

## GENERAL ELECTION 2017: PUTTING SPORT AND RECREATION AT THE HEART OF AN ACTIVE NATION

### **Making a commitment to sport and recreation**

The forthcoming election on 8 June 2017 represents an important opportunity for the next Government to make a commitment to putting sport and recreation at the heart of an active nation.

Participating and volunteering in sport and recreation has enormous benefits to us as individuals and as a society: it improves our physical and mental wellbeing, brings communities together by breaking down barriers and supports employment and economic growth. Sport and recreation provides the best preventative solution to many of the critical public policy challenges the country faces – including obesity, social exclusion and physical and mental health problems. This is why it must be a key policy tool of any incoming Government and must be funded appropriately so that the power of sport and recreation can be harnessed to change lives and transform communities.

### **Joined-up thinking and investment**

The Government's sports strategy *Sporting Future*, published in 2015, represented a step-change from previous approaches to sport and recreation, recognising the breadth of the contribution the sector can make and making future funding dependent on delivering a wide range of public policy objectives. The sector has embraced the strategy but any incoming Government must commit to a genuinely joined-up approach which ensures that policy decisions taken across *all* parts of Government – for example on tax, health, education and land use planning – support the sector including through funding. This also means making sure that the scale of funding genuinely matches the scale of the ambition to get the nation active and that it is committed across a range of Government departments, not just the Department for Culture, Media and Sport – the sector cannot be expected to simply do more with less. Further, Government policy must be inclusive and ensure that everyone, regardless of age, race, economic background or ability, has the opportunity to take part in and benefit from sport and recreation.

### **Taking Opportunities**

The decision taken at the 2016 referendum to exit the European Union (EU) will have far-reaching consequences for the country and the sector. As the Brexit negotiations and associated legislation will dominate the next parliamentary cycle, it is critical that the sport and recreation sector's voice is heard as the Brexit process unfolds. Government must continue to consult with the sector throughout this period and should work with the Sport and Recreation Alliance, its members and wider sector stakeholders to ensure the sector's interests are represented and protected. Further, the UK has built a strong reputation for attracting the best talent from across the globe, hosting major international sporting events and maximising the 'soft power' of sport overseas. The sector must be supported through a range of measures to protect intellectual property, crack down on ticket touting and address threats to integrity in order to maintain our world-leading position beyond Brexit.

In this period of political uncertainty, the Sport and Recreation Alliance also calls on any new Government to commit to promises already made: to put money from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy into school sport, to introduce Corporation Tax reforms to support additional investment in grassroots sport and to protect the environment and outdoor spaces so that everyone has the opportunity to get active.

# The Sport and Recreation Alliance calls on the next Government to:

## 1. Ensure the economic and social value of sport and recreation is realised

- ***Publish a 25-year environment plan which protects and prioritises our natural assets and public rights of way to support opportunities for everyone to be active outdoors.*** The plan should identify how the economic, health and social value of outdoor recreation, as demonstrated by our [Reconomics Plus](#) report, can be maximised across all areas of Government policy.
- ***Deliver on the recommendation in Baroness Grey-Thompson's Duty of Care in Sport report to support the [Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation](#).*** Funding the Charter will enable the mental health benefits of sport and recreation to be maximised and help to break down the social stigma attached to mental health problems.

## 2. Support and diversify volunteering in sport and recreation

- ***Introduce a workplace entitlement for all public sector workers to a minimum three days of paid volunteering leave with a potential to extend to larger private sector organisations over time.*** This would give employees dedicated time to volunteer in their local community, including volunteering in grassroots sport. This reform would benefit both employer and employee and also make vital skills available to not-for-profit sports organisations.
- ***Continue to invest in volunteering to encourage young people to give back to sport and recreation in their local communities.*** Proposed Sport England investment in volunteering and investment in the National Citizen Service needs to be protected to help support the next generation of volunteers for the sector. The NCS provides an important chance for young people to engage in volunteering and the scheme should partner with the widest range of sports organisations to help ensure there is a variety of opportunities available.

## 3. Ensure that children and young people are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of high quality physical education and sport and recreation activities

- ***Put physical literacy on the same footing as academic literacy and numeracy and hold schools accountable for every child's physical development.*** No child should leave primary school without reaching a basic minimum standard of physical literacy and all children and young people should have access to high quality PE, sport and physical activity opportunities, including dance, throughout primary and secondary school. Schools should be held accountable for their performance through the existing assessment framework.
- ***Implement the measures in the Childhood Obesity Plan including the use of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to support sport and physical activity in schools and the introduction of a new healthy rating scheme for primary schools.*** The next Government should extend the commitment to fund physical education and school sport from the levy – irrespective of the total revenue raised – to cover the lifetime of the parliament to 2022.

## 4. Support the sport and recreation sector to become fit for the future

- ***Establish a sports betting levy to generate a fair return to sport.*** Building on the principle that the Government has already established for horseracing, a levy would help make sure that a proportion of the profits made by the gambling industry from betting on sport go back into developing sport, including the grassroots, to sustain the long-term health of the sector.
- ***Require local authorities to maintain a public register of sport and physical activity assets and create a new national Green Spaces Panel to protect the quantity and quality of our green assets.*** Making an up-to-date register of sport and physical activity assets (including parks and green spaces) available to local people will help inform them about the availability and quality of community facilities. A new Green Spaces Panel would have responsibility for assessing any proposed development of school playing fields, parks and green spaces and, taking account of current and future local needs and have the power to reject or put restrictions on development.