

House of Lords Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee

Introduction

The House of Lords Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee met on Monday 8th July to consider evidence from the chairmen and women of national sports bodies. During its first session it gathered evidence from the following witnesses: Baroness Campbell of Loughborough CBE, chairwoman, Youth Sport Trust and Eileen Marchant, former chairwoman, Association for Physical Education. During the second session: Andy Reed OBE, chairman, Sport and Recreation Alliance.

Questions focused on the deliverance of physical education (P.E.) in primary and secondary schools and the responsibility of teachers to provide quality P.E. teaching. The committee also analysed the impact London 2012 had on inspiring people to take part in sports and whether it improved understanding of Paralympic sports.

Overview

First session

Responsibility for developing sport

Chairman Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab) asked who was responsible for developing and encouraging participation in sport amongst school age children, and what coordination there was in developing strategy:

Baroness Campbell of Loughborough CBE, chairwoman of the Youth Sport Trust:

- her organisation has been seen as the strategic coordinators under the previous administration.
- there is now no overarching strategic coordination and instead it had been devolved to head teachers to take charge.
- Is concerned that children no longer had a right to receive quality P.E. teaching in the early years.

Lord Harris asked whether the standards of physical education (P.E.) delivered in schools now depended on individual teachers.

Eileen Marchant, former chairwoman of the Association for Physical Education:

- P.E has now ceased to be a fourth core subject in the national curriculum review.
- It is a question of leadership, but they had seen some fantastic examples of sport taught in both primary and secondary schools.

Lord Moynihan (Con) focused on high performance in sport and asked if they would wish to see support for non-Olympic sports to help maximize legacy.

Baroness Campbell:

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- They have made the right decision as high performance sports take a lot of resources. She would like to extend resources to non-Olympic sports such as netball where it is possible to do so.

Schools Sport Partnerships

Baroness Billingham (Lab) asked for clarification on whether the school sport partnership was just an interim measure:

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- The partnership has not worked everywhere but they have certainly set a model which could be used in future.
- referred to comments made by Ofsted in their reports that partnerships have improved sport at primary school level.
- is not aware it is only a temporary agreement as she thinks it is an evolving framework.

Quality of P.E. teaching

Lord Moynihan asked what three changes they would like to see for teaching P.E. in schools.

Merchant's answer:

- Explained the importance of having quality P.E. sessions
- Their aim is to upskill teachers to be able to have the confidence and skills to give those good quality lessons themselves.
- Teachers previously having had a bad experience of school sport in the past is not an excuse for their failure to deliver quality physical education.
- Wanted to see good P.E delivered across the board.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- Number one on her list would be to change initial teacher training.
- There is the need for a system where teachers were mentored and supported.

Barriers to participation

Lord Stoneham of Droxford (Lib Dem) asked:

- What they considered to be the major barriers for sports participation and how their organizations were tackling those problems.
- What are the current effects of London 2012.

Merchant's answer:

- There is no doubt London 2012 had inspired a nation but they didn't get through to parents yet about the importance of sport.
- There is a lack of understanding about the recommended amount of exercise children should have.
- Parents should get more information even if it is in the form of a factsheet or similar.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- A generation has been inspired but whether that has turned into something long lasting is yet to be seen.
- There is a number of challenges against building physical activity into a lifestyle.

Lord Addington (Lib Dem) questioned the witnesses about competitive sport.

Merchant's answer:

- There is a need to ensure those people who did not want to play sports competitively were not pushed out and instead are still encouraged to take part in sports.
- The drop out levels for sport, are often at secondary rather than primary school level.

A member of the committee asked if the national governing bodies of sport were best placed to encourage participation in sport.

Marchant's answer:

- The national governing bodies have a great wealth of knowledge which they could share with schools by working alongside teachers.

Creating sustainability

Lord Moynihan asked if:

- They had any specific recommendations for the primary school sport premium to deliver a legacy for London 2012.
- What they meant by 'creating sustainability'.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- Ofsted provides guidance such as they had with the pupil premium would be important.
- It is imperative not to displace teachers by bringing in specialists, so she saw sustainability as investing in the P.E teaching ability of teachers.

Baroness King of Bow (Lab) asked about whether there were problems nationally with maintaining competition in sport at school level.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- The school games has replaced some of the old partnerships and allowed it to stay alive in around 50 per cent of places around the country.

Lord Bates (Con) asked if scarce resources were allocated in the best way.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- It is hard to put a value on the national pride elite sport invoked and the impact it has on young people.
- It is important to continue investing in young people but feel the short-term element is creating challenges.

Sports programmes

Baroness Billingham:

- There is too much confusion in the different programmes and how they connect together.
- It is important not to overload people and repel them from sport.

Baroness Campbell:

- The youth sports strategy is for 14-21 year olds rather than just those of school age.

Lord Addington asked what could be done to get people to understand that sports was something that became part of life not just curriculum.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- School club links are important and should be worked on but said more importance should be placed on the school-community clubs. She refers to those who might want to participate in yoga or other types of exercise or more casual participation in sport.

School sports facilities

Baroness Wheatcroft (Con) pointed out many schools have facilities which could be used or were used by the community and asked whether schools were doing enough to mobilise parents to use the facilities their facilities and in turn encourage prolonged participation in sport.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- There is a lot to do on accessibility and the way clubs were structured.
- There is a lot more schools could do to open up their facilities.
- She is disturbed by the news that many new schools, particularly free schools, have absolutely no requirement to provide physical education space.

Marchant's answer:

- They need to sell the message that P.E helped to give students the confidence to do well in other subjects and to succeed on a personal level.

International impact of London 2012

The Earl of Arran (Con) asked about international inspiration.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- International inspiration is the response to Lord Coe's comments about how the London Olympics would inspire sport across the world and is a collaboration with organisations including UNICEF

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Lab) asked if there was anything which could be learnt from the Olympics.

Baroness Campbell's answer:

- Women had a huge profile at the Olympics as did disabled athletes.
- the volunteer spirit during the games is certainly something which would be taken away from it.

Second session

Legacy of the 2012 games

Lord Harris asked if it was realistic to expect the games to deliver a lasting legacy of sports participation when previous games had failed to do so.

Andy Reed OBE, chairman of the Sport and Recreation Alliance:

- Feel confident they could deliver an Olympic participation legacy.
- They may have left it a little late in devising a legacy plan and taking ownership of it.
- Grassroots clubs are the backbone of sport in the country but there is a huge squeeze on those clubs.
- Would really like to see a better use of schools sports facilities.
- He also would like to see a genuine joined up approach to health and sport as it could make an enormous difference to the pathways for people to become involved in sport.

Funding

Reed told's comments:

- The Exchequer funding has been decreasing but lottery funding has been increasing.
- Spoke of some of the strains on sports clubs, particularly indirect strains such as the changes in a music license.
- Stated that although substantial gains had yet to be made, he is confident that the government has not taken its 'eye off the ball' and that a willingness is still there to make real progress.
- Highlighted the youth sport strategy by Sport England and the primary school sport premium as evidence that a number of influential figures were fighting the corner for an Olympic legacy.
- There is however a real feeling by grass roots organisations that the headline grabbing initiatives had yet to be activated at local level.
- Stated that he would like to see a reduction in the number of sporting initiatives created by organisations as well as government departments.
- Pleased that swimming has been maintained as part of the core curriculum and reiterated his belief that physical activity raised the academic performance of children.
- Hoped that the primary school sport premium would improve the number of specialist physical education in primary schools.
- The loss of school sport partnerships is a big blow for the sector and is one of the reasons why there are fewer school sporting opportunities.
- However, a number of counties has been able to carry on the good work of SSPs but with the result that school sport partnership coordination had become a bit of a "post code lottery".