

29 April 2016  
Andy Reed

## **County Sports Partnership Consultation**

I am writing as discussed to outline our views on the consultation on the future of County Sports Partnerships (CSPs). As you know, we have a number of CSPs and the County Sport Partnership Network (CSPN) in our membership. Both CSPs and the CSPN provide a very important service in local areas across England, and we see a vital role for local infrastructure moving forward in the context of increasingly localised policy making and delivery.

We have attended your consultation event and fully expect that individual CSPs and CSPN will be inputting detailed evidence to you as part of your review, but I also wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate some particularly important points from the Alliance.

### **Clarity of role and consistency**

The perceived role and remit of CSPs clearly varies from one to another and some variance is obviously not only expected but desirable as they have to work to fit local needs. However, it may be useful in the context of the review to (re-)state the agreed role of CSPs, and where possible to set guidance and minimum standards for what it is expected that all CSPs should do and deliver.

There is also a potential concern, as highlighted at consultation sessions, where any organisation is involved in both the setting of strategy and the awarding of funds, as well as engaging in direct delivery. There are examples, including within the charity sector, of where organisations do play a strategic and delivery role and guidance and support for CSPs on how to do this well if they intend to fulfil all of these functions would be helpful.

### **Partnership and collaboration**

We do not have a firm view on the appropriate number, scale or size of CSPs but would particularly encourage partnership working and the sharing of resources across the network where this can not only help in realising economies of scale but also, crucially, in driving and sharing best practice.

### **Funding**

CSPs generally operate with relatively small budgets, though some have very successfully leveraged additional funding and income from within sport, from the public sector and indeed more widely. I would hope that the review will present an opportunity to not only share best practice in this area, but also set clear expectations around the extent to which CSPs are expected to diversify income and what activities and programmes should be considered appropriate and in scope as they seek to grow their future income.

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**Local strategic co-ordination**

The most important role for the majority of CSPs, particularly as policy making is localised and resources become ever more constrained is in acting as a local strategic co-ordinator and broker. CSPs should be the 'voice' of sport and recreation to key decision makers locally – and should seek influence and connections with local authorities, public health bodies, the Police, schools, social and care services, local charities and voluntary organisations and a whole range of other people and organisations that are in contact with current and potential participants. We know there are examples of where this does happen so there is an opportunity to ensure that this good practice, and importantly how the connections were established, is shared more widely.

The public sector at a local level is not only very resource constrained, but also can be confusing (not least with such frequent structural changes) and we would hope that CSPs can help in navigating this landscape and bringing key decision makers together. This should allow the importance of raising participation and overall activity levels to rise up the agenda across all local areas.

I do hope that this is helpful to you and I very much look forward to discussing this important issue further in the coming months.

Emma Boggis  
Chief Executive