



HOUSE OF LORDS

Unrevised transcript of evidence taken before

The Select Committee on Olympic and Paralympic Legacy

Inquiry on

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC LEGACY

Evidence Session No. 9

Heard in Public

Questions 127 - 140

WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2013

11.45 am

Witnesses: Baroness Grey-Thompson

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Members present

Lord Harris of Haringey (Chairman)
Lord Addington
Earl of Arran
Lord Bates
Lord Best
Baroness King of Bow
Lord Moynihan
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Lord Wigley

Witness

Baroness Grey-Thompson

Q127 The Chairman: I think you are familiar with the format. This is a public session, as you know. We are being webcast. You will be receiving a copy of the uncorrected transcript; if you feel there are factual inaccuracies, you are welcome to correct them, and as an incentive, will publish the uncorrected transcripts straightaway and correct them as soon as you let us know there is anything inaccurate. I am going to start by asking what your aspirations were for the Olympic and Paralympic legacy at the time of the original bid, and did those aspirations change or evolve between 2005 and 2012?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I had very simple personal aspirations for winning the Games based on the context of the time of where we were in disability sport. At the start of the bid in the early 2000s, lottery funding for Paralympic athletes had only just kicked in. It was slightly more established for the Olympic athletes, but I think it took a while for it to really bed down for the Paralympic sports. I think as well, if you look at where the national governing bodies were at the time, they were not very inclusive—very tokenistic, I think. There were very few Paralympic squads that were integrated with the mainstream governing bodies. For me, if we could win the Olympics, it meant that lottery funding would be confirmed and set and protected. I also felt that we had a very good opportunity to

encourage inclusion. There were a number of governing bodies who actually did not want to have anything to do with the Paralympic squads at all and lottery funding and winning the Olympics was part of that. It was also about trying to raise the level of media coverage and support. While there was a lot of coverage around Paralympic time for our athletes, that did not continue through the rest of the four-year cycle.

For me, it was just a chance to kind of put the Paralympic Games on the map. I think we also had to be very realistic. There were a number of people involved in the bid who understood Paralympics and got it, and talked about Olympics and Paralympics. But for a number of people, Paralympics was very much a second-class event. One of the things I was really happy about when we were in Singapore bidding, there was a big discussion about when we were on stage, whether we actually said to the IOC, “It is the 60 days of the Games.” That, at the time, felt a little bit of a step too far to the IOC, because we had to be very mindful we were bidding for the Olympics and then the Paralympics negotiations came behind the scenes. As much as I am very passionate about inclusion, I was one of the people who said, “No, we just need to win the Olympics and the rest will happen.”

For me, it was very much about what we could do with Paralympics. It was also about changing attitudes towards disabled people. At the time, the attitude was not great. I do not think it is probably any better in the wider disability context, but I think having Games on home soil meant we could push so many different agendas. That was the excitement of bidding for me.

Q128 The Chairman: I note that in 2008, DCMS produced a document, *Before, During and After* that only put forward five legacy promises. The sixth legacy promise—to develop the opportunities and choices for disabled people—only appeared the following year, making it look like an afterthought. Would you like to comment on that, and how that change was brought about?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: At the time there were probably lots of people who did not get what the Paralympics were. It was just this thing that happened afterwards. Even now, a lot of the language around Olympics and Paralympics is people talking about the “real Olympics” or the “proper Olympics” or the “Paraplegic Olympics”. Now that we have had the Games I think there is a huge amount of understanding, but I think probably at the time not an awful lot of people understood where disability rights politics was or where disability rights sport was, or just how to include it. There was a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes by quite a significant number of people—not least LOCOG—in terms of trying to kind of push everyone who was involved in anything to do with the Olympics and Paralympics to make sure we got the best legacy we could. Sometimes it did feel like we were playing a bit of catch-up. I saw one document that I think was draft number 23, which was saying, “We would like transport to be better and we would like a bit better access to school sport”, and it kind of felt that some of it was a long time coming and quite hard work, trying to push what the Paralympics could really deliver. Ultimately, the Games are never going to change the world on their own. They are a moment that is an incredible, special time, which is fairy dust; but there has to be a huge amount of work behind the scenes to make sure the ongoing legacy actually happens.

The Chairman: So you are saying DCMS needed to be brought into the 21st century, as far as this was concerned?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I think that is a very fair comment.

Q129 The Chairman: Could I slightly switch direction and take us out of sequence from what we were originally talking about? What is your reaction to last week’s spending review, in which funding for elite sport was protected but government funding for community sport was cut by 5%? Do you think that is the right approach to take, and to

what extent is the sporting legacy of London 2012 dependent upon continuing to receive sufficient income from the National Lottery?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I think it is very important that the elite side is protected—although I would say that, having been a Paralympian. I do not think anybody wants to see us in the same situation that the Australians are now in. We have a lot of nice rivalry between us and the Australians, but it is never good to see a country that has done so well, and has had all of its funding removed, to be in a situation where it is really struggling. The reality is, to continue elite success, we do need funding. You can always question where various pots of money are spent, but I think the public reaction to cutting the elite pot of funding at this point would have been very adverse. The real challenge in elite funding comes after Rio, as the further we get away from the Olympics and Paralympics—that kind of wonderful, fuzzy moment that everyone felt—is further in the past. I think that is a big challenge for the elite sports, to carry on justifying the funding it needs.

My personal view, again, is that the elite funding also needs money spent beneath that. If I am being very harsh, a huge proportion of our Olympic medals still come from the independent school sector. That is not true of Paralympic medals. We need a really broad-based pyramid beneath that. We need a population of young people who are fitter and healthier. Out of that, the talent pathway and sporting success will come with an appropriate amount of investment. It is difficult, because when you start saying we have this much money spent on the National Health Service or social care or welfare as opposed to sport and recreation, it is a really tough sell, but I think there is a huge amount we can do in terms of physical activity, physical literacy, promoting health that would actually save money from other budgets along the way. I would always argue that more money needs to be spent in terms of the grassroots participation side of it as opposed to other areas.

It is hard to know whether cutting a budget by 5% will have a long-term impact on medal success. We probably would not know that for another 10 to 12 years and by that point funding cycles will have changed so much anyway it is hard to know.

Q130 Lord Moynihan: You make a compelling case for the importance that governing bodies should address in terms of embedding sporting opportunity for those with disabilities, as well as the so-called able-bodied sportsmen and women. Given the success of London in making a transformational step in a number of governing bodies and given the fact that international federations are now beginning to recognise this as well, is one of your long-term goals to see the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee becoming one?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: No. That is actually the one thing where I do not think inclusion would probably work very well. It is a lovely idea, but the reality is if you had one Games an awful lot of Paralympic events would get cut. You would potentially pick up wheelchair racing, tennis, basketball and some other sports that are considered more aesthetically pleasing. There was some unpublished research a few years ago, before London, that would be interesting to do again, about what sports the public wanted to watch. The public were very comfortable watching leg amputees and wheelchair sport, but they were slightly less comfortable watching sport with people with higher levels of impairment. The reality is that sports like Goalball and Boccia would be cut from a joint Games and sporting opportunities would be limited. I like having the Olympics first and then having the Paralympics second. People argue that we should have the Paralympics first, but again for me that would not work because we are not in a place world wide where the world gets the Paralympics. It has to be ready for the Olympics and the Paralympics can piggyback on that.

Lord Moynihan: As a supplementary to that, it is a condition precedent if you are bidding for the Olympic Games to host the Paralympic Games. What is your view about the Special

Olympics? Should they have a similar status in their relationship with the IOC, given that they are embedded in the Charter in the same way that the Paralympians are.

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Logistically, if you were talking about having a Special Olympics after a Paralympics after an Olympics it would be difficult. There does need to be more recognition of Special Olympics because people do not quite understand what it is. I have been called a Special Olympian quite a lot. There is more understanding now that the Special Olympics is incredibly important for the group of people it serves in terms of participation and life skills, but it is not elite sport. It is different. The organisation was very smart in using the Olympics title, but there also has to be recognition of Deaf Olympics as well in terms of where that fits in the overall scheme. That will take longer to come as well.

Q131 Lord Wigley: Perhaps I could follow through. Did the experience of staging the 2012 Games change the way that Paralympic and disability sports bodies on the one hand and Olympic and other governing bodies on the other interact and co-operate. I am aware that Norway has integrated all governing bodies and National Olympic and Paralympic Committees into a single body for their sport. Some have suggested that a unified system like this would be appropriate in a GB context. What is your feeling about that?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: The fact that something like the British Olympic Association and the British Paralympic Association are co-located in one office is fantastic. In post-Games rationalisation there is probably more working together they could do. I still quite like having a separate identity. I would like to see much greater work in integration within the NGBs, national governing bodies. All Paralympic/Olympic national governing bodies would say they are inclusive, but I would dispute that. I am slightly tired of seeing lovely posters with Paralympians on, but knowing that in that particular sport beneath the surface what they genuinely do for inclusion is somewhat limited. I would be interested in the next couple of years looking at national governing bodies' performance plans, how they spend

their money, the line of demarcation between their Olympic and Paralympic spends and whether they are genuinely spending all the money they are allocated for their Paralympic programme on Paralympic sports. I would say most governing bodies still have a long way to go.

Lord Wigley: In the previous session we had some interesting comments made: targets would be set and there might even be the possibility of funding being withdrawn if those targets for disability sports were not met. Is that something that you would welcome?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Hugely. It feels now at the point where that will be done, although if you look back to the start of Lottery funding all governing bodies were told if they did not take on their Paralympic programme they would not have full access to the Lottery funding. I am not aware of any mainstream governing body that had its funding cut. I would also like to see beneath squad level, to junior quad level and even down to participation, that there is genuine inclusion. It does not work for everybody and there is a case at grassroots level that some people might need a slightly different route in. If you are in my sport, wheelchair racing, it is quite hard to compete in school against lots of people running; it is a bit easier when you develop and you get stronger. The actual entry routes could be different. I still think most governing bodies could do better. The messages they send out to the clubs about inclusion with their coaching awards: we have some fairly tokenistic “coaching athletes with disabilities” courses that are not part of guaranteed revalidation. They are very much set on the side, and I would like to see a real drive for those to be included.

Q132 Lord Addington: How much do you think the attitudes within the disability world changed? We did get some panicky messages coming out from disability groups saying, “By the way, we’re not all capable of going for hundreds of miles in a wheelchair or leaping up and down like this. Some of us cannot do these things.” There was, a moment of

enjoyment and panic at the same time. I wondered how far you think they have decided that sport is for them. Has that happened at all?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Before London, a lot of people had great difficulty understanding what it took to become a Paralympian. People understood that to be an Olympian you needed to be talented, train hard and resilient, all those things. There was a view that if you are a Paralympian you could just turn up and have a go. Athletes before the Games were still being asked, “Do you train?” We do, quite a lot: 15 times a week 50 weeks a year.

One of the things that London did change was that people understood what it took to be a Paralympian, which was great, and there has been a very positive view of Paralympians, which is amazing. Whether that translates into media coverage going forward into sponsorship I would doubt, but then you could also ask how much London has changed sponsorship and media coverage of women Olympians. It has shifted it a bit, but there has not been this massive whole-scale change. I still think if there was one tiny downside of London, it was that there still was the view that every disabled person could be or would want to be a Paralympian. There are loads of disabled people who hate sport, and that is fine. It is very difficult looking at Paralympians—who are a very different group of people to the rest of the disability population—and trying to compare what you can do as a Paralympian to what other disabled people can do. In the mainstream population you would not ever have a test of someone’s ability to do a job by going into a gym and deadlifting 200 kilos. It is the same with disabled people: it is understanding that there are differences between Paralympians and other disabled people.

The disability hate crime figures are out of date now, because they were over 18 months ago, but the last reported disability hate crime figures were the worst they have ever been in 10 years of reporting. There is a mismatch between what the public think about

Paralympians and what the public think about disabled people as one homogenous group and the way they are treated. That is a difficulty we have to try to overcome.

Q133 Lord Best: I will take that line about attitudes to disabled people more generally a bit further. You of course bring us all your expertise from the world of sport, but you are also a champion of disability issues on a much bigger stage. Were you saying then that broader attitudes towards disability and disabled people have not really moved very far as a result of a fantastic Paralympic Games, or was this a seminal moment in which for quite a lot of people something fundamentally changed?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: It was a seminal moment for Paralympic sport. If you know somebody who is disabled, you probably view them slightly differently. There has been some shift into slightly more positive attitudes, but there is not this whole-scale shift to understanding the social model of impairment, how disabled people fit into society and how we can remove some of the barriers to accessing work or education. I do not feel there is a shift, but I suppose I am affected by the mail I receive and most of the mail I receive is from people saying it has not got any better. It is not any kind of scientific study at all, but it is just what I see coming across my desk. If you see the GB tracksuit—and lots of Paralympians are now very well known—the public adore them and do not see them as being any different from Olympians, but the wider image has not changed much.

Lord Best: Could we use sport to change broader attitudes? Have we missed a trick?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: We have not missed a trick yet, but the time and the opportunity we have is disappearing. We could do a lot in terms of how we use our well-known Paralympians in terms of encouraging people to be fit and healthy and it could filter down into physical activity in school. The reality though is that in tough economic times, with some of the changes that are coming through welfare and other legislation it is pretty hard out there. While the media is great in terms of covering sport, it likes to put people in

boxes. A lot of the ways that disabled people are portrayed would be as benefit scroungers sucking money out of the state and not being a positive contribution. That is the reality of where we are at the moment.

Q134 Lord Stoneham of Droxford: Can we turn to the issue of facilities for the competition and practice in London 2012? What is your view of how they will be used to deliver the Paralympic legacy? Has Paralympic sport been properly, fully considered in looking for and developing legacy uses for these facilities? Did the single Organising Committee of LOCOG offer any benefits in this regard?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I know you have my register of interests, but I do sit on the London Legacy Development Corporation. That has been very interesting in terms of looking at the transition. Undoubtedly, the single Organising Committee was amazing in terms of making sure of how we treated our Paralympians but how we looked at the whole provision of the Games. It worked exceptionally well. I competed at five Games and then worked in Beijing. There was always quite a lot of money spent afterwards trying to make things more accessible. What London did was very smart in terms of building that in. It was really exciting at Games time in terms of spectator seating, accessible toilets, provision of food, lowered serving spaces and Games Makers being trained to help people or at least offer help. That was incredible in terms of what was done. They were really small things that meant a lot to the people who came. If you were there as a wheelchair user you could sit with your family, which does not happen in a huge number of venues. The number of times when I have gone somewhere with my daughter when she was seven or eight and they said she has to sit 20 rows in front of me because, due to health and safety, she cannot sit next to me. The Games time experience was actually really well thought of.

In legacy, the spectator experience is being thought of quite a lot. It would be nice if we could have a few more seats for wheelchair users, but now the standard has been set in

terms of hearing loops, special seating for people with mobility impairment so people can choose seats on the edge or rows, that will carry on. I would love it if that actually had an impact on wider sporting venues around the country. If you look at football, the reality is that most Premiership football stadiums are pretty shocking if you are a wheelchair user. There is a large number of clubs who do not allow disabled people to buy season tickets; they can be given tickets in one out of every three games, which means you cannot complain about your sightline, your accessible seating, toilets or whether you have to sit with away fans or home and away fans together. There is a big piece of work that could be done. Football is obviously one of our biggest sports, but with the Rugby World Cup and the Commonwealth Games that are coming to us it would be great if the lessons we have learnt from London could be filtered out, because I do not think disabled people should be given free tickets to sporting events; they should pay for them. However, it needs to be addressed that we have genuine inclusion again, going forward.

Lord Stoneham of Droxford: How would you like to see that? There were certain standards set and, by example and persuasion in other sectors, it must filter through, should it not?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: The IPC standards were very high, which is great. The great advantage is that lots of very good people worked at LOCOG and got diversity and inclusion. They did not all get it straightaway. One of the great things was that Paul Deighton chaired diversity and inclusion, so people bought into it and they realised it made good business sense. Those people will go and work elsewhere and they will be an influence. It is also left to people like me to keep going on about it, actually. When we stop talking about London there will still be people who remember lots of good things that happened. I am not a huge fan of legislation for the sake of it, but it would really nice if some of the standards and levels of expectation that were raised by London would filter into other

sectors. I do not want people who came to 2012 Olympics or Paralympics, whose first experience as a disabled person watching sport was amazing, going to something else, being told to use the back entrance and, “You cannot sit here and if you can only see half the field of play do not complain about it because you have a free ticket.” That would be a huge shame.

Lord Moynihan: Can I just follow up on the football club example you have just mentioned? Surely it should be made illegal for football clubs to discriminate on the basis of a disability.

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Yes. They hide behind costs at the moment; there has been a figure—I am not sure how much work has gone on behind it—saying that disability access at Premiership football clubs would cost £100 million. It would be very interesting to explore that and learn from LOCOG what is needed and what can be done. It seems like a huge amount of money; I am not sure it is as much as that.

Lord Moynihan: If you go back 30 years, they had to take action on the grounds of safety. Why should they not be compelled to take action against discriminating through the argument of cost against disabled people coming to watch Premier League games?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I completely agree.

The Chairman: A 1% levy on some of the top players’ salaries would probably cover it.

Q135 Earl of Arran: Can we really expect to finish in the top three in the medals table for the Paralympics, particularly in view of increasing international sport? Is it realistic?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Yes, I think it is.

Earl of Arran: Good.

Baroness Grey-Thompson: It is hard. Winning the London Games inspired lots of young people who were on the edge of participation to stay in sport. It has inspired lots of people to have a go. At Games time when you are watching David Weir win gold medals, loads of

people want to be the next David Weir, and then you realise it is actually quite dull and boring and you have to train very hard. That weeds a lot of people out. We can expect to finish fairly high up.

A challenge is that the development of Paralympic sport has happened relatively quickly compared to the Olympic movement in terms of professionalisation of Paralympic sport. There are more and more countries taking it seriously. Twenty years ago it was a bit more tokenistic. There is the fact that you now have countries like China who take it incredibly seriously. If you look at their team for Sydney, they only selected athletes from the Greater Beijing area. Now the Chinese team—scarily for us—is coming from across the whole of the country. You will see more countries investing money because it means more. We will know the world takes it seriously when it appears live on American television. It was hugely disappointing that there was a couple of hours of recorded programming after the Games had finished, because they do not get it. Bizarrely, in a country where you have Title IX about women's entitlement to sport at university and they have had scholarship programmes for disabled athletes for 40 years and the local structure is amazing, the public do not get to see it. The next step is getting it shown live in the States. The reality is that that will make it much harder for Paralympics GB.

Earl of Arran: What about Rio? Are they right behind the movement?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Yes, they are doing incredibly well. They are probably strongest in swimming and athletics, but they are catching up with their other sports. It is going to be a very different Games, but as a country they are developing. It will also develop the other South American countries. There will be a domino effect as the Games move round. I believe our team can step up to the plate, because they know what to do.

Q136 Baroness King of Bow: You recently chaired a review group that came to the conclusion that PE should become a core subject in Welsh schools. Do you think this is

specific to Wales or should a more general case be made for the UK as a whole? I have just a quick supplementary to that. I understand that your report looked at examples of where physical activity is taken more seriously in countries including Canada, Finland and Scotland. My out-of-date stereotype is that they are eating deep-fried Mars bars in Scotland. Are the figures for obesity actually lower there than in the rest of the UK?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Wales's obesity figures are pretty shocking, in terms of the downward trend as well. When we were looking at countries to compare it to, we obviously looked at England as well. It was a really interesting challenge. The Welsh Assembly asked me to be bold, which I was, because we only have one recommendation. It looks very simple to make PE core, but there are a lot of things that fall out of that. A massive priority is changing teacher training. I and so many other people have been going on about this for years. It could be changed incredibly quickly. Most parents would be shocked if maths was being taught to their primary school children by somebody who dropped out at 11 and had four hours of instruction in how to deliver it. There would be universal outcry. That is what is happening in PE in primary schools. It is a challenge, and if you suddenly have 30 children who all have different levels of ability and physical literacy you make it as simple as you can. What we want is to radically change initial teacher training so that we are delivering really good quality physical education, but we are teaching good skills from the youngest age.

I had a really strong panel of experts both within Wales and the international field. We agreed that if we teach good skills at a younger age we are much more likely to keep girls involved in sport in particular. One of the reasons girls drop out at nine, 11, 13, 14 is because they do not like doing it in front of their friends, because they are perceived to not be so good at it. There are lots of issues. We know that if you put hairdryers in girls' changing rooms they are 10 times more likely to do PE in school because they worry about

what their hair looks like. We cannot change that girls worry about how skinny they are and whether their hair is straightened or not, but we can have an influence on it by doing things differently. I would love it if we could do that across the whole of the UK because this is not just about sport, although it kind of is a little bit because we want GB to keep doing well. We have an obesity time bomb across the whole of the UK and if we do not make a change we are just going to get worse. You cannot blame schools for everything, but children are in schools for lots of hours a day and we have to help parents to understand they need to play with their children, they need to get their kids walking to school and they need to eat the right stuff. We were specifically asked to look at what you could do in school.

Baroness King of Bow: Those nine, 10 and 11-year-olds you mentioned do not come under Sport England's remit at the moment. Do you think they should?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Probably, but actually I would really like for Sport England to be given a remit that stays steady. It changes all the time. I might be being slightly disingenuous here, but their remit has changed every couple of years. It is really hard on Sport England for them to have to move the goalposts all the time. I do not mind where the remit comes, but unless we take physical activity and physical literacy more seriously at primary school level we are going to always struggle. It is not just me; I am not an expert in primary education, but most governing bodies and most people in sport would agree this is where we can have a big impact.

Baroness King of Bow: As far as you are aware, are those issues around core teacher training in PE the same for England as they are for Wales?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Absolutely. It is across the whole of the UK. In a lot of primary schools, the teacher who is seen to be sporty is given the role of doing PE. That might be great because they might be good at teaching PE, but they might not be. We also

actually need to widen the opportunities given to young people. I love netball, hockey, football and rugby, but they do not suit everybody. We have to have a bit more fun. If you are competitive you find your way through to the elite stuff, but we have to give a lot more opportunity to the widest possible amount of physical activity.

Q137 Lord Wigley: Is your recommendation in Wales practical in rural areas where you have schools with perhaps two teachers? The likelihood of being able to fulfil that expectation is going to be very challenged. What is the response of the Assembly to your suggestion?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Making PE core can happen straightaway within the next cycle. The time lag in terms of changing initial teacher training and continual professional development will take a while. There has been some really good support in Wales through something called PESS, which is additional teacher training; they have Dragon Sport; they have lots of stuff wrapped around school. Some of those are coming to the end of the funding cycle and we are suggesting using some of that funding, which we think is going to cost about £1 million in Wales to radically changing how PE is offered. It is not going to change overnight, but we want to make it better for the teacher who dropped out of sport, does not like it and dreads teaching it. We want to give them the skills so they can make it fun for the children. It will not change overnight, but it will change over a period of time. We are waiting for the official response; these things take a while. The Welsh Assembly will report back before Christmas.

Q138 Lord Moynihan: Disability sport is one element of the Government's 10-point sports legacy plan. There were other good elements as well that impact on disability sport, including the School Games Programme and Project Ability. Could you comment on that? Secondly, related to that, what is missing from the sports legacy plan for those with disability? What are the key items that you would really like to see? It may be beyond

sport; it may just be the legacy benefits for society as a whole for issues that are relevant to those with disability.

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I love the idea of School Games. I think it is great, but it fits sporty children and I would like the legacy to be wider than that. What is quite hard at the moment is that in some of the sports that are School Games it is hard to find the number of children. Bizarrely in my sport, wheelchair racing, there were more girls competing in 1982 before the word "Paralympic" was invented than there are now. That is a big challenge out to the sports. It is harder because there is more competition between the sports. The idea of School Games is great, but we just need to make sure that all events are competitive. We also need to make sure that there is genuine inclusion within the teams to make sure they are not just something that is tacked on the outside. I would quite like to incentivise team selection: if you bring a full team of Paralympic athletes you can score differently on your points. There are teams which do not have enough athletes and it is probably not fair to penalise them, but we need to find a way of really making sure that we are targeting disabled children who want to do sports and be active to make sure that we give them the opportunities to come in.

In the wider legacy it comes back again to school sport. The only advantage I ever saw in special education was for sport and physical activity because children had people to compete against of a similar impairment. It was quite a positive way of doing things and it was a better competition route through. Now an awful lot of disabled children are in mainstream education and it is hard for an 11-year-old in a wheelchair to play tennis against someone who is running around. It is not hard for someone who is GB squad in a wheelchair to play tennis with someone who is running around, but it is different. We have to think really clearly about how we include disabled children in PE lessons. I still get a huge number of letters from families saying their children are excluded. Within the statement of special

educational needs, physical activity is not seen as a priority and it is not seen as a priority to parents. If you spent all this time fighting for your child's right to be educated, physical activity is just not on the top of your agenda.

The Children and Families Bill is an amazing opportunity to wrap up social care, health and education of disabled children, and actually make sure that we have physical activity as part of that. If you have disabled children who are fitter and healthier they are going to cost us less money. That is the reality. There was some research that I saw last week that shows disabled people are not as fit and healthy as the general population. That is about physical access to sport; it is about access to coaching. There are lots of things that impact on that, but if there was one thing I could do for disabled kids it was make sure that they leave school more physically active.

Lord Addington: Looking at barriers to participation in sport for those who have disabilities, is it lack of facilities or is it lack of training that is the biggest problem? If you are mixing them as a cocktail, which one would you say is the biggest problem?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: I do not think facilities are too much of a problem because they are much more accessible than they used to be. Cost of equipment is a barrier. Racing chairs, prosthetic legs and basketball chairs are not cheap. They can be around £5,000. There are a number of charities who support children by buying equipment, but my gut reaction is that has actually pushed up the price. There is still a little bit of a patronising tone around some of the coaching that I see and some of the work. It is not knowing; some coaches and teachers can be a bit worried about coaching disabled people in case they hurt them. A little bit of knowledge would help, so in that respect it would be teacher/trainer coaching and just teaching people that you can ask. Most of the time disabled people do not get broken that easily and it is about not being afraid to work with them.

Q139 Lord Bates: We have talked about the legacy and the London Games was supposed to be the first Games with an international legacy. You played a phenomenal role not only here in the UK, but also going out around the world and raising awareness for the Paralympic Games. What do you see as the legacy of that aspect of the Games—in other words, attitudes to Paralympic sport around the world—and the success of London in that respect?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: If you look at something like the International Inspiration programme that was great. I was involved in that and that talked about Paralympics all the way through. Countries that maybe did not have much of a tradition of Paralympic sport had to embrace it, and that was good. What we are going to see by Rio, but certainly the Games after that, is a big increase in the number of countries that will bring athletes to the Paralympics because London showed that you could do it. It showed that you could sell tickets and that is actually probably the biggest thing that came out of the Games: people want to watch. London made Paralympic sport cool and that was great.

The approach LOCOG took in terms of the stuff they could do together, they did; they sold tickets separately and there were some really smart decisions about price points for ticketing, about bringing children in. The most amazing thing was nobody had to be bussed in, and that is the first Games in my experience where people were not bussed in and told what they were watching. That gives other cities coming behind the confidence that they can do it as well.

Q140 The Chairman: We have covered all the ground we were going to ask. Is there anything you feel you want to tell us while you are here that we have not asked you about?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: There is some wider work I am doing. Around London one of the really great things about the Games was access to public transport and people being slightly more thoughtful about how things could work. At Games time with the Javelin from

St Pancras out to the park, they ignored the rule about only one wheelchair user per carriage. They were very smart about how they moved people around and that has given some of the public transport network a bit more incentive to think about what they could do. As opposed to just physical access to sport, there are lots of areas that we need to keep working on. Public transport is also one of the things on my list that I would like to solve. We have some fairly strange rules in this country where only one wheelchair user can travel on a bus at any one time or one wheelchair user per carriage of a train, and you have to book 24 hours in advance. Not everyone knows what they are doing 24 hours in advance. What I would like to do is use some of the magic of the Games to challenge some wider views on some of the rules we have had for a very long time that were there for a very good reason at the time, but I am not sure they are there for a very good reason any more. London at Games time moved lots of people around very smartly and they could do that again.

Baroness King of Bow: What about moving around the Houses of Parliament? How easy is that for you?

Baroness Grey-Thompson: It is one of the most accessible buildings I have ever been in, apart from the very expensive carpets that are slightly harder to push on. If I had my way I would laminate the whole building, but I doubt that would get through the renovation committee.

Lord Bates: Peers' Entrance was your idea.

The Chairman: On that note can we thank you very much? The session is now concluded.