Shaping our Strategy – Responses to your questions
Thank you for attending the Sport England Webinar on Shaping our Strategy.

As part of the webinar attendees were invited to pose questions. Some of these Tim and colleagues were able to cover individually during the event, however due to the large quantity of the remainder, we have sorted these into the general themes, and looked to give an overview response to each of these areas. Please find the following themes below:

1. Name change to Active England
2. Data and Digital
3. Children and Young People
4. Disability
5. Funding
6. Health
7. Inclusion
8. Measurement and Impact
9. Place
10. Workforce
1. Should Sport England change its name to Active England?

Several people asked about Sport England’s name and whether it remains appropriate and helpful given the broader focus of the organisation started with ‘Towards an Active Nation’. It is certainly in the spirit of our conversations about future strategy to consider whether our name and identity creates barriers to effective delivery and partnerships moving forward.

We are pleased to hear views on this. We are careful and conscious in the use of our brand within our ‘customer-facing’ work such This Girl Can. That said, the name Sport England is well established, reflects our founding purpose and some fundamental parts of our role, including one of the identified ‘good causes’ benefiting from lottery funders.

Is a more fundamental challenge to ensure a broader, more inclusive and shared understanding of ‘sport’ moving forward? Are there specific instances of our name acting as a barrier to progressing initiatives, partnerships or new opportunities?

In continuing the strategy development process, we will be exploring Sport England’s purpose, how we communicate our mission and priorities, and the roles we play across sport and physical activity. If you have any reflections that you would like to share with us around this, we would really value your input. Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
2. What is Sport England’s role in leading the development of data and digital within the sector?

Sport England sees digital as a critical enabler to achieving our wider vision and strategy. People of all backgrounds and ages have increasingly high expectations of the role that digital can and should play to support them to be active. Yet in the UK, research has shown it is easier to order a takeaway than it is to find your local exercise class. This shouldn’t be the case in 2020.

Over the past strategy period, we have focused our energy on partnerships and initiatives that have helped us to understand the role that data can play, both open and shared, in removing barriers for people to get active, such as making it easier to find information online and understanding how digital and tech can support a more inclusive sector - both in encouraging a more diverse range of innovators to enter our sector to create innovations that support people who are less likely to be active. We have worked alongside many organisations in the sector, learning a lot about the technical and cultural barriers at play, when asking them to prioritise time and resources to create the data infrastructure needed to achieve our collective goal of getting more people active.

We believe there is a significant prize to be won, if both our sector and other government departments (such as Health and Local Government) can work collaboratively to embrace the opportunity that digital presents us in the coming years. But we recognise this is much more a change process than a technology one. We are also learning about our role to support the sector in this change, and to collectively move forward on a journey to improve our maturity in this area.

As part of the strategy development process we will be exploring Sport England’s purpose and the role we play going forward in the above agenda. As digital is such a broad term, a critical component to this is understanding what this topic means to our partners, what your aspirations are for your business, and for the experience of your consumers. If you have any reflections that you would like to share with us on this topic, we would really value your input. Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
3. Will Sport England prioritise Children and Young People more in the next strategy?

Children and young people remain an important part of Sport England’s current strategy. The recent Children and Young People’s Active Lives survey shows that we are making good progress in increasing the number of children and young people that are meeting the Chief Medicals Officers guidelines of being active an average of 60 minutes per day, across a week. We are particularly encouraged by the increase in activity levels outside of the school day. We are also learning that the more that young people enjoy taking part, the more likely they are to be active. Additionally, we know that there is a positive association between how active young people are and how happy and resilient they are. However we know that there is much still to do, in particular in addressing the inequalities which the survey has highlighted.

There is significant opportunity for Sport England to continue to lay the foundations with children and young people for long term behaviour change into adulthood, by developing physical activity habits for life. To do this we must work collaboratively with partners in the sport sector and non-sport sector. We will work with those partners who have shared outcomes, and can deliver both for us and with us on our outcomes.

The government has signalled the importance of this work through the recently published School Sport and Activity Action Plan, which Sport England will continue to support. The Plan sets out the government’s commitment to work collaboratively in the interest of young people. Sport England will continue to play its role in this.

As part of the strategy development process we will be exploring Sport England’s purpose and the role we play in the above agenda. Children and young people and reducing inequalities is likely to continue to be a strong and important theme for our work. We would welcome your views and what you believe our future strategy should look like in relation to our collective challenge to get and keep children and young people moving. Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
4. What will Sport England do to further their support of disability sport?

We recognise the importance of developing inclusive, accessible, and appropriate opportunities for all disabled people to get involved in sport and physical activity as participants, volunteers, coaches, and leaders.

In the delivery of our ‘Towards an Active Nation’ strategy we have committed more than £40m to support disabled people to get active. Ensuring that each of our investment programmes have impacted directly on disabled people e.g. Active Ageing (Tackling Inactivity), Families Fund (Children & Young People), and Helping the Active Stay Active When Life Changes (Core Market). We have also developed investment programmes that focus solely on disabled people including the Toyota Parasport Programme which we deliver in partnership with the British Paralympic Association and Toyota. This programme is continuing throughout 2020/21.

We work with a wide variety of partners who can help us deliver better opportunities for all disabled people in sport and physical activity. These include organisations we’ve had a longer-term relationship with such as Activity Alliance and the National Disability Sport Organisations who include, amongst others, Special Olympics GB, UK Deaf Sport, and WheelPower.

We have also developed relationships with new organisations including disability charities like Mencap, Disability Rights UK, Sense, and Leonard Cheshire Disability. These partnerships are helping us reach more disabled people through organisations that are trusted. We are supporting systemic change by forming strategic and national alliances, building an evidence-base and sharing good practice, supporting the sport and physical activity sector to be inclusive of disabled people. Further information can be found on our website:

https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/disability

As part of the strategy development process we will be exploring Sport England’s purpose and the role we play in the above agenda. Tackling inactivity, reducing inequalities experienced by disabled people, and supporting disabled people to stay active are likely to continue to be strong and important themes for our work. If you have any reflections that you would like to share with us on this topic, we would really value your input. Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
5. How will Sport England prioritise the allocation of funding in the next strategy?

As part of the development of our next strategy we will be thinking carefully about the funding environment and a range of factors that link to it. We will consider the budgets that we operate within including how we use our income to achieve the greatest impact over the coming months. We have yet to publish our next strategy however we do anticipate seeing a continued demand for our funding. This means we will need to continue to make choices about where to prioritise our funding and we will be in position to say more about this in the future.

We are likely to want to continue to award funding to projects and organisations that aim to increase physical activity levels including among those who are currently less active. This will mean collaborating with and influencing a wide range of partners including government as well as the commercial and non-profit sectors.

As we continue to process of developing our next strategy we will be consider Sport England’s purpose and the role we play as a direct funder of sport and physical activity and our work with partners across a range of sectors. We would welcome your input into this process so please visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your reflections.
6. What is Sport England’s future role in supporting the health sector?

Health is considered an important outcome which drives our strategy. We want to encourage people to get active in ways that deliver the most for their physical and mental wellbeing. This will be through many or various forms of sport and physical activity. There are many elements that make up/contribute towards a healthy nation/being healthy but we know that physical activity and sport plays a fundamental and important role for many.

There is significant opportunity for other agendas (such as Health and Education) to use sport and physical activity as an effective vehicle to deliver outcomes such as improving the health and wellbeing of the nation. Part of our role and current work is therefore to influence and advocate for this across government and sectors.

This includes working with, supporting and influencing the health sector to embed physical activity and sport as business as usual, working in partnership with organisations such as health charities who have reach and trusted relationships to those who are inactive, supporting systemic changes by forming strategic and sometimes national alliances, building and sharing a credible evidence-base, our place-based whole system pilots and supporting the sport and physical activity sector to be inclusive. Further information can be found on our website: https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/health-and-inactivity/

As part of the strategy development process we will be exploring Sport England’s purpose and the role we play in the above agenda. Tackling inactivity and reducing inequalities is likely to continue to be a strong and important theme for our work. If you have any reflections that you would like to share with us on this topic, we would really value your input. Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
7. How can Sport England address the level of inclusivity through this strategy?

This is a really pertinent question ahead of Sport England developing our new strategy. The teams within Sport England who lead on inclusion-related work (E&D, disability, LSEG) are working closer together than ever and are joining up on how we can make more of an impact together in the new strategy. We are currently mapping how we think we can better support intersectionality across all that we do, from reviewing the data we collect, to utilising our investment opportunities, to working with our expert delivery partners, but this is just the start needed to have an impact across everything that Sport England does.

In addition, we had a number of questions around our role in Black, Asian and minority ethnicities (BAME) inclusion in sport and physical activity. encouraging Sport England is currently undertaking a major strategic review of our work in this area, with the fundamental belief that everyone, from every background should be able to take part in and benefit from the range of benefits that come from taking part in sport and physical activity. Yet we are well aware the rate of participation among people from many BAME communities has been stubbornly low for too long and there are deep routed inequalities - meaning that people from these backgrounds are more likely to be missing out on the benefits of sport and physical activity. This ‘ethnicity gap’ is not right, or fair, and Sport England is committed with partners to work collaboratively to identify better, long term, joined-up solutions.

Of course, these are only two examples of the work going on and we believe in the power of sport and physical activity In helping create a more inclusive society. We are particularly interested in the thoughts of partners around Sport England’s future role in this area and would highly value your input: Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
8. Understanding how we measure impact feels vital to the sector, how does this fit into Sport England’s thinking?

Developing effective ways of measuring progress and impact will be crucial to the successful delivery of the new strategy. There are existing foundations that we can adapt and build on as we work with partners to develop the impact measurement approach.

There is a well-established, and growing, evidence base to support the contribution sport and physical activity can make to health, social and economic outcomes. We have worked with academic partners to review this evidence base, and will shortly be publishing our latest findings. Building on this evidence, last year we worked with DCMS and other Government departments to commission Sheffield Hallam’s Sport Industry Research Centre to develop a model to demonstrate the value of physical activity across the five Sporting Future outcomes. This work is important not only in quantifying the economic and social value of sport and physical activity but also in highlighting robust evidence that all Government departments can use to identify how sport and physical activity can deliver for their agendas. It also identifies areas where the evidence base is less well-developed. The findings of this work will be published shortly.

The Active Lives Surveys (Child and Adult) provide a comprehensive and detailed national picture of the population’s sport and physical activity behaviours and attitudes. The surveys allow us to monitor differences between groups of people and across geographical areas, and track trends over time. We are using this data, supplemented by other information, to develop new market segmentations. This should help inform Sport England and our partners work, allowing us to tailor messages and delivery to better suit people’s needs and motivations. Further information about Active Lives is available from our website – https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives

While published literature and population measurement help us understand the general picture, evaluation of initiatives will be key to understanding the impact of specific projects, investments and partnerships. We have developed and published an Evaluation Framework to help support colleagues and partners to implement improved impact measurement and evaluation. This aims to strike an appropriate balance between consistency (e.g. via the use of standard questions for measuring impact on outcomes), relevance (e.g. making sure the tools, methods, and measures used are suitable for the specific project, context and target group) and the burden of data collection (e.g. not making unreasonable demands of project staff and volunteers, or adversely affecting the participant
experience). We recognise that this is a difficult balance to strike, so we welcome input from partners as we continue to review and update the framework based on learning and feedback received. Here is a link to the Evaluation Framework website – https://evaluationframework.sportengland.org/

We are conscious of the need for the existing measurement approach to evolve in line with the future strategy, responding to the way we understand Sport England’s purpose, and the collaborative way we want to work with others. We want to work collectively with partners to continue to refine and improve our approach to impact measurement, for example, to ensure it is sensitive to local context and aligned with ambitions to bring about long-term, sustainable system change.

We would welcome any further thoughts or suggestions you have on this theme and you can share them with us using our online form at this link: https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/
9. Will Sport England’s next Strategy focus on funding in the context of community needs?

You will have heard Tim say that more of a place based approach will be an important element of our next strategy.

‘Place’ is an important lens through which to look at the challenge and opportunities of getting more inactive people active and in particular to engage with individuals and communities where there are real stubborn inequalities and barriers to accessing opportunity. As context both public and third sectors are increasing their efforts to understand and change the entrenched social issues facing some of our communities and increasingly a more collaborative and systemic place based approach is seen as the way to work where we start from a platform of better understanding the lived experience first.

We know that significant disparities persist, with activity levels remaining unchanged among those from the poorest backgrounds. We increasingly see the strong link between this and place. Through our local pilot investment and work in other priority places we see that effective models of delivery locally seems to work best, peoples horizons are ‘limited’ i.e. what local means is very small and much smaller than a professionals outlook and if you want to gain the trust of a community and build sustainable change, this is more likely to be affected at the local level.

We will continue to explore the prospect for more place-based ways of working through the work in our local pilots, other priority places and our work on developing leadership to affect the systems in operation locally that contribute to lived experiences in our communities as well as exploring new models of creating sustainable behaviour change in localities. In parallel we are gathering our applied insight into how to engage with low socio economic audiences. This research through a ‘project’ lens and coupled with our learning about systemic changes from the local delivery pilots will provide a powerful ‘set of ingredients’ and the approach needed to think, act and ‘deliver’ differently.

The strategy will embody what we think place based working means and looks like and will help all parts of the sport and physical activity eco system in working differently with local communities. Increasingly this will be about not just what but how sport and physical activity needs to build with marginalised audiences and communities a change in activity in a way that lasts.
As part of the strategy development process we will be exploring Sport England’s purpose and the role we play in the above agenda. Place based approaches will be a strong and important theme for our work. If you have any reflections that you would like to share with us on this topic, we would really value your input. Visit https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/ to submit your thoughts.
10. The Workforce is vital to the Physical Activity landscape, what are Sport England planning to do to support this area further?

Sport England passionately believes that ‘people make the difference’ and that the sport and physical activity workforce, including volunteers, coaches and the professional workforce will continue to play a vital role in achieving the objectives of this strategy but also our in our ambitions to create an Active Nation in our future strategy.

Our current strategy and our associated work with our partners, acknowledges the important role that the workforce plays in creating inclusive and positive experiences for participants and for those who make up our varied workforce. In order to achieve this we need to recruit the right people and ensure they are equipped with the right skills and have the right experience. Our current work seeks to support and develop the workforce to achieve these objectives across the sport and physical activity ecosystem. Alongside this, we have also prioritised efforts and funding on making the sport and physical activity workforce more diverse. Diversity is a key priority across our workforce strategies. For example, our current volunteering strategy and the volunteering funds sought to develop new opportunities that will appeal to more diverse volunteers and ensure that those supporting others to get active reflect the diversity of our communities and the audiences we are seeking to engage.

You can find out more about our current work in this area here: https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/workforce

As we start to gather ideas and views on the role the workforce can play in achieving our mission in the new strategy, we will be seeking to explore new ways in which we can unlock the potential of the workforce, the potential of our people, to support and deliver across important strategic areas of work; whether that’s getting more women active or ensuring people with long term health conditions can get active with the right support for them in their community.

Sport England can’t do this alone and taking workforce development and support to the next level to achieve an active nation will often need to happen locally, taking a place-based approach, with and through a diverse range partners. This is likely to include some partners we already work with; like Active Partnerships, clubs and local authorities. We will also need to use our influence and relationships, not just our funding, to ensure that a strategic approach to workforce development is
embedded across the ecosystem and champion it across a range of agendas designed to support sport and physical activity. We will be looking in the next strategy to be open to exploring new ways and work with new partners to mobilise and engage people and communities and develop the workforce we need for the future of sport and physical activity.

We would welcome any further thoughts or suggestions you have on this theme and you can share them with us using our online form at this link: https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/shaping-our-future-strategy/