Given the current absence of a coalition government’s sport policy [February 2011], until that is the ‘A New Youth Sport Strategy (2012)’; this Ruff guide seeks to collate some of the ‘directional signs’ provided by government announcements and commentary of wider policies that impact on sport and physical activity provision. We borrow commentaries from a variety of organisations that serve to paint a picture of the governments’ immediate vision of public sporting provision followed by details of the ‘new’ youth sport strategy published on January 10th 2012;

We introduce this with some published commentary from the Sport and Recreation Alliance (formerly the CCPR);

On October 20, Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, announced the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in the House of Commons. The decisions taken by himself, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury would, he said, bring Britain “back from the brink”.

He announced public spending cuts totalling £83 billion over the next five years, starting with £23 billion in 2011 which he hopes, if coupled with a strong economic recovery, will completely eradicate the deficit by the end of the current Parliament.

Given the scale of cuts in welfare (£18 billion) in total since the Election, policing and defence, sports minister Hugh Robertson had already told CCPR that our sector would have to shoulder some of the burden. Although it will take a while to deliver a full analysis of the spreadsheets and navigate our way through the politics to the real detail, we now know the broad departmental funding reductions and can offer some initial analysis.
While considering DCMS cuts, it is worth noting that they will in part be offset by the return of the National Lottery to its original pillars. That will restore sport’s 20% share (from 16%), bringing in an extra £50 million a year.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

The DCMS has enjoyed a budget of £1.6 billion. Around £160 million goes directly to sport. The Chancellor announced the following:

- 25% cut to DCMS and its sponsored bodies over the next 5 years, with administrative cuts of 41%.
- The Department itself will halve in size
- Sport England’s budget will shrink by 33%
- UK Sport’s budget will shrink by 28%
- Whole Sport Plans and Elite Athlete Funding will be protected, but will still be cut by up to 15%
- The UK Anti-Doping Agency’s budget will be cut by 19%
- £9.3 billion budget for the Olympics will be protected (though the stadium’s £20 million wrap around will be diverted to pay for security at the Games)

Hugh Robertson has said he would rather do fewer things very well than top slice all of the Department’s activities. Some peripheral programmes will therefore be cancelled, as we have already seen with free swimming, but as yet we are not in a position to know exactly what else
is at risk.

Sport England:

- Sport England will have to absorb cuts of 33% by 2014/15
- Sport England will reduce its administration costs by 50% over the same period
- Revenue funding for NGBs will be protected until March 2013
- Sport England will also have to absorb a cut of 40% to its capital budget, which will affect NGBs more immediately.

UK Sport:

- UK Sport has received a settlement which means a 28% cut over four years
- UK sport will continue to fund athletes as planned up until 2012
- UK Sport has been given a number of other priorities for the coming four years. They include:
  - UK Sport to consider how to work better together with NGBs and other organisations to lever additional private sector funding into Olympic and Paralympic sport alongside public funding
  - UK Sport to work with the Home Country Sports Councils and Commonwealth Federations in the run-up to Glasgow 2014 to maximise our teams’ performances, and to consider how we could improve British performances at the Winter Olympics and Paralympics
- UK Sport to increase the budget for World Class Events to £5m per year to support the Government’s economic growth strategy
- UK Sport to reduce its administration cost level by 50% by the end of the Spending Review period
- UK Sport to work with the Department and Sport England to deliver a merged organisation by the target date of 1st April 2013, including driving out administration savings through closer working in advance of the merger
- UK Sport to work with the Department and Sport England to improve the governance of NGBs, including in the areas of equality and diversity

Department for Education

- Funding for schools and teachers has been protected, but savings will have to be found by the Department for Education and ring fencing has been removed. This means that the £125-130million that the department sets aside for school sport will no longer be targeted. The potential impact of this is that the five hour offer will be reduced to two.

- In addition, it is expected that all 400 sports colleges will lose their specialist status and as well as targeted funding for sport, worth £130,000 per school or £129 per child.

- Individual schools will be expected to fund sport from their ordinary budgets, and it is likely that the only additional funding for school sport will be the School Olympics, which will come from the Lottery.
- Ring-fencing of 162m for school sports partnerships (SSP) will cease, although after the scheme goes in summer 2011 (probably earlier in most cases to fund redundancy provision), the government is promising that £65m will be available in 2011-12 and 2012-13 to ensure one PE teacher per school is released for a day a week to ensure efforts to boost competitive sports are "embedded". The SSP's often characterised as being over bureaucratic, target driven by government via the Youth Sports Trust, are attempting to develop a continued service to schools (particularly primary) in the form of a variety of business models that they are _variously_ competent to construct and without the 'legitimacy' of the Youth Sport Trust, are likely to achieve only partial success.

- The Youth Sports Trust (a charity established in 1994) principally funded by the Department for Education and overseeing work in what are currently 501 specialist sports colleges and the 450 SSPs, employing 160 and having a turnover in excess of £28m, will suffer a significant reduction in operation given the governments cuts. Whilst government have given the YST lead on the competition based 'school games' initiative, their core _original_ objective of enabling specialist PE provision in primary schools appears to have been melted away; some argue that the original investment in the YST model was at the cost of specialist PE teacher provision in primary schools, a model adopted by Scottish schools.

The focus on the values associated with competitive sport and PE, irrespective of obvious political ideology interpretations, was already implicit in the sport policy of the previous government's _Playing to Win_ policy statement (2008-11) which was a departure from the 'sport as social instrument' philosophy that characterised _Game Plan_ in 2002. The Department for Culture Media and Sport in their December 2010 _Olympic legacy policy update_ detail their position;
“The Government is committed to delivering a sporting legacy for young people, and to bringing back a culture of competitive sport in schools. School sport is in a good position in this country – and we give thanks to the thousands of people in schools, and in communities, who make sport happen every day. However, levels of competitive sport are not as high as they should be. Just under four in ten pupils compete regularly against classmates and only two in ten compete regularly against those in other schools. This lack of competition may contribute to what happens when young people leave school. Sports participation drops off sharply – with the number of 16-19 year-olds doing sport falling by a third compared to 11-15 year olds. The cost is enormous, not just in terms of health, where one in four adults in this country is now classed as obese - the highest level in Europe - but also in terms of educational attainment, since teachers know that physical activity boosts concentration and feeds through directly into improved academic performance.

Truly vibrant sporting provision should not be subject to multiple conditions set within Whitehall. Instead, school sport should be part of a truly rounded education offered by every school. Our approach will be to get behind teachers and schools, and support them to work with parents, and within their local communities, to make Physical Education (PE) and school sport sustainable, and responsive to local needs.

The Department for Education has secured a good settlement for schools at a time when cutting the national deficit is an urgent priority. Schools value PE and sport and will continue to use their settlement to provide this for all pupils. The Department for Education has also announced that it will provide funding of £65 million for the school years 2011/12 and 2012/13, so that secondary schools can release a PE teacher to organise competitive sports, embed good practice and train primary teachers. This marks the transition from the previous Government’s top down Whitehall-led approach to giving freedoms to schools to deliver sport as they see fit.

To broaden the range of Olympic and Paralympic sports available to children and young people the Department of Health is providing funding of up to £6.4m over two years to secure the future of Change4Life Sports Clubs in secondary schools and to extend this model to primary schools. The extension of this programme will create further opportunities for those children who are
least active.

To inspire kids across the country to choose sport, and to incentivise schools to set their ambitions high, we are also creating a new, inclusive School Games, for which every school will be invited to sign up. We have applied for the ‘Inspired by London 2012’ mark (which is awarded to high-quality non-commercial projects inspired by the 2012 Games) for this programme. This package of annual events at school, district, county and national level has the potential to engage and excite every child – whether they are trying a sport for the first time in primary school, or competing on behalf of their school at county level.

The development of the School Games is being led by the Youth Sport Trust (YST), who will work with Sport England, sports and other key partners to develop the new series of competitions over the next academic year 2011/12. This will involve a new series of intra-school competitions offered to schools; more competitions between schools available at district level; and festivals of competitive sport in every county and city – linked to a schools’ database to recognise and profile competition results. The first ever finals will be held in the Olympic Park in the run-up to the Games in 2012.

The new competitions will be supported by Lottery funding of up to £10m per annum. The Department of Health is also providing up to £14 million over the next two years to support levels of participation in the Games by primary schools, and to create further opportunities for those who are the least active and deliver the important health benefits associated with physical activity.

We are determined that the School Games builds on existing strengths of the school sport system, renews our focus on competitive sport for all, and delivers a truly inspirational sporting legacy for young people. Further detail around the package for school sport and the new School Games will be announced in the New Year."
Department of Health

It is less clear than in any other department where exactly the pain will be felt. Health spending has been protected, with real terms increases in funding for hospitals, and the public health budget has been ring-fenced.

At face value, this is encouraging as sport and recreation are such important weapons in the fight against obesity. However, the current signs are not so good given that Department of Health funding for County Sports Partnerships (although they retain funding from Sport England) has already been withdrawn and Primary Care Trusts are being abolished.

Department for Communities and Local Government

The biggest threat to a thriving sport and recreation sector lies in local government reforms. Councils spend £1.5billion a year on sport and physical activity infrastructure and programmes, easily the most significant provider of sport and physical activity opportunities.

The Chancellor announced a 28% budget cut for communities and local government over the next four years, with the possibility of a further 7% cut in year five. If shared evenly across the Department, that means £500 million less for sport in communities all over the country. But
experience tells us that sport will take more than its fair share of cuts.

Councils will have more discretion on what they spend their money on, but there remain a number of things they have to do. Policing and fire-fighting needs local spend, houses have to be built and benefits administered, bins have to be emptied and social care has to be provided. So they are required to do the same for much less, disproportionately squeezing discretionary spend - such as that on sport.

Local authority sport, leisure and recreation departments in conjunction (and often jointly) with school sport provision represent the bulk of public ‘mass participation’ sport and physical activity opportunities. An original 2012 legacy objective of “Getting people more active: help at least two million more people in England be more active by 2012” (DCMS 2008), became a mere aspiration as it fell off the legacy progress reports, replaced by (inter alia) the School Games and the lottery funded initiative Places people play; (DCMS 2010);

“We are increasing the share of lottery funding that goes into community sport, to bolster activity at the grassroots. The Minister for Sport and the Olympics recently announced the Places People Play initiative. This £130million lottery-funded initiative will bring the sporting legacy to life in communities across the country, delivering on London 2012’s Singapore promise to inspire a new generation to play sport. It is being delivered by Sport England, in partnership with the British Olympic Association and the British Paralympic Association with the backing of LOCOG and the London 2012 Inspire mark.

Through Places People Play we will transform the places where people play sport, making the benefits of London 2012 visible in cities, towns and villages across England by:

· Upgrading up to a thousand local sports clubs and facilities
· Investing in a number of iconic multi-sport facilities that set the standards for future facilities development

· Protecting and improving hundreds of playing fields across the country, with local communities having a say in which local facilities should benefit, preserving high-quality spaces for local people to play and enjoy sport.

These facilities will be among the first of a select group to carry the London 2012 Inspire mark, a permanent celebration of their contribution to the legacy of the Games.

We will inspire people to make sport happen at the local level, embedding the Olympic and Paralympic values in grassroots sport, by Sport England funding the recruitment, training and deployment of 40,000 sports leaders as the next generation of sports volunteers to organise and lead grassroots sporting activities.

We will create the sporting opportunities and challenges that give everyone the chance to become a part of the mass participation legacy, through:

· Gold Challenge – an independent UK-wide initiative that will motivate over 10,000 adults to test themselves in multiple Olympic and Paralympic sports, and in doing so raise millions of pounds for charity

· Sportivate – a nationwide campaign by Sport England that will capture the excitement of sport, providing opportunities for teenagers and young adults to receive six weeks of coaching in the sport of their choice and guiding them into regular participation within their community

· Bikeability - cycle proficiency for the 21st century - will be supported for the rest of this Parliament. This will give the next generation of children the confidence and skills to ride more safely, increasing their physical activity and giving them an additional means of travel to and from sporting competitions.”
The coalition government have centred their approach to sport policy on the ‘inspirational’ impact of competitive sport and particularly that of the coming London Olympic games. It is perhaps worth a note of caution; Coalter as far back as 2004 states;

There is a lack of rigorous research about the impact of major events on sports development and “very little participation data permitting an evaluation of the impact of the Olympics on general levels of sports participation”. Of the research that does exist, an analysis of sports participation in Australia between 1985 and 2002 revealed that in the year following the Sydney Games in 2000, seven Olympic sports experienced a small increase in participation while nine declined. There was a similar pattern for non-Olympic sports, with the largest increase in non-competitive walking. In a 2008 (p160) paper Kristine Toohey wrote that it was “impossible to conclude that the 2000 Games left a legacy of active sport-for-all in Australia” and that “the most substantial sport participation-related impact of the [2000 Games] was an increase in passive involvement, such as live and television spectating”.

In a 2007 report, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee also concluded that “no host country has yet been able to demonstrate a direct benefit from the Olympic Games in the form of a lasting increase in participation”. (para 135)

On January 10th 2012 with 199 days to go to the opening ceremony of the London Olympics, the DCMS published the governments' ‘new’ youth sport strategy; Creating a sporting habit for life: A new youth sport strategy
We offer here Sport England's description of this strategy (although offer that there is nothing really in it that is new, rather a repackaging of existing ideas..... we'll let you decide);

"Between 2012 and 2017 over £1 billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding will be invested to create a meaningful and lasting community sport legacy by growing sports participation at the grassroots level.

Under the new strategy, every secondary school in England is set to host a community sports club, and £10 million will be made available to open up school sport facilities for wider public use.

In 2017, five years after the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, we want to have transformed sport in England so that playing sport becomes a lifelong habit for more people and a regular choice for the majority. In particular, we want to raise the number of 14- to 25-year-olds playing sport.

National governing bodies (NGBs) will continue to play a pivotal role in increasing participation, particularly among young people. And, as the Secretary of State has outlined today, a tougher regime of payment-by-results will be a fundamental feature of our performance management
system. This will be coupled with a new incentive fund to enable those doing exceptionally well to achieve more.

County sports partnerships will support NGBs, foster local links and help transition young people into clubs. We will support and work with local authorities through our advocacy tools and investment including a new community activation fund.

Partners including the National Partners, StreetGames, the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust, the Youth Sport Trust and others will add value and support our work.

“Changing the sporting behaviour of a generation is a major challenge which has not been achieved by any other Olympic host nation,” said Sport England Chief Executive Jennie Price. “With a new focus on young people and an even tougher, Government-backed, regime of payment by results, Sport England and its partners are determined to deliver.”

Under the strategy:

- Every one of the 4,000 secondary schools in England, will be offered a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more NGBs, depending on the local clubs in its area
- County sports partnerships will be given new resources to create effective links locally between schools and sport in the community
- All secondary schools who wish to do so will be supported to open up, or keep open, their sports facilities for local community use and at least a third of these will receive additional funding to make this happen
- 150 College Sports Makers working across most of the 347 general FE colleges
- Three-quarters of the university student population (aged 16-24) – that’s over 900,000 young people - will get a chance to take up a new sport or continue playing a sport they enjoyed in school or college
- A thousand of our most disadvantaged local communities will get a Door Step Club
- Two thousand young people on the margins of society will be supported into sport and to gain new life skills by the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust
- There will be a new £40 million local sport fund to help local authorities improve sport provision
- Building on the early success of Places People Play, a further £100m will be invested in new facilities for the most popular sports, for example new artificial pitches and upgrading local swimming pools
- A minimum of 30 sports will have enhanced England Talent Pathways to ensure young people and others fulfil their potential.
- In future, NGB investment will start at age 14 to ensure a better transition from school sport and create a sporting habit for life through increasing participation overall.
- School Games: Sainsbury’s pledged a £10 million package to support the new School Games Competition over the next four years. A further £14 million from the Department of Health plus a further £8 million from Sport England will extend funding for School Games organisers from two years to four years, up to 2015. And sponsorship from adidas means that the 1,600 young athletes will be provided with sports kit."

In March 2013 the Government announced 150m of funding for primary school sport;

According to the DCMS;

'The new sports funding aims to improve the quality of provision by providing:

- A lump sum for each school, with a per-pupil top-up. A typical primary school with 250 primary aged pupils would receive £9,250 per year
- ‘Ring-fenced’ funding that’s only to be spent on sport which will go directly into the hands of heads and teachers
- A greater role for Britain’s best sporting and voluntary organisations, including National Governing Bodies who will increase the specialist coaching and skills development on offer for primary schools
- Tougher assessment of sport provision via Ofsted to ensure the funding is bringing the maximum benefit for all pupils, with schools held to account for how they spend the money

- Sport England investing £1.5 million a year of lottery funding through the County Sport partnerships to help Primary Schools link up with local sports coaches, clubs and sports governing bodies
- Teacher training to produce a cadre of primary teachers with a particular specialism in PE, developed in conjunction with sports bodies'

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See our Ruff Guide to PE & School Sport for further background and commentary

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The above commentary is an amalgamation and slightly amended versions of the following bibliography;

Culture, Media and Sport Committee, London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: funding and legacy, HC 69-I, January 2007


See below for a detailed impact interpretation compiled by the Physical Activity Network - West Midlands;