

**MINUTES**

**Date:** 4 December 2002

**Time:** 9.00 – 12.15pm

**Venue:** Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales

**Members**

Rhodri Glyn Thomas (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, Chair)

Jenny Randerson (Liberal Democrat, Cardiff Central, Assembly Minister)

Owen John Thomas (Plaid Cymru, South Wales Central)

Lorraine Barrett (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth)

Delyth Evans (Labour, Mid & West Wales)

Alison Halford (Labour, Delyn)

Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru, Caernarfon)

Glyn Davies (Conservative, Mid and West Wales) (until 11.15)

**Officials**

Margaret Evans (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)

Arthur Emyr (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)

Prys Davies (Culture and the Welsh Language Division)

Gareth Thomas (Culture and the Welsh Language Division)

<b>Secretariat</b>
Marie Knox (Head of Members' Research and Committee Services)

### **9.00am to 9.10am**

#### **Item 1: Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public.

### **9.05am to 10.15am**

#### **Item 2: Policy Review of Sport / Participation levels in Finland**

Presentation by Mari Miettinen, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland

Mirja Virtala, Ministry of Education, Finland

2.1 The Chair welcomed the presenters who had been invited to explain the factors affecting sports participation in Finland.

2.2 Ms Virtala explained her role as a Counsellor for Cultural Affairs in the sports division of the Ministry of Education which was led by two ministers; one for Education and Science and one for Culture, Sports and Youth work. Her presentation included the following points:

- The Finnish levels of participation in sport were high compared to other countries, although the population did not get enough exercise in relation to their health needs. As in most countries, activity levels were decreasing due to modern way of life.
- Statistics showed that adult women were slightly more active than men. Research also showed that women were more likely to use commercial sports facilities and be interested in fitness and aerobics than competitive sports. Men were more likely to take part in sports organised through clubs and competitive and team sports.
- Four out of five people in Finland took exercise on their own, through no formal organisation.
- Sports relied heavily on volunteers, especially for children's sports. These volunteers tended to be parents who volunteered for as long as their children were doing sport. The figures suggested that as many as 509 000 people were volunteers which was 10% of the population.
- The Government policy was set out in the Sports Act which had been revised in 1998. It concentrated mainly on sport for the young in order to develop healthy habits for adults, and because children could be reached easily through sports clubs, as approximately 40% of 3 to 18

year olds did sports in clubs.

- The school day finished at 1.00pm in Finland and sport was one way in which children could take part in a supervised activity rather than being home without their working parents. After school clubs were overseen by the Youth Association of Finland. 2500 out of 7000 clubs were involved.
- Policy was designed to reach all children, not only those who showed proficiency. The 'Operation Fair Play' initiative motivated 7 to 13 year olds to participate in sport regardless of their ability.
- There were certain preconditions for sports participation in Finland: a large number of volunteers; environments which made participation in exercise easy; high levels of training for those instructing and managing sport; and research regarding provision levels.

2.3 Mari Miettinen, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health made a presentation during which the following points were made:

- A large proportion of the Finnish population did too little exercise. In order to raise the activity levels the government had launched the 'Fit for Life' project in 1995. It was a 5-year strategy to target 40 to 60 year olds who exercised less than three times per week. It was also an exercise in co-operation between different ministries.
- The financial support for the project was 200,000 Euros from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and 900,000 Euros from the Ministry of Education.
- Marketing for the campaign included television programmes and magazines. Broadcasters also produced programmes focussed on the successes at local level, but free advertising slots were not available
- Networking was undertaken between different ministries, research institutes, non-Governmental organisations and municipal sports authorities.
- The success of the project was demonstrated in an increase in the proportion of physically active people from 33% in 1994 to 46% in 1999.
- 400 projects were established during the first 5 year phase. During the second period (2000 – 2004) many more institutions had become involved, for instance the Forestry and Park Services.
- A Committee was established in 2000 to promote health enhancing physical activity, involving members from expert groups and the education and health ministries. The Committee's remit was to advise on how to reach the groups who take the least physical exercise as well as monitoring levels of participation in physical activity. Its report was the basis of a Government Resolution in April 2000. An advisory committee had since been set up to implement the resolution.

2.4 The following comments were made during the subsequent question and answer session:

- The 'Fit for Life' project encouraged workplace activity. This required senior management commitment within the business to be successful. Employers often provided free tickets for

employees for sports centres.

- Local Authorities in Finland were responsible for building sports facilities but not for running them. Funding included 240 million Euros for operating costs and 80 million Euros for building facilities. The sports budget of 83 million Euros (largely from Lottery funding) was under 1% of the total public expenditure in Finland.
- It was felt that the high level of women's participation in sport in Finland was due to cultural factors and women's position in Finnish society. Women worked outside the home, were socially active, and were interested in health. However, there were concerns that women were under represented in the administration and governing bodies of sports organisations. It was important to have women involved in the organisations responsible for planning in sport to ensure that the needs of women and girls were met.
- It was considered that the success of elite athletes in Finland was partly due to tradition and a history of sporting success in a particular sport generating young people's interest. There was a network of sports institutes providing training, for instance involving former Olympic champions in the training of javelin throwers.
- The financial contribution of volunteering was estimated at 800 million Euros. This was based on the number of volunteers performing 11 hours of service a week. Training was available for those wishing to run a club. There were no official checks on people who volunteered to work with children, only on professionals. However, the Sports Federation had produced guidelines on harassment.

### **Item 3: Policy Review on Sport / Healthy and Active Lifestyles Action Plan and Wellbeing in Wales**

#### **CC 20-02 (p1); CC 20-02 (p2)**

Presentation by Ginny Blakey, Health Promotion Division and Ceri Breeze, Public Health

Strategy Division

1. Ceri Breeze explained that the document Wellbeing in Wales was a follow up to the 'Better Health – Better Wales' initiative which ran from 1999 – 2002. Wellbeing in Wales was an attempt to reduce the inequalities in the health of the people in Wales and raise awareness of the factors affecting health. His presentation included the following points:

- The consultation document had been launched on 4 September; the closing date for responses was 19 November 2002. As of next year Local Health Boards and Local Authorities would be under a statutory obligation to produce joint action plans.
- This consultation document clearly showed the links across policy areas that affect health.

The Forestry commission, for instance had assessed how their work linked to the aims of 'Well being in Wales'.

- The consultation responses were being analysed and a plenary debate had been scheduled for 17

December 2002.

3.2 Ginny Blakey made a presentation on the Healthy and Active Lifestyles Action Plan including the following comments:

- The Action Plan was based on the recommendations from the PE and School Sports Taskforce. The Sports Council for Wales had provided invaluable input and thanks were due to them for their assistance in producing the final report.
- The Plan was focussed on the strong protective effect of physical activity against many diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.
- Social changes such as the use of labour saving devices and reliance on cars meant that people were becoming less physically active than in the past.
- The Action Plan targeted groups who could benefit the most. The plan was designed to reach the people that sport failed to reach: women, elderly, socially disadvantaged and physically disabled people.
- The Plan aimed to demonstrate the benefits of including physical activity in daily life, such as using the stairs not the lift, rather than promoting new activities.
- The Plan focussed on raising awareness of the importance of physical activity; supporting public health and primary care professionals in encouraging patients to engage in physical activity; tackling the barriers; and creating a network of stakeholders.

1. The following comments were made during the subsequent question and answer session:

- There had been a wide consultation on Wellbeing in Wales but inevitably it was not possible to reach everyone.
- There was a difference between the 'gold standard' measure of health promoting exercise (30 minutes of moderate exercise 5 times per week) and the Sports Council's measure of participation in sports once in 4 weeks.
- Most businesses in Wales were not large scale employers which affected the support they could provide to staff. Workplace gyms would not be feasible for many businesses.
- The Ministers for Health and for the Environment were looking at the ways in which health could be taken into account in the planning process.
- Projects such as providing exercise classes in homes for the elderly could be eligible for funding under the new scheme.

**10.45 to 11.00am**

The Committee agreed to break for 15 minutes.

## Item 4: Football Forum

**CC 20-02(p3)**

**Presentation by Mark Aizelwood, Technical Director of FAW Trust.**

1. Mr Aizelwood explained the role of the FAW Trust: a charitable trust that had a wide remit to develop football across Wales, including responsibility for players from 6-19 years old and coaching education responsibilities. His presentation included the following points:

- The Football Forum had taken nine months to produce the 5 year development strategy for the FAW Trust. The Welsh Assembly Government and the FAW Council had accepted the strategy.
- Encouraging young people to play football was not simply a matter of improving performance, it was relevant to health promotion, crime prevention, lifelong learning initiatives and drug awareness programmes.
- The aim of the strategy was to raise overall participation by 25%; the number of coaches by 20% and the number of referees by 10%. Targets for girls' football included increasing the number of players from 600 to 4000 and to create 25 new leagues and 300 new teams by 2007.
- The creation of a full time football development coach in each local authority was considered essential. Unfortunately six Local Authorities – Conwy, Wrexham, Newport, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Merthyr – had not committed funding (£10K) for this.
- The FAW had a training programme for coaches that had been recognised by UEFA's GIRA convention on mutual recognition of coaching standards, meaning that this coaching qualification was valid across 58 countries in Europe. However the OCR examining board did not recognise the course provided by the FAW, therefore NVQ candidates in Wales had to follow a coaching course run by the English FA. The strategy aimed to create a support system from participation level to elite players that provided a route for good players.

4.2 The following comments were made in the question and answer session that followed:

- The Football Academy in Newport had undertaken excellent work. A meeting had recently been held between the FAW Trust, the Hartridge Academy, the Junior Leagues and Newport County Football Club to bring together the various bodies and establish a structure for progressing players.
- The FAW Trust were working with an organisation called 'Soccer Skills' based in Porthmadog to access European Social Fund money for the Modern Apprenticeship scheme. The aim was to establish academies similar to the Hartridge Academy in London in 8 locations in Wales. The FAW Trust would welcome a more co-ordinated response from WEFO.
- The Assembly funding for the FAW Trust comprised £150,000 as an emergency payment for the first year, £500,000 for the second year and £500,000 for the third year in addition to the £220,000 from the Sports Council for Wales.
- The FAW Trust had entered into negotiations with the Sports Council for Wales and private sector

investors with regard to establishing a national training facility. The FAW Trust was carrying out a facility audit in Wales and estimated that the audit of teams in Wales would show that there are 8,000 to 10,000 football teams across Wales. Any facility would be available for coaching education purposes.

- The target for raising the number of referees applied to both sexes and was the responsibility of regional organisations.
- There were 9 or 10 players currently in the Welsh national team who played regularly at premiership level, compared to 3 or 4 just 6 years ago.
- The FAW Trust hoped that in time it could develop an equivalent to the Football Foundation in England. The Trust intended to make a Wales-wide bid for Communities First money in recognition of the work it did in tackling anti-social behaviour.

### **Action:**

- The Chair agreed to ask Gareth Jones, Chair of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee to raise the matter of recognition of coaching education qualifications in ELL Committee.
- Dafydd Wigley agreed to raise the matter of providing a contact point for inquiries regarding ESF funds in the Economic Development Committee.
- The Education Minister would be asked for a note of clarification on the funds announced for the sports development centres.

### **Item 5: Our Language: Its Future – Minister’s Response**

Paper: CC 20-02 p4

5.1 The Minister introduced the item and reminded Committee that her formal response to the Committee’s Welsh Language report, had been debated in plenary.

The following points arose in discussion:

- Members were pleased with the strategy and praised officials for their work. The additional £27 million over 3 years for the language was welcomed, as were recent announcements on the home buy initiative.
- Doubts were expressed as to whether the proposed Welsh Language Unit within the Assembly would have sufficient influence. The Minister assured members that staffing levels were appropriate. Members noted that staffing costs would be additional to the £27 million and pointed out that some members had received comments from their constituents that too much money was being spent on the Welsh Language.
- Some members felt that schools already provided adequate statistical information on Welsh language education provision to the local education authorities and that the targets for Educare and school education could be confirmed without the need for the Census results next year.

- It was suggested that the Committee needed to be clearer as to whether all its recommendations had been accepted. There had been negative reaction to the Cabinet's strategy externally in relation to economic development, housing and planning issues. It was suggested that a meeting with media representatives might help to address misunderstanding of the proposals in this field.
- The issue of Welsh speaking juries has been referred to the Lord Chancellor's Department.

**12.25pm to 12.30pm**

**Item 5: Minutes of previous meeting: CC 19-02(min)**

1. The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

**Any Other Business**

The Chair reported that he had been invited to give a St David's Day lecture at Rio Grande University, Ohio. The Committee was content for the Chair to take up the engagement.