.*

2.5.2 During the review we were particularly interested to hear that in Finland the government succeeded in tackling low participation rates among older people via a targeted campaign "Fit for Life". The programme was launched in 1994 and ran for 5 years. It targeted people aged 40-60 who did not exercise three times per week. The goal was for 150,000 people in the target group to begin taking regular exercise by the year 2000. The programme consisted of an information campaign (picked up by newspapers and broadcasters) and local and regional projects. Local authorities, health bodies, employers, residents associations and sports clubs were all involved. During the programme participation rates for the age group targeted increased from 33% in 1994 to 46% in 1999. The programme has been re-launched from 2000-2004 and the target group extended to include people over 60. *We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government considers incorporating Finland's "Fit for Life" model into its Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan.*

2.6 TARGET GROUP - ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES

2.6.1 Participation rates among people from ethnic minorities and in particular within certain groups, for example Asian women. Consultation response identified a range of barriers to participation:-

- cultural issues (do not associate with the sport) and traditional costumes;
- home/family demands (women);
- work/study demands (men);
- lack of role models/ethnic minority coaches;
- fear of abuse/being unwelcome;
- lack of female only classes and privacy needs.

2.6.2 Sport England and the Commission for Racial Equality have together launched an initiative "Sporting Equals" to promote racial equality in sport throughout England. The initiative includes:

- Racial Equality Charter for Sport to which [64] organisations are signatories;
- a racial equality standard for sport. Twenty organisations have achieved the preliminary level of the standard; and
- a series of fact-sheets on positive publicity images, working with ethnic minority communities etc.

2.6.3 *We recommend that the Sports Council for Wales works with the Commission for Racial Equality, local authorities and sports associations to learn from and build on the Sporting Equals initiative and develop an action plan to address barriers to participation by people from ethnic minority communities in Wales.*

2.7 TARGET GROUP - DISABLED PEOPLE

2.7.1 The Assembly is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all people, and this includes opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport and physical exercise. The high profile recent successes of our disabled athletes both help to counteract ignorance and stereotyping and provide inspiring role models for young disabled people. During our review we were impressed by the presentation we received on the work of the Federation of Sports Associations for the Disabled (FSAD). *We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government/SCW continues to provide funding and support for the work of the FSAD and works with local authorities to remove the barriers to participation by disabled people. [other recommendations ??]*

2.8 TARGET GROUP - SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

2.8.1 Research suggests that rates of participation in sport and physical exercise are lower among socially disadvantaged groups than among higher income groups. As social disadvantage is also linked with poor nutrition

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patterns and higher levels of ill health, the benefits of exercise will be particularly important to this group. As noted previously there are indications that participation in sport can also have a positive impact on social inclusion as part of a package of other social measures, although firm evidence of the impact of sport participation alone on, for example, crime reduction [is not available]. *[check]*

2.8.2 Consultation responses identified the following barriers to participation by socially disadvantaged groups:

- Lack of awareness of facilities/opportunities available;
- Lack of role models/parental interest; peer pressure;
- Perceived attitudes of clubs and staff as unwelcoming;
- Low community involvement;
- Lack of facilities in local community;
- Transport costs;
- Day time access to dual use facilities.

2.8.3 The Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan includes socially disadvantaged people as a target group. The Communities First initiative is aimed at tackling the problems of severely disadvantaged areas. There will be benefits in linking activities proposed as part of the Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan and the Culture Minister's forthcoming sports strategy with Communities First. *We recommend that the Communities First initiative includes participation in sport as one of its priority areas.*

2.8.4 The cost of accessing facilities can also be an issue for socially excluded groups. The Audit Commission report noted that local authorities' pricing of leisure services and subsidy schemes were not always clearly linked to authorities strategic objectives and were often determined by historic patterns of provision. *[We recommend that authorities in Wales review their pricing schemes and consider the scope for subsidies for key target groups.]*

2.9 FACTORS AFFECTING ALL TARGET GROUPS

2.9.1 As indicated above, a number of the barriers to participation in sport and physical exercise were identified as affecting several or all of the different target groups. Where a particular barrier affects a specific group differently to others, this has been highlighted above. The following paragraphs discuss the barriers which are of general relevance to most groups.

Facilities

2.9.2 **Quantity** Many respondents cited access to suitable local facilities in their communities as a barrier to participation. The Sports Council for Wales has a database of sports and outdoor facilities in Wales (excluding private sector sport centres). When compared with Edinburgh University's "Facilities Planning Model", this indicates that the match between population

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and the number of facilities across Wales is generally good, albeit with an absence of local authority swimming pools in two or three locations. *[check]*

2.9.3 Quality The quality of facilities which exist is another matter. Due to the age of facilities, and insufficient maintenance at times of financial constraint, the quality of public sector facilities may often be unsatisfactory and off-putting to those whose motivation to participate in sport or exercise is not already strong. Factors which can deter individuals include: safety concerns – poor lighting, non-secure car parks; lack of privacy in changing rooms; lack of disabled equipment; The Sports Council for Wales has developed guidance for local authorities on [quality standards/upgrading facilities] which advises Funding for upgrading local authority sports facilities is available through the National Lottery, and the Sports Council has recently awarded £8million to local authorities in two allocation rounds. Projects include..... *[check info with SCW] [We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government/Sports Council for Wales continues to work with local authorities to improve the quality of local sports facilities.]*

2.9.4 Access While sports facilities exist in most areas, they may not be perceived to be accessible to some groups. Some respondents pointed out that where facilities are linked to schools, they may not be available for day-time use, which can exclude certain groups – for example mothers with young children and older people who may not wish to travel in the evenings. [Legislation {1993 Education Act – section on transfer of control agreements? *check*} allows for school governors to transfer the management of those school sports facilities to which there is community access to local authority control. This provision allows for a balance to be achieved between the needs of school pupils and those of other groups in the community. *We recommend.....??]*

2.9.5 Private sector providers There has been huge private sector investment in the health club sector in recent years. [For example about half a dozen private sector health clubs have been established in Cardiff within the last decade, excluding those attached to hotels.] The Audit Commission report highlights this issue and emphasises that local authorities should not see themselves as in competition with the private sector. It recommends that local authorities think carefully about their objectives in providing a sports and leisure service and targeting that service accordingly. For many people, of course, membership costs at private clubs will be prohibitive and local authority provision will be their only means of accessing sports facilities. *[We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government uses the findings of the Audit Commission report to work with local authorities in Wales to promote best practice in the provision of sport and leisure services. We recommend that our successor committee reviews the improvements made as a result of this best practice work.] [drafting note – include this here or under local authorities section below?]*

Community Infrastructure (Clubs And Associations)

2.9.6 A number of respondents commented on the lack of structures within the community to support participation in sport after leaving school. There were comments that the structures which do exist are stronger for traditional male sports than for women's sports. It was also suggested that sports associations' main focus tends to be on supporting the more talented players rather than broadening participation. It was felt that opportunities for casual, social participation in sport were limited. Funding was an issue raised by a number of organisations. [*recommendations? – eg need to simplify funding sources for voluntary organisations?*]

Human Resources

2.9.7 We heard of the crucial role that the voluntary sector plays in sport in Finland: while high numbers of adults in Finland undertake sport on an individual basis - for example through outdoor activities - sports activities for children and young people are provided through the voluntary sector sports clubs, which depend on high numbers of volunteers, particularly parents. We also heard from sports governing bodies and voluntary sector sports associations in Wales of the importance of volunteers and of a shortage of coaches. We were told that the factors which deter people from volunteering include: the increasing burden of legal responsibilities (health and safety, child protection legislation, personal liability insurance); time commitments; assistance with incidental costs (travel costs); and a need for effective training and support. [*We recommend that the Minister for Culture and Sport develops an action plan for increasing the number and improving the training of coaches and promoting volunteer activity in sports.*]

Transport and Personal Safety

2.9.8 Availability of transport, travel time, and personal safety concerns may all act as barriers to some groups in the community making use of the facilities which exist.

2.9.9 At the Mid Wales Regional Committee we heard that Powys County Council had trialled a mini-bus scheme during the school holidays. [*add text on scheme in Powys*]

2.10 OTHER ISSUES

2.10.1 The terms of reference for our review also included: the role of local authorities and the Audit Commission report; the impact of major events on participation levels; and the impact of elite sports on participation levels. This is discussed below.

The Role of Local Authorities

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2.10.2 Local authorities are not under a statutory duty to provide sport and recreation services. Moreover with the rapid changes to the sport and leisure sector, local authorities now find themselves offering facilities alongside highly competitive private sector providers. Despite the absence of a statutory duty on them and this private sector competition, local authorities are major providers of sport and recreation facilities, although the quality of facilities and services can vary. As noted above, the recent Audit Commission report on sport and recreation highlights the challenges now facing local authorities and explores how authorities can target their provision most effectively.

[recommendation???)

2.10.3 During our review we encountered little enthusiasm for placing a statutory duty on local authorities in relation to sport and recreation. It was felt that the establishment of minimum statutory standards would not necessarily improve the current position and that authorities should have the freedom to determine their own priorities in this arena. *[recommendations???)*

Mega and Major Events

2.10.4 The Cabinet Office report “Game Plan” defines mega and major events as follows:

Mega events The Summer Olympics, FIFA World Cup, UEFA European Championships, IAAF World Athletics championships and the Commonwealth Games. These events are awarded after competitive bidding to an international federation and tend to involve significant infrastructure investment.

Major events Events that are part of a regular international calendar for that sport - eg Wimbledon, cricket test series; one-off events that attract substantial interest in the UK and international TV rights – eg the rugby and cricket world cups; and showcase events – eg the World Disability Athletics Championships, the World Judo Championships.

2.10.5 Although we heard concern expressed during the review that a lack of role models and a low media profile for a particular sport can affect participation levels, it was felt that mega and major events do not, of themselves, generate long term increased participation in sport and that the economic/ tourism benefits will be more significant. “Game Plan” concludes that the benefits of hosting mega sporting events, whether economic, social or cultural are difficult to measure and the available evidence is limited. It recommends that mega events should be seen as an occasional celebration of success rather than as a means to achieving other government objectives, and that the cost implications of events should be understood from the start.

2.10.6 In view of the above concerns we were pleased to hear of the attempts by Golf Development Wales to maximise the benefits of the Ryder Cup by

using it as a springboard for increasing participation in golf and widening access.

2.10.7 The Commonwealth Games Council for Wales advised us that the only mega sporting event for which Wales could realistically bid is the Commonwealth Games but that to do so would require major financial investment both in infrastructure and in a bidding campaign. They emphasised the cost and complexity of such an exercise and also warned of the risks to the image of the country hosting a mega event if the organisation of that event is less than entirely successful. *[recommendation.....??]*

Elite Sports

2.10.8 [Apart from anecdotal evidence about the impact of role models and a high media profile on participation in popular sports, there is no firm evidence of a link between international success in elite sports and mass participation in sport. For example Australia has high levels of international medal success but its mass participation levels, while higher than those in the UK, are not the highest. In Finland on the other hand the extremely high mass participation levels are not matched by similar levels of success in international medals (although it should be noted that Finland's voluntary sector sports clubs' main focus is on competitive and elite sport).]

2.10.9 During our review we heard concern at the distances that our elite athletes have to travel to participate in suitable training and support. It was argued that there is a need for regional centres of excellence to feed into the national centres. *We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government and the Sports Council for Wales developments a network of regional sporting excellence centres*

[Drafting note - does the Committee wish to comment on the "Game Plan" recommendations in relation to rationalisation of elite sports and governing bodies?]

SECTION THREE - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

[Drafting note – include this section?]

3.1 As noted above, there are a number of bodies who have a role to play in encouraging participation in sport and physical activity.

[text on NAW, SCW, LAs, NGBs, Has, private sector etc to be added.....]

[Possible points to make in this section:-

- Importance of holistic / co-ordinated approach across various sectors and players. Assembly at an advantage as it has responsibility for education, health, local government, transport, lifelong learning and therefore able to promote cross-cutting policies more effectively.
- NHS - While strong evidence of health benefits of active lifestyle, limited health authority intervention to promote this at present. Need for more effort here; welcome Healthy Active Lifestyles Action Plan.
- Local authorities - not a statutory requirement. Do not propose that statutory requirement be introduced. Partnership working with health and other bodies important.
- Education sector – burdens on schools and teachers; pressure on curriculum; need for good support to be provided; need for links between LEAs and other bodies.
- Voluntary sector – accessing match funding and sponsorship difficult; new legal requirements (health and safety, child protection) affecting volunteering levels.
- Private sector – Audit Commission warning against local authorities competing with private sector providers.
- Role of SCW – quinquennial review underway; Committee supports SCW role in increasing participation as well as supporting elite athletes.]

SECTION FOUR - CONCLUSIONS / NEXT STEPS

ANNEX

ORAL PRESENTATIONS TO COMMITTEE – LIST OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

1. Sports Council for Wales
2. Audit Commission
3. Welsh Local Government Association
4. PE and School Sports Taskforce
5. Llandarcy Park Ltd
6. Caerphilly County Borough Council
7. Sports Council for the Deaf
8. Nigel Walker, BBC Wales
9. Golf Development Wales
10. Welsh Development Agency (Ryder Cup)
11. Commonwealth Games Council for Wales
12. Health and education officials from Finland
13. Ginney Blakey, Assembly official, Health Active Lifestyles Action Plan
14. Ceri Breeze, Assembly official, Wellbeing in Wales
15. Welsh Sport Association
16. Welsh Schools Athletics Association
17. Welsh Athletics Association
18. Cabinet Office official, Game Plan
19. Federation of Sports Associations for the Disabled