

RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT SPORT STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alliance welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of a new strategy for Sport. The potential for a genuinely root and branch reform of sport, recreation and physical activity is an opportunity to evidence the belief that sport and recreation are a vital part of the fabric of our society and can inspire, engage and excite people in many different ways. Our response builds on our "[Raising the heartbeat of the nation](#)" document which we published pre-election as our "to-do list" for new ministers.

The cross departmental nature of the consultation is welcome but the commitment from departments must go beyond encouraging forewords and must manifest itself in departments understanding the role sport and recreation can play in achieving their objectives and supporting this through joined up coordinated investment.

In a multi-departmental landscape, accountability is key. The strategy must set out who is responsible for what and how delivery of objectives will be measured. It must also be clear about key milestones and next steps. The sport and recreation organisations that are our members, for their part, similarly recognise the need to be held to account particularly when in receipt of public funds, and stand ready to do this and demonstrate strong corporate governance.

The sport and recreation landscape is constantly evolving and changing and creating behavioural change does not happen overnight. A new strategy needs to set a long term vision – and by long term we mean twenty years - but be nimble enough to respond to further changes. Many of our members are changing both what they offer, and the way they offer it, to respond to the needs of demanding consumers. In our respective detailed responses, we and our members, will provide some examples of this to evidence the recommendations and points we are making. The new strategy needs to reflect this and recognise that the sector provides comprehensive and hugely diverse opportunities to play sport and take part in recreation and get active. The strong, established and trusted network and infrastructure of providers must be an essential part of any successful future strategy.

Finally a point about nomenclature. The Government has consulted under the title of "A new strategy for sport" but the consultation makes reference to outdoor recreation and physical activity and sets out the desire to capture the value individuals derive from playing sport. But the word sport can mean many things to different people and it is not always an inclusive word so reference to wider outdoor recreation and physical activity is important. The work that was initiated in the spring about developing a strategy for the outdoors, which we have been working with Sport England and the Outdoor Industries Association about, should then form part of the new, wider, inclusive, strategy.

Below is a list of the key asks under each heading of the consultation. More detail is provided in our full response.

Theme One: Participation

- The Active People Survey measurement should be widened to reflect breadth of activity because the sector is uniquely well placed to deliver a wide range of social outcomes – for communities, the economy and the nation’s health and wellbeing, thereby reducing costs for the Exchequer.
- The methodology for data collection must change to reflect the role that technology plays in sport and recreation and in the way people communicate.

Theme Two: Physical Activity

- More clarity about the Chief Medical Officers’ Guidelines for physical activity is needed. A message with the same cut through as “Five a Day” is needed to support public understanding.
- Physical activity should be embedded across the full range of government strategies, including those to combat obesity and diabetes.
- Local authorities should produce a strategy for physical activity opportunities for communities, based on local needs. The rules around asset transfer should highlight the importance of physical activity.
- Government should create a Minister for the Outdoors to deliver the long-term outdoor strategy that places green spaces at the heart of a strategy to improve health.

Theme Three: Children and Young People

- Increased investment is needed in initial teacher training for primary school teachers to equip them to deliver high quality PE.
- Outdoor learning should be embedded across the curriculum, in conjunction with appropriate teacher training to help schools deliver such a programme.
- Clear pathways from schools to clubs should be provided for children and young people to continue participation.
- Sport England’s remit should be extended to children as young as five.

Theme Four: Financial Sustainability

- Although there is a need to look towards diversifying income streams, government must provide sufficient funding to match the ambition of any new strategy; NGBs and others cannot be expected to deliver a wide range of additional outcomes with significantly reduced resources.
- Targeted and sustained investment in women’s and minority sports is essential to develop a product that is attractive to broadcasters and sponsors.
- Government should introduce a sports betting right which would ensure that a proportion of the significant revenue generated by sports betting is channelled back into developing sport.
- Government should continue support for the Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Broadcasting of Major Sporting Events.
- The Lottery share between the distributors should be reviewed and consideration should be given to a specific ring fenced fund, potentially from more than one distributor, aimed at driving participation in under-represented groups.
- The tax system should be used in a more targeted and systematic way to support sport, including: introduction of statutory corporation tax relief for NGB expenditure on community sport, simplification of the tax regime for grassroots clubs and reform of the taxation of elite athletes.

Theme Five: Coaching, Workforce and Good Governance

- To ensure that the governance models in sport represent participants and follow industry standard best practice the strategy should include a single governance framework for the sector to display its commitment toward governance and to provide multiple funders with the accountability they are seeking. The Triennial Review of Sport England and UK Sport has recommended that both bodies share a single set of governance requirements for the next

funding cycle and we would propose that the Voluntary Code of Good Governance, which more than 100 sports bodies have now signed up to, could be used as a foundation for this work.

- Consideration must be given to the impact on the largely volunteer workforce in sport when regulatory or legislative changes are made.

Theme Six: Elite and Professional Sport

- The strategy should encompass the broadest view of what constitutes sport, recognising that there are many sports in which Britain achieves international success but which are not part of the formal UKS/SE funding/pathway model.
- Government's role in professional sport should be limited and have a clear rationale. Areas where government should focus on include: reforming the tax regime around major events, ensuring sufficient resources are directed towards protecting sports integrity and enforcing the Consumer Rights Act provisions.
- Lottery investment in elite sport has been transformational and our high performance system remains the envy of the world – the government should maintain this investment.

Theme Seven: Infrastructure

- Decent, sustainable and appropriate facilities are an essential part of enabling people to get and stay active, but facilities across the country have been under considerable pressure.
- The descriptor "facilities" needs to include more than sports centres, swimming pools and sports pitches – the outdoors provides the basis for many natural facilities.
- Existing infrastructure owned and run by NGBs must have adequate investment, protection and support.
- Current provisions around community assets are potentially a helpful and underused legislative provision that could give the sector greater influence.

Theme Eight: Fairness and Equality

- We welcome the support for initiatives such as the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation to tackle stigma and discrimination, and want to continue to work together to build on current activity.
- Disability and other disadvantaged groups, such as BME and LGBT, should be clearly referenced throughout the strategy, along with a recognition that greater pro rata investment may be needed to engage these groups.
- Outcome targets should be used in funding and grants as levers to get NGBs and other deliverers to focus on these areas.

Theme Nine: Safety and Wellbeing

- Duty of care must include safeguarding and safeguarding needs to include vulnerable adults.
- The production of the 'Concussion Guidelines for Education Professionals' by the Forum on Concussion in Sport and Physical Education was an example of how Government, sector and experts can come together to produce practical guidance, but when this happens the Government must be prepared to actively support and promote what is produced.

Theme Ten: International Influence and Major Sporting Events

- UK Sport should continue support to help promote UK representatives onto International Federations – there is scope to do more to encourage National Federations to come together bilaterally to influence IF decision-making.
- Government should continue to support bids for major events - in conjunction with reform of the tax regime around major events, introduction of a sports organiser's right, a relaxation on the rules for taxation of elite athletes and better intellectual property protection.
- The Strategy needs to protect the integrity and honesty of top level sport from corrupt betting.
- Effective legislation and regulation which makes the buying and selling of tickets on the secondary ticket market as transparent as possible is needed.

For further information, please see the Sport and Recreation Alliance [website](#).