

‘Promoting Health and Wellbeing – a Commonwealth Games Legacy’ – Executive Commentary

I would like to thank the Commonwealth Games, Culture & Physical Activity Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and all those who contributed to this inquiry, for this inciteful piece of work into the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of sports, from spectating to participating, from grassroots to elite level.

I still get goosebumps when I think about how proud I was of our city as we hosted the 22nd Commonwealth Games – a Games that goes down in history as the “Games for All”, setting the standard for accessibility at this and future major events. Seating for assistance dogs, Changing Places toilets, specialist quiet areas, charging points for wheelchairs and panel sessions with sign language interpreters were just some of the many things which illustrate the lengths to which accessibility was placed at the core of Birmingham 2022. A lot of the groundwork done for the events last summer will stand us as a city in good stead for future events, including informing what we ought to consider when creating the proposed Insight Community group to help us ensure all voices are heard, especially those that are seldom heard.

In fact, we realised some benefits of the Games through the legacy of the newly redeveloped Alexander Stadium and Perry Barr railway station, both with first class accessibility in-built as part of the design process, which is easier to do when building something from scratch. Whilst I can appreciate the aspirations set out in the recommendations to ensure we seek to make whatever changes we can to our own facilities and venues to “exceed DDA compliance”, we must be cautious on what we commit ourselves to financially when the ramifications are not specified. Like the Wellbeing Centres, 46% of our external leisure centres are historic buildings that likely won’t fully conform to current DDA standards without capital investment. There could therefore be potential contractual ramifications which we would need to be mindful of.

That said, the Executive is of course supportive of the stated aims of increasing physical activity for everyone and would seek to explore any methods which make physical activity more accessible, particularly for those who traditionally experience barriers to participation. I speak on behalf of my Cabinet colleagues also named in the recommendations when I say we would be happy to work with officers and Scrutiny colleagues to help bring this about.



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