



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a
Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport

Mr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair
Health, Social Care & Sport Committee
National Assembly for Wales

21 November 2017

Dear *Dai,*

Thank you for your letter dated 14th November to the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport and myself, regarding the Welsh Government Draft Budget for 2018-19. I shall answer the questions in the order you have presented them.

1. What is the rationale for separating sport and physical activity from public health again, given that the evidence paper submitted for the budget scrutiny session with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services and Minister for Children and Social Care, highlights that sport and public health were brought together in this Government due to the important contribution of sport to physical activity levels?

We do not consider that there is any separation between health, sport and physical activity, despite the splitting of portfolios. Sport will continue to help to make a significant contribution, but increasing levels of physical activity requires a wider response and will require collaboration across government. We are committed to promoting healthier lifestyles and choices and are taking action through interventions to prevent ill health, encouraging more physical activity for general well being throughout the life course as well as tackling obesity through a range of policies, programmes and legislation.

2. The previous Minister with responsibility for public health and sport clarified the remit of Sports Wales last month:

- **Will the change in Ministerial portfolios have an impact on this, or the new outcomes framework Sport Wales has been tasked with developing?**
- **Does the Minister share the same vision for Sports Wales?**

The change in Ministerial portfolios will not deter or have any negative impact on the work being undertaken by Sport Wales or on their outcomes framework.

We fully support and share the same vision for Sport Wales. This is an opportunity for everyone in Wales to help shape how sport is delivered across Wales and to get more people active at every stage of their lives. Following the independent review of Sport Wales

there were a series of recommendations to which Sport Wales have responded very positively. This will include adopting a fresh approach to demonstrate the value and impact of sport and physical activity and work is already underway.

3. The previous Minister set out a requirement for Sport Wales and Public Health Wales to work together to deliver the commitment to significantly increase physical activity levels:

- **Will this continue to be a Government priority?**
- **If so, how will the two portfolios be aligned across Government to deliver these objectives?**

We will continue to work across a range of Ministerial portfolios to maximise the opportunities that are available for people to become more active. Increasing rates of physical activity remain a Welsh Government priority as set out in Prosperity for All. To tackle this agenda needs a range of partners working effectively together and we need to draw on Wales' significant natural resources to increase people's physical activity levels.

The collaborative working between Sport Wales and Public Health will continue and over the coming months they will develop priorities and actions to contribute to our action plan to deliver the objectives of our national strategy. They have already held discussions with other public bodies such as Natural Resources Wales to agree a common set of objectives and indicators. That work will continue to establish a new outcomes framework for physical activity, some shared performance measures and methods for evaluating impact and value for money. Furthermore, the Public Health Wales Act places a requirement on Welsh Ministers to publish a national strategy on preventing and reducing obesity, where engaging in physical activity and tackling sedentary lifestyles will play an important role.

4. The Welsh Government has protected overall sport and physical activity resource funding at its current level (£22.3m), but should physical activity be given a higher priority in funding terms if the Welsh Government is serious about the preventative agenda?

Prosperity for All made clear Government's commitment to increasing levels of physical activity. That is to be realised not just through levels of funding but through a range of partners, Health Boards, Local Authorities, Schools, Employers – ensuring opportunities for physical activity can be factored in to daily life in Wales.

The budgetary protection at the current funding levels are for specific measures and programmes for sport and physical activity but do not present the totality of efforts to increase physical activity. For instance, they do not cover active travel, the National Exercise Referral Programme, support for the Daily Mile, or work with employers to promote physical activity.

5. What proportion of the sport and physical activity funding is allocated to increasing the physical activity levels of children and young people, and is this substantially different from previous years?

Increasing the number of young people who take part in sport and physical activity remains a priority area for Sport Wales and we are seeing levels increasing but we acknowledge that more work needs to be done.

Sport Wales continue to provide funding to support young people and this year will invest £11.5m in a range of programmes which focus on supporting sport and physical activity opportunities across our communities.

6. Sport Wales has been tasked with developing a new approach to physical activity, targeting communities which are least likely to meet Chief Medical Officer's guidelines. Sport Wales' resource budget has not increased for 2018-19:

- **How confident is the Minister that Sport Wales has the capacity to deliver this?**
- **Will delivery of the new approach be evaluated on effectiveness and value for money?**
- **What will be the contribution of Public Health Wales to this new approach?**

Sport Wales have responded very positively to the independent review and as part of their response they have recently launched their "My Welsh Sport, the Conversation" which aims at inviting people across Wales, from community level to elite level, to contribute their ideas and views as part of a nationwide consultation. These views will help us to rethink our ways of working together, consider future investment, create new focus and help inform a new vision for sport. But importantly this will not be a Sport Wales vision but it will be a vision for everyone.

We have total confidence in Sport Wales to build upon the foundation of success recognised in the independent review of sport to unite the sport sector and to deliver tangible and long lasting benefits to the communities of Wales. We want children from all social backgrounds to have the best start in life and for under represented groups to have more and better quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity on a regular basis. Sport Wales will be working with Public Health Wales to identify opportunities to increase people's activity levels. As part of the new comprehensive engagement plan, measurement, evaluation and effectiveness will form a central and fundamental part of the work of Sport Wales.

7. The WLGA and ADSS Cymru told the Committee that local authorities have responded to financial pressures by prioritising statutory services, often at the expense of non-statutory services like leisure centres which have a preventative role:

- **Has the Welsh Government undertaken any assessment of the impact of cuts to community leisure centres and services on physical activity levels?**
- **How does the Welsh Government plan to mitigate this?**

No assessment has been undertaken in terms of any cuts suffered to community leisure centres. However, we recognise that in the light of budgetary pressures, public sector bodies, such as local authorities, have to make some very difficult decisions, particularly on providing non-statutory services such as sport and leisure facilities.

To support local authorities in their decision making, the Welsh Government has undertaken a number of actions. For example, in March last year, we asked Sport Wales to develop, "Facilities for Future Generations – A Blueprint for Sport and Active Recreation in Wales" to help facility owners, managers and investors to consider the wider landscape of their communities, the changing trends in customer demand and the opportunities for collaboration, innovation and smarter investments. This document was developed in consultation with key partners that included local authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association.

The Welsh Government has also supported the sharing of good practice by publishing a toolkit on Community Asset Transfers to help and support community groups who express an interest in taking ownership of a community asset like a leisure centre or sports club.

I trust this information answers the questions you have raised and reassures the Health Social Care and Sport Committee that we remain committed to increasing levels of sport and physical activity across Wales and working with key partners and stakeholders to drive this agenda forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', written in a cursive style.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport