

**Board Meeting - 12 June 2020**

**Board Paper No. [Additional]**

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| **For Decision** | **Recommendation**No recommendations. |
| **For Monitoring** |
| **For Information** |

**Research progress and update**

Prepared by Nick Rowe, Chair of OSS Research Advisory Group

**Introduction**

The following provides a brief progress update on previously identified priority research projects. It includes observations provided in my capacity as Chair of RAG.

**Project update**

1. **‘Motivating Sport in Scotland’ (national survey)**. Progress has been made on raising the profile of this research (e.g. at the National Summit) and in subsequent discussion with stakeholders. The conceptual thinking and approach have been documented and scrutinised by RAG, broad agreement on the approach within OSS and the documentation (one-page summary) to leverage donor support improved. Feasibility and cost have been explored with market research agencies. Exploratory discussion has been held with YouGov with potential to develop a collaborative approach.

**Observations**: This is a potential flagship project for OSS. We need to continue to work on explaining the distinctiveness and benefits/value from this research. But potentially it has a wide stakeholder interest. Perhaps a multi–partner funding call could be taken e.g. 30 ‘partners’ at £1,000 each? Covid-19 has made a 2020 survey inadvisable and Spring 2021 is now a realistic target date. YouGov look promising but we will seek competitive quotes to get best value for money.

1. **Disability and Sport in Scotland Research Review.** This will take a similar form to previous academic reviews commissioned by OSS. It has a £1,000 budget allocated to it. A brief was finalised following extensive consultation with over 30 stakeholders in disabled sport. Richard Davison is co-ordinating a collaborative effort with colleagues including RAG member Gayle McPherson.

**Observations:** This is an important project for OSS. Profile and expectations have been raised following consultation. We need to demonstrate progress. It is also important to connect with the sportscotland ‘equality review’.

1. **21st Century Community Sport and Leisure Service Delivery Models in Scotland**. A draft brief has been prepared and an online session held with a wide range of stakeholders. There is general support for a review of this kind. However the brief and parameters remain unclear as is the source of funding. Further work has taken place to tighten the brief with the potential to work with 3 case study local authorities to include Glasgow, possibly the Highlands and possibly a local authority either in central Scotland or the Borders.

**Observations**: This could be an important project for OSS. It does however come with significant risk. It is not just the complexity but also the potential scope and political nature with many competing interests. The risk is compounded by the issue of ‘authority’ that OSS can bring to this review. Being independent is an advantage but lacking an established authoritative position in the landscape is in this context a risk. Without Government, local authority and potentially sportscotland backing could leave OSS exposed and research outcome . It is a risky project for OSS to use as a proving ground of its worth but, defined well and with the right support, could provide a platform for securing OSS’ position in the landscape.

1. **Sports Research Information Hub (SRIH)**
Development work was undertaken internally with Thomas spending quite a lot of time on this. Work has been carried out on the concept and a less sophisticated ‘library’ version is now on the OSS web site with Lesley’s help. Tess Kay at Stirling has expressed an interest in a collaborative effort, and I have been tasked with negotiating with Stirling to establish if there is an opportunity for a fruitful relationship. Initial correspondence has been held with Tess and I am ‘meeting’ with her, John Taylor and Colin Moran the Faculty’s ‘Impact Champion’ on Wednesday 17th June for first stage exploratory discussions. It is my intention to report back to OSS Executive with a recommendation within a few weeks.

**Observations:** It is early days. My first impression is that Stirling isn’t coming at this with any sealed deal on funding. But a collaboration with them could be beneficial to OSS and help lever funding that we could not achieve in isolation. Issues of ownership and branding will need to be addressed.I will know more after the meeting next week.

1. **Glasgow World Cycling Championships 2023 impact evaluation**Two exploratory meetings have been held with Joel Lavery Interim Head of Policy responsible for leading on the event development and legacy in the Scottish Government. We have had excellent RAG specialist input from Richard and Fiona and with further expertise from Gayle who specialises in event impact we can put together a strong team. Richard is leading on the documentation and discussions are ongoing.

**Observations:** This is a potentially very large project – more like hundreds of thousands of pounds over three to five years than 10’s of thousands over a year. The source and commitment to funding still, however, seems unclear as does any potential competitive tendering procedure. We are hoping that we may be able to create a collaborative approach with OSS independently managing and coordinating the research which could potentially draw on expertise from a range of institutions. We will continue to prioritise developing a relationship with Joel.

1. **‘Portfolio Projects’**

**Observations:** These remain as options to explore with potential funders. Where necessary we can put more detail around the projects costs and possibly provide one-page version for easy access and to make a quick impression. We have also been giving thought to how we can join up all these projects into an overarching link to the ambition to improve local community sport delivery (see 3 above)

**Other work completed**

1. OSS is continuing to build its research evidence base. This now includes a substantial body of work with the publication of six Academic Reviews (including the recent addition of Richard’s review on ‘Sport participation and ageing - influence and impact’; Jane Dennehy’s on ‘Gender diversity in sport’ and the imminent publication of John Taylor’s review of research needs; publication of my report on ‘Participation Trends and Future Prospects’; publication of my think piece on ‘Sport, obesity and the Corona virus’; five think piece articles from Thomas Rowe and one from Ryan Brown, our Research Assistants. We have also created a ‘library’ of research publications on the OSS website with 30 entries to date.

**Observations:** It is important that OSS uses its own research to maximum effect and profile. The body of research is now reaching the point where it could be synthesised into one summary publication that joins the research up to provide an overview of what we know about the current state of sport in Scotland and what the issues and research gaps are.

**OSS Researchers, network and capacity**

1. We now have three categories of Research support:
2. Research Advisory Group members (8)
3. Research Associates (11 senior academics and researchers) that now include: Professor Simon Shibli, Sheffield Hallam University; Dr Larissa Davies, Sheffield Hallam University; Professor David Kirk, University of Strathclyde; Dr Shirley Gray, University of Edinburgh; Dr Heather Morgan, University of Aberdeen; Dr Andrew Brinkley, Loughborough University; Paula Murray, Course Leader, Loughborough College; Jon Best; Professor Geraint Florida-James, Edinburgh Napier University; Dr Gemma Ryde, University of Stirling; and Jane Dennehy of the Gender Hub
4. Research Assistants (3): Thomas Rowe (internship just finished); Ryan Brown; and Olly Thomson.
5. We currently have a vacancy for the editorial role that Jon Best fulfilled.
6. My role as RAG Chair is only an Interim arrangement. OSS should continue to look for a suitable Chair ideally, I think, drawn from a senior and influential academic position in Scotland.