



Glasgow City Council

Item 3

22nd January 2026

**Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
(WECCE) Committee**

Report by Convener for Culture, Sport and International Relations

Contact: Alan Milner, Head of Sport (Glasgow Life)

SUPPORT FOR TALENTED SPORTS PERFORMERS

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Committee a paper outlining the response and findings of the consultation exercise requested by the WECCE Committee in April 2025 regarding Glasgow's support for talented sports performers, and next steps to ensure that Glasgow's talented sports people are appropriately supported.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note points 1-3 and that point 4 is referred to the City Administration Committee for approval.

1. Glasgow School of Sport (GSOS) continues until June 2029, enabling all current 38 pupils to complete their education and sporting pathway in full thereby ensuring a fair and inclusive transition. This accounts for 13 Glasgow pupils and 25 pupils from 12 other Local Authorities.
2. Glasgow Life will continue to work with National Governing Bodies (NGB's), Sportscotland, and the Scottish Institute of Sport to realign the future delivery and administration of high-performance programmes, ensuring these conversations align with the strengths and responsibilities of the National Governing Bodies.
3. Talented Sports Performer Scheme (TSP) Create a working group to review the current scheme and, where feasible, tailor its design to better support the evolving needs of talented sports performers in Glasgow, identified through the consultation.
4. That the recommendations contained in this paper be referred to the City Administration Committee for approval.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. Background

- 1.1 Opening in 1998, Glasgow School of Sport (GSOS) is a partnership between Glasgow City Council Education Services and Glasgow Life and was developed as Scotland's only facility that allowed young people to develop their sporting talents as part of their school education. GSOS is located at Bellahouston Academy in Glasgow with entry by selection only, with pupils specialising in one sport. It should be noted that GSOS was opened by GCC and transferred over to Culture and Sport Glasgow (Glasgow Life) in 2007 when the company became a Charity.
- 1.2 Glasgow Life and GCC sought financial support from surrounding local authorities and the Scottish Government in 2023 to sustain the Glasgow School of Sport, reflecting its national catchment. All funding requests were unsuccessful. While funding discussions were ongoing, it was agreed to pause new pupil intakes from August 2024, and this was communicated to staff, parents, and prospective families. Forecasts also show a natural decline in pupil numbers in the coming years.
- 1.3 GSOS currently has 38 pupils in S3 to S6 year groups, of which, 13 pupils (34%) reside within Glasgow postcodes, with the remaining 25 pupils (66%) drawn from 12 other Scottish Local Authorities, specialising in athletics, badminton, gymnastics, hockey or swimming. In April 2025, when the initial paper was presented to the WECCE committee, the school had 60 pupils.

2025/26	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
Athletics	3	0	1	3	7
Badminton	2	2	2	1	7
Gymnastics	3	4	1	2	10
Hockey	1	1	0	1	3
Swimming	1	7	2	1	11
Total Pupils	10	14	6	8	38
2026/27	S4	S5	S6	Total	
Athletics	3	0	1	4	
Badminton	2	2	2	6	
Gymnastics	3	4	1	8	
Hockey	1	1	0	2	
Swimming	1	7	2	10	
Total Pupils	10	14	6	30	
2027/28	S5	S6	Total		
Athletics	3	0	3		
Badminton	2	2	4		
Gymnastics	3	4	7		
Hockey	1	1	2		
Swimming	1	7	8		
Total Pupils	10	14	24		
2028/29	S6	Total			
Athletics	3	3			
Badminton	2	2			
Gymnastics	3	3			
Hockey	1	1			
Swimming	1	1			
Total Pupils	10	10			

- 1.4 When GSOS opened in 1998, the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for these 5 sports were not well-positioned to drive performance sport forward. GSOS filled this gap, helping move school-aged young people into sporting excellence pathways. The five GSOS sports were aligned to the newly formed Scottish Institute of Sport (SIS) which also opened in 1998.
- 1.5 NGBs have significantly improved their capability and capacity to deliver national performance and sporting excellence programmes by creating a strategic vision for their sport, developing high-level coaching and competition programmes, and fostering talent from grassroots to elite levels. These programmes support young athletes in improving their skills and ultimately gain selection to represent Scotland and Great Britain. This shift in NGB capability and capacity led to a review of GSOS.
- 1.6 Cognisance of a shift from specialisation to generalisation being favoured by many sports, many academics and other nationalities now point towards a more

general approach to sport in the early years of development, where sport specialisation is focused far later in a young person's sporting journey.

2 Strategic Context

- 2.1 Glasgow Life (GL) led work in partnership with HSCP, GGCNHS, GCC Education Services, NRS, Sportscotland, Public Health Scotland and GCVS to develop a Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Glasgow that would build a unifying vision in the city over the next decade. The new [Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Glasgow](#) (PASS) was approved on 27th February 2025 by Glasgow City Council, City Administration Committee and was launched in June 2025.
- 2.2 Recognising that the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy is clearly aligned to addressing inequality of access to physical activity and sport and championing EDI, Objective 1 Sport and Recreation for All, sets out an ambition to create and support development pathways for individuals participating in sport and active recreation. However, this objective does not actively highlight the need to support athletes participating at the performance and excellence levels of sport or are aiming to compete at national and international level.
- 2.3 To help identify the best way to ensure that Glasgow's talented sports people are appropriately supported and as part of the strategy, it was proposed to carry out an engagement and consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders currently engaged at the performance and excellence level.

3. Purpose of Report

- 3.1 In April 2025, the WECCE Committee requested a consultation process be undertaken to assess how Glasgow could best support talented sports performers. Glasgow Life led this process, engaging stakeholders across education, sport and local authorities.
- 3.2 This report outlines the consultation process that Glasgow Life undertook, recommendations and next steps to ensure that Glasgow's School of Sport pupils and wider talented sports people are appropriately supported.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 The WECCE committee requested consultation be aligned to the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, of which objective one highlighted the need to create and support development pathways for individuals participating in sport and active recreation.
- 4.2 Consultation took place between April and October 2025, engaging:
 - Parents and pupils at GSOS
 - Athletes in Glasgow's Talented Sports Performer Scheme
 - Sports Clubs
 - National Governing Bodies
 - Sportscotland and Scottish Institute of Sport

- Local Authorities (12) aligned to GSOS
- Education partners

4.3 Key engagement activities included:

4.3.1 Glasgow Life appointed Kinharvie Institute as independent consultants to gather the views and opinion of GSOS parents and pupils.

- Two GSOS pupil and parent facilitated information and consultation sessions took place in June 2025. All parents/carers of the 58 GSOS pupils were invited, as were the pupils. Over the 2 sessions - 26 of the 58 pupils were represented.
- Kinharvie circulated a survey to 58 parents/carers of GSOS pupils. 37 fully completed parental/pupil surveys were returned, and 3 direct emails were sent to Kinharvie. It should be noted that the current roll call at GSOS is 38 pupils. There have been 20 leavers since consultation commenced, therefore the return rate sits in line with the current pupil roll call.
- Following the engagement's session and survey responses, Kinharvie wrote the report, "A Consultation on the Future of Glasgow School of Sport".
- The report was provided to GL by the independent consultants on 27th October 2025 (Appendix 1). Kinharvie also emailed copies of the report directly to parents that had made a request to receive it when ready for circulation.
- The Kinharvie findings captured strong support for the GSOS model from parents and pupils, describing it as a distinctive programme combining education, elite coaching and structured support. Respondents expressed concern that potential changes could impact pupil development, wellbeing, timetables and family routines and emphasised the importance of clear communication throughout the review period.
- As Kinharvie's engagement focused solely on current GSOS families, the findings represent these stakeholders' perspectives and were not designed to provide a full assessment of wider evidence from National Governing Bodies, sports clubs or Glasgow Life staff. These broader views were gathered separately through the wider engagement activities set out in sections 4.

4.3.2 Glasgow Life circulated a survey to over 400 Sport Clubs, organisations and 5 National Governing Bodies of Sport. SportScotland circulated the survey to their national network of NGBs. The survey was available on the GCC Consultation Hub for a 6-week period. There were 17 responses from sports clubs or National Governing Bodies, with individuals on a pathway to sporting excellence in Glasgow. 83% of the 17 responses felt that the Glasgow School of Sport had been either very or somewhat effective in developing Glasgow's sporting talent. The survey was sent out twice by Glasgow Life, once in July and once in August 2025. The consultation was about supporting sporting excellence.

4.3.3 The consultation focused on supporting sporting excellence. However, most of the clubs involved are not exclusively dedicated to performance sport or sporting excellence.

- 4.3.4 The clubs surveyed represented more than 60 different sports. While it was important to gather perspectives from the wider sporting community, it is likely, though not unexpected, that discussions about the future approach to High Performance sport in the city are of particular interest only to a small segment of Glasgow's broader sport sector, which it is assumed resulted in a low survey return rate.
- 4.3.5 Glasgow Life circulated a survey to 143 Talented Sports Performers. The survey was available on the GCC consultation Hub for a 6-week period. There were 12 responses from athletes in Glasgow's Talented Sports Performer Scheme. 92% of the 12 responses felt that Glasgow's Talented Sport Performer Scheme had been either very or somewhat effective in developing Glasgow's sporting talent.
- 4.3.6 In total: 29 stakeholder survey returns were received. The survey was sent out twice. Once in July and once in August 2025, as well as being available on the GCC consultation Hub website for 6 weeks.
- 4.3.7 Glasgow Life circulated a survey for staff working at GSOS. 8 out of 13 staff members completed.
- 4.3.8 Glasgow Life wrote to the 12 Local Authorities, accounting for 66% of current roll call, accounting for 25 pupils out of a total of 38 pupils, who have pupils attending the school. Positive responses were received from East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire regarding a potential financial contribution (approx. £10K per authority). The Glasgow Life outturn costs for GSOS are £730K, therefore £481K (66% of the GL costs) can be equated to 12 Local Authorities. Glasgow pupils account for £248K of total costs. The £10K contribution was fitting when the roll call was higher, however, the further the roll call diminishes the less the contribution meets the cost. This approach would require all 12 LA's to contribute financially. At present the GL cost per pupil head is approximately £19K. This cost per pupil head will continue to rise as the roll call lessens, year on year.
- 4.3.9 Glasgow Life chaired a joint NGB meeting on the 02 September 2025. Scottish Athletics, Badminton Scotland, Scottish Gymnastics, Scottish Swimming, Sportscotland, and the Scottish Institute of Sport were all represented.
- 4.3.10 It was confirmed and agreed that the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) associated with GSOS sports are best placed to deliver high-quality performance pathways, aligning with Sportscotland and the Scottish Institute of Sport's approach of devolving responsibility for performance pathways to the NGBs. While they may not be able to fully replicate the integrated provision offered at GSOS, each NGB is recognised as the specialist in its respective sport and is best equipped to provide the appropriate support structures tailored to individual athletes.
- 4.3.11 All 5 NGB's are appreciative of the support and talent nurtured through GSOS over the past 27 years, whilst recognising that performance pathways have significantly changed during that time. The only NGB who offered financial

contribution to look at the link for senior aged pupils through to further education was Scottish Athletics.

5. Financial Overview

- 5.1 The draft outturn costs for GSOS in 2025/26 are £730k, covering staffing, coaching, travel, facility recharge, and professional fees.
- 5.2 Historically, funding for GSOS was ringfenced within the Scottish Government's (SG) settlement for schools of excellence. This is no longer the case and the funding is now embedded within Glasgow City Council's settlement, with no specific financial provision for GSOS. As such, there has been no inflationary uplift and there is no recognition of current costs.

6. Strategic Options

- 6.1 Two transition options have previously been considered:
- . Option 1: Conclude GSOS at the end of the 2025/26 academic year
 - . Option 2: Continue GSOS until the end of June 2029, allowing all current pupils to complete their sporting and educational journey.
- 6.2 Following consultation and review, Option 1 is no longer considered to be achievable due to time constraints restricting viability of a fair and inclusive transition, particularly given the multi-authority pupil profile, ongoing parental engagement, and the absence of a confirmed alternative pathway. Option 2 is therefore presented as the recommended course of action.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note points 1 - 3 and that point 4 is referred to the City Administration Committee for approval:
1. Glasgow School of Sport (GSOS) continues until June 2029, enabling all current 38 pupils to complete their education and sporting pathway in full, thereby ensuring a fair and inclusive transition. This accounts for 13 Glasgow pupils and 25 pupils from 12 other Local Authorities.
 2. Glasgow Life will continue to work with National Governing Bodies, Sportscotland, and the Scottish Institute of Sport to realign the future delivery and administration of high-performance programmes, ensuring these conversations align with the strengths and responsibilities of the National Governing Bodies.
 3. Talented Sports Performer Scheme (TSP): Create a working group to review the current scheme and, where feasible, tailor its design to better support the evolving needs of talented sports performers in Glasgow, identified through the consultation.
 4. That the recommendations contained in this paper be referred to the City Administration Committee for approval.

8. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

<i>Financial</i>	<i>Implications for GCC to underwrite</i>
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<i>Legal</i>	N/A
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<i>Personnel</i>	N/A
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<i>Procurement</i>	N/A
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Council Strategic Plan: Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

Grand Challenge 2 - Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens. Mission 3

Grand Challenge 1 - Reduce poverty and inequalities in our communities. Mission 3 and Mission 4

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. Outcome 14 - improving outcomes education

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? EQIA was carried out as part of the review.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: No

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

NA

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

NA

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report.

Appendix 1 – A Consultation on the Future of Glasgow School of Sport – Report