

To review and provide recommendations for an integrated approach to a unified vehicle for recognised Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport, enabling SGBs to work together, provide a collective voice for sport and optimise shared resources.

THE FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

David Joy & Dr. Paul Bush OBE

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We would like to record our sincere thanks to the many people who contributed to this Review and helped bring the project to a successful conclusion. The key contributors are identified in paragraph 4.2 of the Report.

We are especially grateful to the members of the Steering Group for their time, commitment and expert guidance during a particularly busy summer for sport in Scotland and to Adele Boucher for her excellent project management.

The Steering Group

Craig Burn	Director of Sport, sportscotland
Jacqueline Lynn	Head of School and Community Sport, sportscotland
Adele Boucher	Partnership and Project Officer, sportscotland
Sue Beatt	Chair, the Scottish Sports Association
Gregor Muir	Acting CEO, the Scottish Sports Association
Trudy Lindblade	CEO, Cricket Scotland
Judith McCleary	CEO, Judo Scotland
Stuart Younie	CEO, Mountaineering Scotland

The Steering Group's openness to change and constructive challenge enabled the Recommendations to emerge relatively quickly given the initially fragmented landscape.

We have great confidence that these same characteristics will enable the Steering Group to oversee the delivery of the Recommendations by April 2027.

It has been our privilege to play our small part in this transformation of the SGB landscape in Scotland.

David Joy & Dr. Paul Bush OBE

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION & THE BRIEF

Introduction

- 1.1. This project (the Review) was initiated to review and provide recommendations (the Recommendations) for an integrated approach to a unified vehicle for recognised Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs), enabling SGBs to work together more effectively, provide a collective voice for sport and optimise shared resources.
- 1.2. The project was commissioned by **sportscotland**, in partnership with the Scottish Sports Association (the SSA) and the SGB CEO/COO Forum (the Forum), referred to collectively as the Parties.
- 1.3. This final report (the Report) presents the findings from this Review, the Recommendations and an implementation plan (the Implementation Plan).

The Brief

- 1.4. The brief required the consultants to fully engage with each of the Parties, Active Scotland, the Forum, all recognised SGBs within Scotland and the National Partners in membership of the Forum, to:
 - 1.4.1. Identify what good looks like for an integrated approach.
 - 1.4.2. Develop a shared purpose.
 - 1.4.3. Identify what is working well within the SGB CEO Forum and the SSA and highlight where the SGBs and other stakeholders are working effectively and efficiently together.
 - 1.4.4. Identify what is not working so well, where there may be gaps or duplication
 - 1.4.5. Highlight where learnings can be taken from previous delivery or from other models.
 - 1.4.6. Suggest clear ways forward.
 - 1.4.7. Examine the current provision of shared services and carry out early work to identify demand for both current services and any additional shared services that may be required.

SECTION TWO: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Final Report sets out the findings and Recommendations from the review of options for a more integrated and unified vehicle for recognised Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs).

The Review was commissioned by **sportscotland**, in partnership with the Scottish Sports Association (SSA) and the SGB CEO/COO Forum (the Forum), to consider how SGBs can work together more effectively, provide a stronger collective voice for sport and optimise the use of shared resources.

The Review has been positively received by SGBs, the SSA, the Forum, **sportscotland**, Active Scotland and National Partners. There is broad agreement that the current landscape is fragmented, that the status quo is sub-optimal and that there is a clear opportunity to simplify arrangements, reduce duplication and strengthen the support and influence available to SGBs.

The evidence gathered through the Review identifies a strong need for a single, authoritative and independent collective voice for SGBs. While both the SSA and the Forum provide valued leadership, advocacy, networks and support, the absence of one recognised representative body has created confusion, duplication and missed opportunities to influence government, **sportscotland** and the wider sporting landscape.

The Review also confirms the significant pressures facing the SGB sector. Many SGBs are operating with stretched capacity, increasing expectations and continuing financial pressures. Evidence from the *Running on Empty* campaign, together with engagement through this Review, demonstrates that greater collective capacity, stronger advocacy and better coordinated services are required to create more stability and support for SGBs.

The case for change is reinforced by the wider national policy context. *A More Active Scotland*, *Sport for Life* and the Forum manifesto all underline the role of SGBs in delivering participation, progression, wellbeing, community benefit and economic value. A stronger unified vehicle would help align the SGB sector with these national priorities, articulate its collective impact and increase its influence across government and the sporting system.

Learning from other trade and representative bodies in Scotland supports this direction. The most effective bodies have a clear and unambiguous identity, are accepted by members and government as the recognised voice of their sector, maintain strong credibility and relationships, provide practical support to members and operate with strong governance and leadership. These characteristics are directly relevant to the future role of a transformed SSA.

The development of the NGB Coalition in England provides a further useful comparator. Although Scotland's context is distinct, the English experience demonstrates the value of reshaping an existing organisation rather than creating a new company, aligning resources to member needs, appointing credible executive and non-executive leaders and creating a single recognised point of contact for government and national agencies on sector-wide matters.

The central recommendation is that the SSA should be supported through a significant transformation process so that it becomes the independent, unified and recognised body for SGBs in Scotland. This transformation should include a review of its purpose, ambitions and strategy, name and brand, membership, governance, networks, services, funding model and executive capacity.

The SGB survey in July showed very high levels of support for the emerging proposals, including unanimous support among respondents for a single, independent and unified body to represent and support SGBs, a refined purpose for the SSA and the development of a new strategy through full engagement with SGBs.

The recommended governance changes are central to the proposed model. They include increasing the size and capability of the board, ensuring stronger SGB experience, appointing independent directors with specialist expertise, strengthening board recruitment and succession arrangements, and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion within governance. These changes are intended to create a credible, representative and well-governed organisation capable of leading the transformed body.

The CEO/COO Forum and other existing networks should remain important parts of the future structure. The Review recommends that current groups and forums are mapped and reviewed, and that the Forum revises its terms of reference and becomes a network group within the structure of the SSA. This approach is intended to retain the value of existing networks while improving alignment, efficiency and collaboration across the SGB landscape.

Shared services should also form part of the future proposition. Existing services are provided by **sportscotland**, the SSA, the Forum and some SGBs, and there is evidence of demand for further work to understand current use, latent demand, potential efficiencies and the most appropriate delivery models. The Review therefore recommends a coordinated review and plan for SGB services.

The August survey on the final proposal received 37 responses from SGBs and National Partners, with 100% voting in favour of the proposal.

The Implementation Plan sets out the actions required between September 2026 and May 2027. These include confirming the Parties' commitment through a Memorandum of Understanding, progressing the SSA AGM changes, developing the new strategy, reviewing membership, governance, networks and services, recruiting a permanent CEO, securing an appropriate funding model and aligning executive capacity to the new strategic requirements.

Taken together, the Recommendations provide a practical route to creating a stronger, more coherent and more influential collective body for SGBs in Scotland. The transformation of the SSA offers the clearest and most deliverable way to establish a unified vehicle that can champion the contribution of SGBs, strengthen their influence, support collaboration and help to create the conditions for SGBs to thrive.

SECTION THREE: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The methodology highlighted that significant changes are required within the SSA, the Forum and the SGB landscape to meet the ambitions of the Review. These changes are set out in the following Recommendations.

R1 The Parties should collaborate to support the transformation of the SSA, to reposition it as the independent and unified body of SGBs recognised by all SGBs and key stakeholders.

R2 The name of the SSA should be changed as part of this transformation, to more strongly reflect its new purpose and membership. The revised name should be agreed as part of a wider brand review that should be commissioned in Autumn 2026.

R3 The purpose of the SSA should be revised to:

“We exist to be the independent and collective voice of Scottish governing bodies of sport, strengthening their influence, championing their contribution and helping create the conditions for sport to thrive in communities throughout Scotland.”

R4 The ambitions or strategic goals of the SSA should also be revised to:

- *Enabling and supporting a vibrant and inclusive SGB sector within Scottish sport*
- *Advocating and demonstrating the collective impact of the vital work of SGBs*
- *Influencing and helping shape the policies, strategies and programmes that impact on SGBs*
- *Enabling the sharing of knowledge, common practices and solutions between SGBs*
- *Creating trusted networks and co-ordinating learning and development opportunities for SGBs*
- *Providing and coordinating services which create efficiencies for SGBs*

R5 A new four year strategy incorporating and building on the new purpose and ambitions, should be developed by the SSA by April 2027 and involve comprehensive engagement and consultation with SGBs, National Partners and key stakeholders.

R6 Recognised SGBs should remain as the Full Members (voting Members) of the SSA and an Associate Membership category should be retained for those national

organisations that work with SGBs. All SGBs should become members of the SSA and only those SGBs in membership should have access to the services and networks of the SSA from April 2027. A membership review group should be established as part of the strategy development in 2026.

R7 The SSA should significantly review its governance arrangements, policies and procedures. The following amendments to the articles of SSA should be proposed to the SSA AGM on 29 September 2026:

- To increase the maximum size of the board to 12 directors
- To amend the maximum term limits for directors from three terms of three years to two terms of four years
- To require the Chair to be politically and commercially independent of any SGB
- To require at least six other members of the board to have significant executive or non-executive SGB experience and to manage recruitment so that they each bring diverse experience, from different roles within SGBs and be drawn from a diverse range of SGBs
- For two of these six directors to be nominated by the CEO/COO Forum from within its membership and then be approved by the Nominations Committee of the SSA
- The other four ‘SGB director’ roles shall be appointed on a competency basis through open recruitment (candidates should be endorsed by their SGB)
- To require four independent directors to be appointed to the board to provide specialist knowledge and experience in areas such as finance, legal, risk, people/HR, commercial and digital. These directors should be appointed on a competency basis through open recruitment and in response to the SSA Board Diversity and Skills Matrix
- One of these four independent directors should be appointed as the Senior Independent Director and-Vice Chair of the SSA
- The CEO should be an ex- officio director of the company
- The SSA should recruit all of its directors in accordance with its Board Recruitment Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Skills and Diversity Matrix and seek to create a Board with appropriate diversity, independence, skills, experience and knowledge to take effective decisions that will further the objects and the strategy of the SSA
- As part of their role, one of the Directors should be appointed as the Board Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Board appointments should be managed by a Nominations Committee of the SSA, which should include the Chair, two independent directors and two ‘SGB directors’

- R8** There will be further governance changes required which should be approved by the board. A governance working group should be established, including board members from the SSA, members of the Forum and **sportscotland** to oversee these additional governance changes as set out in the implementation plan, by April 2027.
- R9** The CEO/COO Forum should continue to operate and to meet the needs of its members. It should revise its terms of reference and become a network group within the structure of the SSA.
- R10** A review group should be established to review the current landscape of networks and forums involving SGBs. This group should involve officers from **sportscotland**, SGBs, the SSA, National Partners and individuals drawn from some of the groups and forums. The group should undertake a mapping exercise of the current network groups and forums, propose a revised structure to improve efficiency and collaboration and identify which should be positioned within the structure of the SSA. There should be full consultation with SGBs and key stakeholders throughout this process and this work should be completed by February 2027.
- R11** A review group should be established involving officers from the SSA, **sportscotland** and SGBs to conduct an analysis and create a coordinated plan for SGB services. The group should consider the current service provision, explore improvements or expansions to current services, confirm areas of greatest latent demand and explore options for the provision of new services. There should be full consultation with SGBs and key stakeholders throughout this process and this work should be completed by February 2027.
- R12** The vacant position of CEO of the SSA should be recruited as soon as is practicable. The role description should be developed based on the proposals within these Recommendations and the new positioning of the SSA. The recruitment should be managed by the SSA, involve representatives of **sportscotland** and the Forum, and be completed by December 2026.
- R13** Work should be undertaken to consider ways of increasing the income of the SSA to meet the requirements of delivering the new strategy. This should include a review of membership fees and earned income and the SSA working with **sportscotland** to be recognised as a National Partner and to secure a funding agreement with **sportscotland** by April 2027.
- R14** Work should be undertaken to review the SSA executive capacity and structure and to align this to the delivery requirements of the new strategy. This should be

developed alongside the strategy and aligned with the available budgets and be completed by April 2027.

- R15** The Parties to this Review should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by October 2026, to confirm their commitment to the further collaboration required deliver these Recommendations by April 2026.

SECTION FOUR: THE METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A four stage methodology was designed to meet the requirements of the brief. This methodology is presented within Appendix 1.
- 4.2 This methodology placed significant importance on engaging with SGBs, the SSA and **sportscotland**. The following engagements were delivered between April and August 2026:
- Monthly meetings with the Steering Group between April and August
 - Meetings with CEO/COO Forum Executive Group every 3 weeks between April and August
 - Meetings with the CEO Forum in May, June and August
 - Shared monthly progress reports with SGBs between May and August
 - Online meetings with all other recognised SGBs not in membership of the Forum in June
 - Meeting with the Chair of **sportscotland** in May
 - Several individual meetings with CEOs of SGBs
 - 3 x online meetings with groups of Chairs of SGBs in June
 - Several meetings with the Chair and Acting CEO of the SSA
 - Meeting with the board of SSA members in July and August
 - Several meetings with CEO and executives of **sportscotland**
 - Meetings with Active Scotland in May and July
 - Meetings with National Partners in Scotland
 - Engagement with other industry trade bodies in Scotland
 - Engagement with the NGB Coalition which has recently been established in England
 - Distribution and analysis of the SGB survey which presented the emerging Recommendations in July
 - Distribution and analysis of the SGB YES/NO vote shared with SGBs and National Partners in August
 - Production and distribution of the Interim Report in July and Final Report in August
- 4.3 The project was overseen by a steering group (the Steering group), whose membership included senior leaders from **sportscotland**, the SSA and the Forum, referred to collectively as the Parties.
- 4.4 The Parties agreed the following as a starting point for this review in May 2026:

- There ought to be an authoritative and single voice for all SGBs – a ‘trade body’ for SGBs
- It should have good governance so that all SGBs are engaged and its leaders appropriately appointed
- The Forum should be retained within any new structure and its voice should be influential
- It should be able to express its independent voice on behalf of SGBs
- Its purpose and ambitions should be focussed on SGBs and these need to be developed
- A new strategy for this collective of SGBs also needs to be developed and it should recognise the current circumstances and set out a plan for a better future
- The SSA was established to be the unified vehicle for SGBs and whilst it once fulfilled that role, many SGBs feel that that it no longer does this effectively
- A preferred solution would be for the Forum and the SSA to work together to resolve differences and to draw the two organisations together, to create a unified body of SGBs.

4.5 At the outset of this project, three governance options were identified that could be explored to meet the requirements of the brief:

4.5.1 The transformation of the SSA to become the unified body for SGBs

4.5.2 The transformation of another national agency.

4.5.3 The creation of a new company.

4.6 It was agreed by the SGB CEO/COO Forum and between the Parties that the preferred option was for SGBs and SSA to work together to explore new ways of working, leading to the SSA becoming a more unified body, fully representing the voice and needs of SGBs.

SGB engagement and support for the Recommendations

4.7 SGBs were fully engaged throughout this review as set out in paragraph 4.2.

4.8 In July all recognised SGBs were invited to indicate their level of support for the emerging proposals, through a SGB survey. Twenty six SGBs completed the survey and the responses indicated high levels of support for each of the emerging proposals.

4.9 100% of responding SGBs agreed or strongly agreed with these three proposals:

- That there should be a single, independent and unified body to represent and support SGBs
- The purpose of SSA should be refined based on the final draft presented within this Final Report.
- A new strategy should be developed by the SSA, fully engaging SGBs in its development

4.10 97% agreed or strongly agreed with these two proposals:

- There should be a review of networks and forums within the SGB landscape and the CEO/COO Forum should be established as a network group within the structure of the SSA.
- That the name of the SSA should be changed to more strongly reflect its new purpose, ambitions and membership and its complete focus on the work of SGBs

4.11 93% agreed or strongly agreed with the remaining three proposals:

- The ambitions of the SSA should be refined based on the final draft presented within this Final Report
- That SGBs should be the only full and voting members of the SSA and that an Associate member category be retained for National Partners at the discretion of the Members
- The Board governance changes set out within Recommendation 7 should be presented to the AGM in September for approval

The YES/NO vote

4.12 In mid-August the findings from this survey were shared with SGBs¹, together with the Proposal and a Summary Report from the project.

4.13 SGBs and the National Partners within the Forum, were invited to indicate their support for the Proposal through a simple Yes/No Vote survey. There were 38 responses and 100% of those responding voted in favour of the proposals. The report from this Yes/No vote Survey was shared with partners in early September.²

¹ [SGB_Unified_Vehicle_Survey_Report_10.08.26.pdf](#)

² [YES_NO_Vote_survey_responses_01.09.26.pdf](#)

4.14 This endorsement from SGBs and National Partners has provided the SSA with the confidence to propose changes to their Articles at the AGM on 29 September 2026 and also provided the mandate for the Parties to work together to deliver the Recommendations (pages 8-11) and the Implementation Plan (Section Eight).

SECTION FIVE: LEARNINGS FROM OTHER BODIES

Trade bodies in Scotland

- 5.1 Within the first month of this review, there were several references that this work needed to result in the creation of a ‘trade body’ for SGBs in Scotland.
- 5.2 To gather learning from other sectors, there has been some discussions with the following trade bodies in Scotland:
- The Scottish Tourism Alliance
 - Scottish Licensed Trade Association
 - UK Hospitality
 - Scotland Food and Drink
 - Edinburgh Festival
 - Culture Counts

Learning from other trade bodies

- 5.3 The initial learning suggests that the following factors are both common and critical to their success:
- The name is critical – simply and unequivocally describing what it is
 - They are accepted by members and government as the voice for the industry and their community
 - They are ‘in the know’ and regarded as highly credible
 - Internal and external relationships are key to success
 - They offer support and advice to members
 - They have strong governance in place, strong leadership and credible membership

The NGB Coalition in England

- 5.4 There are some parallels between this review and recent work to establish an NGB Coalition in England.
- 5.5 In June 2024, the NGB CEO Forum commissioned a review to determine how it could strengthen its influence, improve support to NGBs and operate more effectively within an evolving sporting landscape. The review set out to assess the

Forum's current contribution to national sport policy, develop recommendations for future direction and propose governance and structural models capable of advancing the ambitions of NGBs. These challenges were later consolidated into five Ambitions, which shaped the Review's methodology and outcomes.

- 5.6 The review process explored options with the SRA to refocus its activities and funding more towards an NGB agenda. It also explored the creation of a new standalone body as an alternative to the SRA.
- 5.7 Following a period of negotiation, the SRA responded positively to the CEO Forum with a proposal that represented significant change, including:
- The new strategy of the SRA would become more NGB-focused
 - Changes to their divisional structure with the establishment of the NGB Coalition as a new division for all NGBs
 - Changes to the board structure with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the NGB Coalition also being appointed to the board of SRA
 - At least four other board members must have significant NGB expertise and experience
 - New executive capacity would be appointed to lead the work of the NGB Coalition, alongside a refocusing of the wider executive team towards NGB support
 - An agreement to allocate at least 80% of SRA resources to NGB work
- 5.8 The NGB Coalition was established in early 2026 and is now operational and the proposals outlined in paragraph 5.7 are being activated. Partners are perceiving positive progress.

Learning from the English NGB Coalition

- 5.9 While useful lessons can be drawn from the establishment of the NGB Coalition in England, the Recommendations arising from this review will be shaped by and respond directly to Scotland's distinct context.
- 5.10 The parallels and learning for the Scottish solution include:
- 5.10.1 There are distinct benefits in reshaping an existing organisation, rather than creating a new company, and then ensuring that its resources are allocated to meet the needs of SGBs.
- 5.10.2 Appointing credible and experienced individuals to executive and non-executive leadership roles is key to success.

5.10.3 Creating this single united body with all SGBs in its membership will make it the “go to body” for Government, **sport**scotland and other national agencies who want to discuss SGB matters.

5.11 The emerging proposition within the SSA proposes a much simpler organisational structure than the SRA model, as the sole focus of the SSA will be the work of SGBs.

SECTION SIX: STRATEGIC CONTEXT & THE CASE FOR CHANGE

What is not working well? What are the gaps and challenges?

- 6.1 The brief required that there should be an identification of the gaps, challenges and things that were not working so well around the work of the SSA, the Forum and support to SGBs. These gaps and challenges include:
- 6.1.1 There is no single body recognised as the authoritative voice of SGBs.
 - 6.1.2 Whilst SSA and the Forum both provide valuable leadership and support, there is no single unified voice for SGBs. This has, on occasions, caused confusion within Scottish Government.
 - 6.1.3 Some disconnects exist between some members of the Forum and the SSA.
 - 6.1.4 The SSA and the Forum do not share an agreed vision or common areas of work.
 - 6.1.5 Individually they each fall short of operating at the same high level as some of the most effective trade bodies in Scotland.
 - 6.1.6 Some recognised sports sit outside the membership of both the Forum and the SSA and are therefore unrepresented and under-supported.
 - 6.1.7 Some disconnect has existed between **sportscotland** and the SSA.
 - 6.1.8 **sportscotland**, the SSA and the Forum are each providing services to SGBs and greater coordination is probably possible.
 - 6.1.9 Many SGBs are stretched to meet their responsibilities. More capacity is required. SGBs have described themselves as being at crisis point.
 - 6.1.10 The leaders of the Forum are also at capacity in delivering their Forum roles.
 - 6.1.11 The SSA is also stretched and could deliver more with additional capacity.

Situational analysis

Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport

- 6.2 There are 57 recognised SGBs that are actively engaged with **sportscotland**. Of these:
- 37 SGBs are funded by **sportscotland** and are in membership of the Forum.
 - 13 SGBs are recognised and funded by **sportscotland** but are not represented within the Forum.

- A further 52 NGBs/SGBs are recognised by **sportscotland** and the other Sports Councils in the UK. **sportscotland** has regular contact with seven of these.
- 6.3 Those SGBs in membership of the Forum have recently undertaken a successful campaign with the support of 56 Degrees North: *Running on Empty*.
- 6.4 A report from this work based on the data from 29 SGBs, highlighted the very real challenges faced by many SGBs:
- 88% of SGBs are concerned about their capabilities/future if no additional budget is provided
 - 48% are concerned about their reduced capacity to attend/host events
 - 24% are concerned about grassroots involvement
 - 25% are concerned about inclusion of women/girls
 - 32% are concerned about shortage of officials/staff/trainers due to salary/budget constraints
- 6.5 The CEOs of many SGBs have reported that they are working within a very difficult environment, where the resources and capacity within their SGBs do not match the requirements and expectations placed on their organisations. There was clear evidence that individuals within the CEO Forum feel uncomfortably stretched within their roles.
- 6.6 SGBs have indicated that the additional funding secured as a result of the recent campaign may alleviate some of these challenges, but that significant capacity challenges will still remain.
- 6.7 SGBs engaged very positively with this Review. They recognise that the status quo position of the SSA and the Forum is limiting the potential to find solutions which may alleviate the current challenges. SGBs are fully committed to supporting the transformation of the SSA to become the new and unified body for SGBs and to exploring what changes may be possible to bring greater stability and capacity to support the day-to-day challenges faced by SGBs.

The CEO/COO Forum

- 6.8 The CEO/COO Forum was established in 2019/20. It is an unincorporated body and its purpose is to:

‘To provide a representative forum for SGB CEO’s / COO’s to co-ordinate their common interests and goals in a collective, collaborative and professional manner

and to ensure that issues impacting on SGBs, and their sports, are effectively discussed and communicated across the wider sports sector in Scotland.’

- 6.9 Its membership is open to the CEOs/COOs of SGBs that are recognised by **sportscotland**. There are 37 SGB members. In addition, the CEOs of some National Partners are also members of the Forum: Commonwealth Games Scotland, Scottish Disability Sport, Scottish Student Sport and Scottish ClubSport.
- 6.10 The Forum represents senior leaders in sports across Scotland. Around 800,000 people (15% of the Scottish population) are members of just under 8,000 sports clubs affiliated to the SGBs.
- 6.11 The Forum does not have a strategy but did publish a SGB Manifesto in the run up to the Scottish Parliamentary Elections in 2026. This advocated sport as a strategic national asset and confirmed that Scotland’s governing bodies of sport were key partners in delivering national priorities.
- 6.12 It highlighted the findings from research commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in partnership with UK Sport and the other home country sports councils, that sport directly contributes £6.7 billion to the total output of the Scottish economy (nearly 2.5%) and that the sector supports nearly 70,000 full time jobs (3.4% of total Scottish FTE). It makes a significant contribution to health and wellbeing, stronger communities, economic growth, education and Scotland’s international reputation.
- 6.13 The manifesto invited the Scottish Government to:
- Recognise the value of sport by delivering on its commitment to double annual investment in sport to £100 million by 2028, with a sustained focus on participation through club and community sport, facilities and the capacity of SGBs.
 - Embed existing spending commitments in the next Programme for Government, ensuring long-term stability and impact across the sporting system.
 - Formally recognise sport’s national value by establishing a clear and visible Minister for Sport and Active Life, aligned within the Health portfolio and working across government, to provide leadership and accountability for maximising the social, health and economic impact of sport
 - Work closely with SGBs to build on Scotland’s success in hosting major sporting events, which not only showcase Scotland internationally, but which

support SGBs to grow, inspire participation and strengthen pathways into sport.

6.14 The Forum is highly valued by its members. It usually meets three or four times per year. The benefits of the Forum include:

- Providing a mechanism for the leaders of the group to engage with Scottish Government, **sportscotland** and other National Partners.
- Providing an immediate network of people with similar issues and opportunities to share common practices and solutions.
- Creating the potential for the co-ordination of learning and development across SGBs.
- Establishing some professional value for group members where their voice can be heard and contribution recognised.

6.15 The Forum currently appoints a Chair and an Executive Group. They work in a voluntary capacity and meet every three weeks. The group is supported by **sportscotland**, but its capacity has been significantly stretched in recent times.

6.16 Forum members are committed to retaining the Forum within the new structure. They believe its core functions should remain, while the new arrangements should create more time and capacity for the group to consider collaborative projects.

6.17 They recognise that the Forum currently has relatively simple governance arrangements and welcome the opportunity to develop new terms of reference. Positioning the Forum as a committee and important consultative group within the SSA structure would help SGBs speak with one voice to the Scottish Government, **sportscotland** and other national partners.

6.18 Forum members are also keen for the SSA to develop a new strategy focused on the work of SGBs and demonstrating how SGBs can make a significant contribution to the delivery of Scotland's national sport and physical activity strategies.

The Scottish Sports Association

6.19 The SSA was established in 1982. Its purpose is to:

“Act as the independent and collective voice for Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) of sport; we exist to represent and support SGBs.”

6.20 Its vision is:

“Supporting Scottish Governing Bodies in playing their vital and recognised role to the full in the success of Scottish sport.”

6.21 The key goals and work areas of SSA are:

- To provide excellent support services for SGBs
- To act as an independent collective voice for SGBs
- To advocate for and on behalf of SGBs
- To respond to government/other relevant consultations with and on behalf of SGBs
- To represent the views of SGBs on various national working groups
- To run its business efficiently and effectively

6.22 There are currently 31 SGBs who hold full membership of SSA and 4 recognised SGBs who are associate members.

6.23 There are 16 SGBs in membership of the CEO/COO Forum that are not in membership of SSA i.e. 43% of the membership of the Forum are not members of the SSA.

6.24 SSA currently has 54% of those SGBs that are recognised by and engaged with **sportscotland** within its membership.

6.25 There are a further 13 associate members of SSA that are not SGBs.

<https://thessa.org.uk/members/member-directory>

6.26 The SSA previously received funding from **sportscotland**, but this ceased several years ago due to irreconcilable differences between the organisations.

6.27 The Scottish Government has funded the SSA directly since 2019. This funding agreement includes specific deliverables for the SSA, some of which are included in the services outlined below.

6.28 The SSA provides many services for the benefit of SGBs. These include but are not limited to:

- Managing the honours nomination process for Scottish Sport
- Providing the secretariat to the cross-party group for sport

- Producing evidence required by Scottish Government and gathering information around topics as they arise
- Representing the sector on several working groups
- Meeting quarterly with the Minister
- Managing an Onboard Programme designed to increase the diversity of board members within SGBs
- Providing leadership dinners
- Managing a Women in Sport leadership group.
- Sharing fortnightly updates and monthly strategic briefings for members via email.
- Providing shared admin services on demand to circa 10 SGBs (see Section Five for further details).

6.29 From the outset of this Review, the SSA acknowledged that, with almost half of recognised SGBs not in membership, it does not currently represent the collective voice of SGBs in Scotland. It also recognised the important role played by the Forum and accepted that the existing fragmented leadership of SGBs is sub-optimal.

6.30 The SSA adopted a very positive approach to the Review from the outset. It confirmed that it was open to change and willing to explore how it could encourage all SGBs into membership and become the single, unified and independent body for SGBs. This openness from the SSA's leadership has been an important enabling factor in the Review.

6.31 The Recommendations propose substantial changes to the SSA, including its name, purpose, ambitions, strategy, governance, funding and executive capacity. These changes are set out in the Implementation Plan in Section Eight of this Report.

6.32 Taken together, these changes would significantly reposition the SSA so that it is recognised by the Scottish Government, **sportscotland**, SGBs and other national stakeholders as the single, unified and independent body for SGBs.

sportscotland & Sport for Life

6.33 **sportscotland's** Corporate Strategy, *Sport for Life*³, outlines a vision for sport in Scotland “*For an Active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport*” and a mission “*to help the people of Scotland get the most from the sporting system.*”

³ [Sport For Life - sportscotland the national agency for sport in Scotland](#)

6.34 Through *Sport for Life*, **sportscotland** sets out its ambitions to increase the number and diversity of people participating, progressing and achieving in sport.

6.35 **sportscotland** leads the sporting system, adding value through investment, partnership working, influence and direct delivery. This is guided by six principles: inclusive, accountable, responsive, person-centred, collaborative and world class.

The sporting system

6.36 The sporting system:

- Reflects the important role that sport plays in creating an active Scotland alongside the agencies for health, education, transport and the environment
- Shows how taking part in sport creates wider benefits in areas such as health, education, communities and the economy
- Includes a commitment to inclusion underpinning everything **sportscotland** does
- Recognises the valuable role of national and local partners and the importance of working together

6.37 The new strategy of the SSA will align closely with the vision and outcomes of *Sport for Life* and demonstrate how the work of SGBs and their clubs, volunteers and coaches will play an important role in helping to deliver Sport for Life and increasing the number and diversity of people participating, progressing and achieving in sport.

The SSA as a National Partner of sportscotland

6.38 **sportscotland** makes investments into several National Partners who each contribute to the delivery of *Sport for Life*. **sportscotland** previously funded the SSA as a strategic partner, but this funding agreement ceased several years ago as the strategic alignment between the two bodies became less clear.

6.39 **sportscotland** is very positive about the benefits of these developments and recognises that the SSA has the potential to become a significant strategic partner once its membership includes all of the recognised SGBs in Scotland and the CEO/COO Forum is positioned as a key group within the committee structure of the SSA.

6.40 Discussions have begun to explore how the transformed SSA may become a new National Partner of **sportscotland**, with the potential to receive investment to help deliver the new SSA strategy from 2027 onwards.

Scottish Government, Physical Activity for Health Framework

6.41 In 2024, the Scottish Government launched the Physical Activity for Health framework⁴, to improve levels of physical activity at both national and local level.

6.42 The framework provides a clear collective vision: More People, More Active, More Often.

6.43 It also provides an evidence-based, systems-led approach to increasing physical activity across Scotland. It brings together partners from multiple sectors around eight interconnected Strategic Delivery Outcomes that represent the key components of the physical activity system.

6.44 Collectively, the Strategic Delivery Outcomes are intended to create positive changes in policy, practice, environments and behaviours, contributing to improved population health, reduced inequalities, and a more active Scotland.

6.45 The eight Strategic Outcomes are:

- **Active Systems-** Collaborative leadership and accountability has been strengthened and actively champions our vision of a more active Scotland through a whole systems approach to physical activity and sport and key partners understand and embrace their roles
- **Active Places of Learning-** We have created active environments, policies and opportunities across all places of learning.
- **Active Travel-** Sectors are working collaboratively on action that prioritises active travel infrastructure and supports and encourages active travel behaviour
- **Active Places and Spaces-** We have strengthened access and ensured sustainability of good quality public and green spaces, green networks, recreational spaces (including blue), play and sports amenities. Increasing levels of physical activity is a priority within planning considerations.
- **Active Health and Social Care-** We have embedded the provision of appropriate physical activity opportunities and programmes between NHS

⁴ [Physical activity for health: framework - gov.scot](https://gov.scot/physical-activity-for-health-framework)

Scotland, health practitioners and physical activity providers for different patient populations

- **Active Communications**- Working with the media, we have integrated communications and public education into both National and Local strategies for physical activity ensuring collaboration and cross organisational messaging.
- **Sport and Recreation**- We have ensured that sport and active recreation opportunities target people and communities where the need is greatest and the participation rates are lower while also supporting those who are already active to remain so.
- **Active Workplaces**- Everyday physical activity is supported in workplaces in Scotland

Active Scotland

6.46 Active Scotland has overarching responsibility for the delivery of the Scottish Government's policy for sport and physical activity. Its vision is:

"To work in partnership to create a Scotland where more people are more active more often."

6.47 Active Scotland and the Scottish Government, whilst not Parties to this review, are key stakeholders for each of the Parties.

6.48 Active Scotland currently funds the SSA directly. There are clear deliverables within the funding agreement in line with the SSA services outlined in paragraph 6.28 of this report.

6.49 Active Scotland worked closely with the SGBs around the *Running on Empty* campaign and there is recognition of some of the challenges within the sector.

6.50 The Head of Active Scotland spoke about the need for the review and suggested that the current situation, where the SSA and the Forum both make representations to the Scottish Government on behalf of SGBs, was sub-optimal.

6.51 He expressed support for a solution that would establish the SSA as the unified and independent voice representing all SGBs, which would enable SGB leaders, with a mandate to speak for all SGBs, to meet regularly with Ministers to discuss opportunities and challenges within the sector.

Public Service Reform Strategy

- 3.1. This review is aligned to the principles of the *Public Service Reform Strategy* in several ways and some of the proposals will make a direct contribution to the Reform agenda:
- 3.1.1. The review is working to prevent future challenges in the sporting landscape, to reposition the voice of SGBs to become more influential and to ensure that conversations with the collective of SGBs can be held more easily and purposefully.
 - 3.1.2. The review is opening up the potential to remove the duplication of effort between SSA and the CEO Forum and to significantly increase the potential to find efficiencies through SGBs collaborating more effectively around their individual and collective needs and developing more shared services.

System master planning – UK Sport

- 3.2. The UK Sport System Master Planning initiative is a strategic change programme developed by UK Sport, focusing on enhancing the operational framework of Olympic and Paralympic sports in the UK.
- 3.3. This initiative aims to tackle various challenges, including financial health, leadership pressures, and engagement with younger audiences. The goal is to create a more unified and efficient sporting system that can adapt to future demands and opportunities.

Implications for this review of the SGB landscape

- 3.4. The focus of System Master Planning is on the British and UK governing bodies (and the English NGBs where these are incorporated within the British body) and at this stage this work does not readily extend to the home nation governing bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 3.5. Some of these developments may bring benefits or learnings to the Scottish system and the following may be worthy of further investigation:
- 3.5.1. **Unified Approach to Safe Sport:** SGBs are highlighting capacity around safeguarding case management as a major concern. It will be important to stay connected to this UK wide development to determine if could bring capacity and solutions to the very real challenges being face by many SGBs.

- 3.5.2. **Organisational Health:** This could offer a helpful framework⁵ for SGBs to assist them in their organisational development. This may be worth further consideration as part of the SSA strategy planning/support services to SGBs.
- 3.5.3. **Consolidated Corporate Services:** The current focus is on English/British/UK NGBs and exploring centralised services. There are some pilots running to see how NGBs can work across the four home nations to find efficiencies. The findings from this pilot project could have a positive impact on the efficiencies work ff SGBs and should be kept under review.

The National Partners

- 6.52 There are four National Partners of **sport**scotland, whose CEOs are members of the CEO/COO Forum: Team Scotland, Scottish Disability Sport, Scottish Student Sport and Scottish Club Sport. These four organisations are also Associate Members of the SSA.
- 6.53 Each of these National Partners work closely with SGBs and as members of the Forum and the SSA, they have a keen interest and a stake in the outcomes of this review. They might be regarded as strategic partners of the SGB collective.
- 6.54 As part of the review methodology, individual discussions took place with each organisation and the significant points are reflected below.

Scottish Club Sport (SCS)

- 6.55 Scottish Club Sport (SCS) is the national umbrella body representing a network of 25 local sports councils or local club networks, involving clubs from 65 sports and around 1500 sports clubs.
- 6.56 Ten SGBs affiliate with SCS. The CEO of SCS is a member of the CEO/COO Forum and also represents SCS within several other national network meetings
- 6.57 The core business of local sports councils or club networks includes the provision of grants, encouraging sharing of good practice and hosting courses (e.g. first aid) for local sports clubs. Some local sports councils are very proactive and provide other services such as negotiating joint procurement for clubs, but the majority are focussed on grants, sports awards etc. Many enjoy excellent working

⁵ [Organisational Health | UK Sport](#)

relationships with their local councils, whilst in some areas this still has room for improvement.

- 6.58 SCS feels that the planning and communication between SCS and individual SGBs could be strengthened but suggested that the very recent regional meetings between strategic partners have helped to improve communication.
- 6.59 SCS recognises the significant shared interest of SGBs and SCS around support to clubs and SCS would welcome the opportunity to explore how more coordinated support can be delivered to sports club and volunteers across Scotland including:
- More coordinated communication from SCS and SGBs to clubs
 - Improving club data
 - Joint signposting to local and national contacts
 - Coordination of club and volunteer support programmes
 - Joint working to more effectively measure the social impact of sports clubs, look at ways of improving efficiencies for clubs, shared services and procurement
- 6.60 SCS consider that the introduction of club development officers within local authorities will accentuate the requirement to become more joined up, as these officers will have new capacity to support local sports clubs in their areas.
- 6.61 SCS supports the steps being taken to establish a more unified body of SGBs and would welcome the opportunity to explore joint ways of working which would increase the support to sports clubs.

Scottish Disability Sport (SDS)

- 6.62 Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) is the co-coordinating body of all sports for people of all ages and abilities with a physical, sensory or learning disability in Scotland.
- 6.63 SDS is recognised by **sportscotland** as the lead agency in disability sport in Scotland. SDS is a member organisation of the British Paralympic Association, an Associate Member of the SSA and the CEO is a member of the CEO/COO Forum.
- 6.64 Its strategic plan, Inspiring Through Inclusion 2021-2029, directs and guides the work of the association. Its vision is: Sport and physical activity in Scotland are welcoming and inclusive for participants with disabilities.
- 6.65 Its major partners are **sportscotland**, SGBs, local authorities and those voluntary organisations concerned with disability.

- 6.66 SDS has 14 branches covering most of Scotland and employs a small team of dedicated staff who work with a large number of volunteers and athlete members who play a significant role in the running of SDS.
- 6.67 SDS supports the steps being taken to establish a more unified body of SGBs and would welcome the opportunity to explore how SDS and a transformed SSA and its member SGBs, could work together to support and develop more welcoming and inclusive opportunities for participants with disabilities.
- 6.68 SDS is a champion for inclusion and is anxious to ensure that the new collective body for SGBs has equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) built into its ways of working and its plans, including an EDI Champion within the board directors.
- 6.69 SDS has played a key role in helping to establish the National EDI Forum for Scottish Sport which has around 10 founding members. SDS is keen that this new EDI Forum has strong links with SGBs and the transformed SSA so that a shared vision and plans can be created.
- 6.70 SDS supports the steps being taken to establish a more unified body of SGBs and would welcome the opportunity to explore joint ways of working which would increase the support to sports clubs. They are keen that the advocacy and influencing ambitions and actions of SGBs and SDS can be integrated and co delivered.

Commonwealth Games Scotland

- 6.71 Commonwealth Games Scotland (CGS) is the lead body for Commonwealth sport in Scotland. Its membership is made up of the SGBs of 28 recognised Commonwealth Games sports and organisations.
- 6.72 CGS is responsible for selecting, preparing and leading Scotland's team at the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games. For each Games, it aims to deliver the best prepared team possible, by creating the right environment and giving athletes every opportunity to excel.
- 6.73 Its vision is for Team Scotland and the Commonwealth Games to inspire Scotland to be physically active and successful in the sporting arena.
- 6.74 CGS is an Associate Member of the SSA and the CEO is a member of the CEO/COO Forum.

6.75 CGS supports the steps being taken to establish a more unified body of SGBs. The board of CGS is actively exploring its positioning within the sporting landscape in Scotland would welcome the opportunity to explore how CGS and a transformed SSA and its member SGBs could work even more strongly together.

Scottish Student Sport

6.76 Scottish Student Sport (SSS) is recognised as the coordinating body for student sport across Scotland. It works on behalf of Scottish universities and colleges to improve the student sporting experience through providing competition, development opportunities, and advocating for the sector with its external partners and stakeholders.

6.77 The CEO of SSS is a member of the CEO/COO Forum and also represents SSS within several other national network meetings. SSS is an Associate Member of SSA.

6.78 SSS supports the steps being taken to establish a more unified body of SGBs and would welcome the opportunity to explore how SSS and a transformed SSA and its member SGBs could work together to develop even stronger links between student sport and the work of SGBs and their clubs and coaches. Whilst they do have partnerships with some SGBs they feel that similar partnerships could be expanded to include more sports with significant mutual benefits.

6.79 SSS felt that there are many areas of common interest which could be explored including; advocacy, story-telling and profile raising, data and insights, learning and development, case management.

6.80 SSS expressed interest in playing an active part in the new SGB collective and felt that they would have interest in further exploring shared services between SGBs and National Partners.

6.81 They feel that the advocacy and influencing ambitions and actions of SGBs and SSS can be integrated and co delivered and that there ought to be more involvement of CEOs from within the CEO Forum (including the National Partners) within the meetings with the Scottish Government.

Summary and the case for change

- 6.82 This section demonstrates that the current SGB landscape is fragmented and insufficiently coordinated to fully meet the challenges facing the sector. There is no single recognised body able to speak authoritatively for all SGBs, and the separate roles of the SSA and the Forum has created duplication, gaps in representation and missed opportunities for strategic alignment.
- 6.83 The evidence also confirms that many SGBs are operating under significant financial and capacity pressures, while the Forum and the SSA are themselves stretched in delivering their current roles.
- 6.84 The key conclusion is that the status quo is no longer desirable. SGBs, National Partners, Active Scotland and **sportscotland** broadly support the transformation of the SSA into a unified, independent and SGB-focused body that can provide a stronger collective voice, improve coordination, align more closely with national policy priorities and create better routes for collaboration, shared services and support.
- 6.85 This transformation offers the clearest route to reducing duplication, strengthening influence and building a more coherent and sustainable support structure for SGBs within the landscape of Scottish sport.

SECTION SEVEN: SGB SERVICES

- 7.1 The brief for this review included a requirement to explore the potential for additional services for SGBs and to examine opportunities where there could be greater efficiencies to optimise collaboration across all SGBs.
- 7.2 Some members of the Forum have expressed views that the transformed SSA should not have a focus on SGB services but should be entirely focussed on advocacy and influence. This view is not universally supported by all SGBs.
- 7.3 Many SGBs are users of services and several SGBs have proposed that there is a latent demand for additional services that could be developed and which might result in financial or capacity savings within individual SGBs.
- 7.4 The services for SGBs provided by **sportscotland**, the SSA and the Forum are summarised in the paragraphs below.

sportscotland services

Expert Resources

- 7.5 **sportscotland** provides a range of Expert Resource Services to SGBs, including HR and legal support, access to specialist helplines, case escalation support, online resources, training and reporting.
- 7.6 SGBs can contact service providers directly by phone or email for advice and support. A dedicated helpline number and email address are available. Under the current arrangements, Harper Macleod provides the first hour of legal advice free of charge, while AAB People is retained to provide HR support.
- 7.7 Usage of the helplines demonstrates clear demand from SGBs. In the last year, the HR helpline has received 115 calls and has been accessed by 18 SGBs and one National Partner. The legal helpline has received 81 calls and has been accessed by 25 SGBs and one National Partner.
- 7.8 Where an enquiry cannot be resolved through the helpline, a case escalation may be raised. **sportscotland** considers whether the escalation should be supported and, where costs are significant, the relevant relationship manager is also involved. Depending on the circumstances, **sportscotland** may meet the full cost

or ask the SGB to contribute. Work that is not business critical is not covered by the service.

- 7.9 There have been 11 HR case escalations, benefiting eight SGBs and one National Partner. There have also been 34 legal case escalations, benefiting 10 SGBs and one National Partner.
- 7.10 Guidance, case studies and advice documents are available through legal and HR resource portals hosted by the service providers. These cover topics including new legislation, common themes, case studies and resources from previous training seminars and workshops.
- 7.11 The service providers also deliver training seminars and online workshops for SGBs. Harper Macleod additionally offers a bi-annual governance conference.
- 7.12 Monthly reports are provided by the service providers. These reports identify emerging trends and help inform appropriate training and education activity.

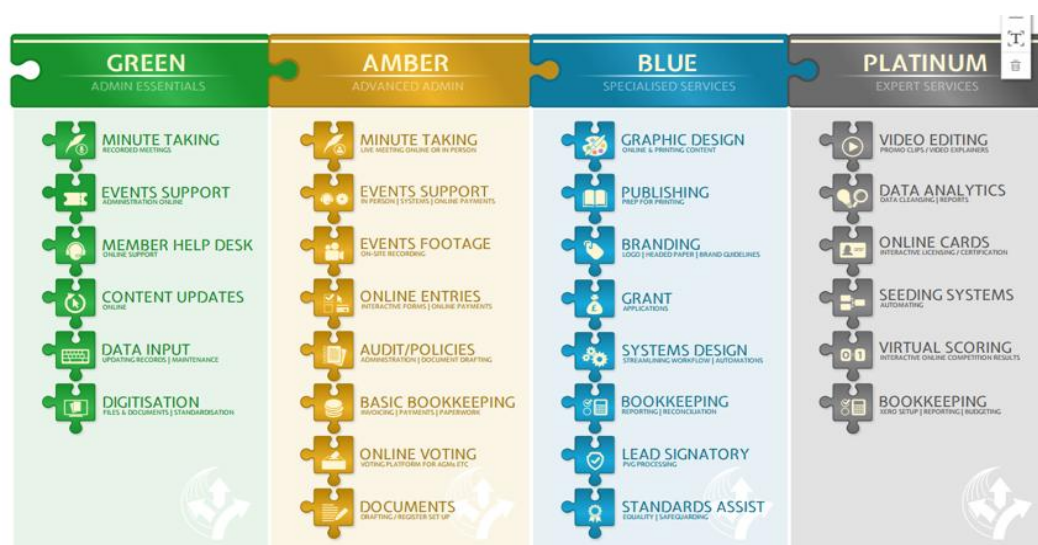
Other SGB services

- 7.13 **sportscotland** also procures or provides other consolidated services for SGBs, including payroll, learning and development programmes and Children First services. These are all well used and welcomed by SGBs.

SSA services

- 7.14 The SSA also provides services for its member SGBs, summarised in Fig 1. below.
- 7.15 Ten SGBs have made use of some of these services within the last 12 months. The admin services, graphic design and video editing are the most used services. Some services have had no take-up from SGBs during the last 12 months.
- 7.16 One SGB makes full use of the admin services to the extent that SSA is providing the majority of admin services for the SGB – effectively an outsourced service.

Fig 1. SSA services for SGBs



7.17 There are four staff working on this service provision (one full-time and three part-time), and each logs the hours spent on each service with each SGB. The services are recharged accordingly and generated income of circa £45k in the previous financial year.

7.18 SSA commonly hears from SGBs that they were unaware of the services offered. It is likely that, with improved communications and advocacy, there could be greater take-up of these existing services by SGBs.

7.19 SSA is open to developing new services based on demand from SGBs. This will require greater insights to be gathered and a stronger connection between the SSA and the Forum and other SGBs and network groups.

The CEO/COO Forum as a service provider

7.20 The CEO/COO Forum has also become a provider of SGB services. Its core business of creating the CEO/COO network to share knowledge and common solutions is a light-touch example of this, but its joint procurement of 56 Degrees North to co-ordinate the *Running on Empty* campaign demonstrated a new way of working for the SGBs in membership of the Forum.

7.21 In addition, although not as part of the Forum business, some SGBs are providing services to other SGBs on a paid-for basis. For example, Scottish Swimming and Scottish Gymnastics provide some services to other SGBs.

7.22 SGBs in membership of the Forum have expressed some initial views about the potential to extend a shared service model into areas including:

- Joint procurement of a SGB impact report
- Joint procurement to be explored in areas of significant SGB expenditure
- Coordinated provision of PVG checks
- Safety and risk management: establishing protocols for injury prevention, such as concussion management, and ensuring venue or equipment standards.
- Creating more central capacity (including shared panels) to more effectively manage disputes, disciplinary, welfare and safeguarding cases
- Centralised IT support
- Centralised financial services
- More effective sharing of best practice, policies and procedures.

Other providers working with multiple SGBs

7.23 There are other private providers of specialist services to SGBs that operate using a similar model to Expert Resources, offering similar fractional capacity in other business areas.

Next steps

7.24 This Review has highlighted the potential to explore the benefits of additional services being developed for SGBs and the next steps are set out within the Implementation Plan presented in Section Eight.

SECTION EIGHT: THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 8.1 The Implementation Plan set out in this section has the in-principle agreement of **sportscotland**, the SSA, the Forum, other SGBs and the National Partners.
- 8.2 The Steering group approved this Implementation Plan at their meeting on 27 August.
- 8.3 **sportscotland**, the SSA and the Forum have indicated their commitment to working collaboratively to deliver the Implementation Plan and have agreed to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by the end of September 2026, setting out their respective commitments.

To confirm the SSA as the single, unified body for SGBs

- 8.4 It is recommended that the Parties should collaborate to support the transformation of the SSA to reposition it as the independent and unified body of SGBs recognised by all SGBs and key stakeholders. The following next steps are proposed:

Confirm the SSA as the single, unified body for SGBs - Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
Final Report shared with SGBs and other key stakeholders, together with an announcement of next steps and timelines.	September.
The Parties sign the MOU to confirm their commitment to collaborating in the delivery of the Implementation Plan and supporting the transformation of the SSA to become the recognised, unified and independent body for SGBs.	September.

Changing the name and brand of the SSA

- 8.5 It is recommended that the name of the SSA should be changed as part of this transformation, to more strongly reflect its new purpose and membership. The revised name should be agreed as part of a wider brand review that should be commissioned in Autumn 2026. The following next steps are proposed:

Changing the name of the SSA – The next steps

Action	Dates
Securing the budget to commission the brand review and name change.	30 September.

The name change is included within the brand review commission and this is completed.	October – January.
Members’ approval to adopt the new name to be secured.	February.
Registration completed with Companies House and IPO and follow up with all parties.	February.
All follow up completed to register the change of name with all statutory agencies and suppliers.	March.
Rebranding the organisation is phased, to replace all references to SSA.	August 2027.

The Purpose

8.6 The purpose of the SSA should be revised to:

“We exist to be the independent and collective voice of Scottish governing bodies of sport, strengthening their influence, championing their contribution and helping create the conditions for sport to thrive in communities throughout Scotland

Purpose - Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
The Purpose is approved within the Recommendations and accepted as a starting point for the development of the new SSA strategy.	27 August

Ambitions

8.7 The following ambitions or strategic goals of the SSA should be revised to:

- Enabling and supporting a vibrant and inclusive SGB sector within Scottish sport
- Advocating and demonstrating the collective impact of the vital work of SGBs
- Influencing and helping shape the policies, strategies and programmes that impact on SGBs
- Enabling the sharing of knowledge, common practices and solutions between SGBs
- Creating trusted networks and co-ordinating learning and development opportunities for SGBs
- Providing and coordinating services which create efficiencies for SGBs

Ambitions- Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
The Ambitions are approved within the Recommendations and accepted as a starting point for the development of the new SSA strategy.	27 August

The SSA Strategy

- 8.8 A new four year strategy incorporating and building on the new purpose and ambitions, should be developed by the SSA by April 2027 and involve comprehensive engagement and consultation with SGBs, National Partners and key stakeholders. The work to develop the new strategy for SSA will commence in September 2026 and will be finalised by March/April 2027.

Strategy - Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
The Purpose and Ambitions of the SSA are approved within the Recommendations.	27 August
Discussions within the SGB landscape, networks and forums are facilitated to explore how the Ambitions could be activated within the new structure of the SSA and to prepare a draft strategy.	December
A membership review is undertaken as part of the strategy process.	September – January
A governance review is undertaken as part of the strategy process.	September – January
A review of SGB services is undertaken as part of the strategy process	September – January
Initial work is undertaken to develop the funding model for the strategy/SSA, including a National Partner funding agreement with sportscotland	September - February
Initial work is undertaken to develop the people plan/executive capacity requirements to meet the requirements of the emerging strategy and to align within the funding model	September - February
The name change and brand review is undertaken as part of the new strategy process and the new strategy is launched with the new brand in place.	March
Key strategy consultation dates are established for the new CEO to manage.	January
New strategy approved by the board of SSA.	April

Membership

8.9 Recognised SGBs should remain as the Full Members (voting Members) of the SSA and an Associate Membership category should be retained for those national organisations that work with SGBs. All SGBs should become members of the SSA and only those SGBs in membership should have access to the services and networks of the SSA from April 2027. A membership review group should be established as part of the strategy development in 2026. The following principles of membership of the SSA are recommended.

Membership - Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
A working group, including officers from the SSA, SGBs, National Partners and sportscotland is established to conduct a membership review. Terms of reference to be agreed but may include: • Review membership trends over the last five years. • Confirm current members and implications for new principles of membership • Membership renewals process • Consider any revisions to categories of membership and level of membership fees • Consider membership benefits • Consider how SGBs can be encouraged into membership and how the expectation of membership can be activated • Consider how membership feedback is gathered in the future through satisfaction surveys and satisfaction benchmarking • Consultation with members on emerging proposals	September – February
Board approval of new membership proposals	March

Governance

8.9.1 It is recommended that the SSA should significantly review its governance arrangements, policies and procedures. The following amendments to the articles of SSA should be proposed to the SSA AGM on 29 September 2026:

- Increase the size of the board from seven to a maximum of 12 directors.
- Change the maximum director terms from three terms of three years to two terms of four years.

- Arrange the board cycles so that the number of board members retiring or eligible for reappointment each year is a manageable number.
- The Chair shall be politically and commercially independent of any SGB (i.e. not currently holding a SGB role).
- At least six other members of the board shall be required to have significant executive or non-executive SGB experience. They will bring diverse experience, for example as Chairs or CEOs, and from funded and unfunded sports.
- Two of these six shall be nominated by the CEO/COO Forum from within its membership and then approved by the Nominations Committee. The Forum will determine how it selects these two nominees, whether by election or competency-based process.
- The other four SGB roles shall be appointed on a competency basis through open recruitment (need to be endorsed by their SGB)
- Four independent directors shall be appointed to the board to provide specialist knowledge and experience in areas such as finance, legal, risk, people/HR, commercial and digital. These directors will be appointed on a competency basis through open recruitment.
- One of these four independent directors shall be appointed as the Senior Independent Director and-Vice Chair.
- The CEO shall be a director of the company
- Directors will be recruited to the Board in line with the SSA Board Recruitment Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Skills and Diversity Matrix. The SSA will seek to create a Board with appropriate diversity, independence, skills, experience and knowledge to take effective decisions that will further the Objects. One of the Directors will be appointed as the Board Champion for Equality,
- Board appointments will be managed by a Nominations Committee which shall include the Chair, two independent directors and two ‘SGB directors’

Governance - Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
A governance working group is established to include officers and board members of the SSA and a SGB CEO to oversee the governance work outlined below.	September
The Articles are redrafted to align with the recommendations from this review. These are presented to AGM for approval.	September
Committee structure and Terms of Reference for the Committees of the Board of SSA approved by the Board.	October
Skills and diversity audit of the current board undertaken and analysed.	September
Board succession plan developed and approved and board vacancies agreed.	October

Director recruitment planned and activated including recruitment pack and adverts, selection processes and dates.	October
Director policies reviewed in advance of new appointments including: letter of appointment, directors code of conduct, directors declaration of conflict of interest, declaration of good character or director screening.	November
New Directors recruited.	December
Board governance policy reviewed and approved.	January/February
Annual calendar of board and committee meetings approved.	January

Networks and Groups

- 8.10 A review group should be established to review the current landscape of networks and forums involving SGBs. This group should involve officers from **sportscotland**, SGBs, the SSA, National Partners and individuals drawn from some of the groups and forums. The group should undertake a mapping exercise of the current network groups and forums, propose a revised structure to improve efficiency and collaboration and identify which groups should be positioned within the structure of the SSA. There should be full consultation with SGBs and key stakeholders throughout this process and this work should be completed by February 2027. **sportscotland** should continue to play its key role in supporting these groups in partnership with the SSA.

(Fig 8) Networks and Groups - Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
Establish the working group to map and review the current network groups and forums operating within the SGB landscape and develop proposals for the structure within the SSA.	September Review and make proposals by end November
The committee structure of the SSA, including the CEO/COO Forum and SGB Chairs' Forum, is approved.	December
Consultation, development and board approval of the terms of reference for the working groups and forums.	January

Create a co-ordinated plan for SGB services

- 8.11 A review group should be established involving officers from the SSA, **sportscotland** and SGBs to conduct an analysis and create a coordinated plan for SGB services. The group should consider the current service provision, explore

improvements or expansions to current services, confirm areas of greatest latent demand and explore options for the provision of new services. There should be full consultation with SGBs and key stakeholders throughout this process and this work should be completed by February 2027.

Creating a coordinated plan for SGB services - *Proposed next steps*

Action	Dates
Create a working group with relevant officers from SSA, sportscotland and CEOs/SGBs to conduct an analysis and create a strategy for SGB services. The terms of reference are to be agreed but may include: • Review current services, levels of use and satisfaction scores • Explore improvements or expansions to these services • Confirm areas of greatest latent demand for new services • Explore options for the provision of new shared services, including host bodies and costs • Consult with SGBs and stakeholders on the emerging proposals • Consider funding and capacity requirements • Clarify the role of SSA in SGB service delivery or coordination of services.	September – February

Recruitment of the CEO

- 8.12 The vacant position of CEO of the SSA should be recruited as soon as practical. The role description should be developed based on the proposals within these Recommendation and the new positioning of the SSA. The recruitment should be managed by the SSA, involve representatives of **sportscotland** the Forum and be completed by December 2026.

Recruitment of the CEO – *Proposed next steps*

Action	Dates
CEO role description developed based on the proposition emerging from this review and approved by the Parties to this review.	September
Salary and benefits approved and funding confirmed to meet the costs of the new role.	August/September

CEO recruitment planned and activated, including recruitment pack and adverts, selection processes and dates.	September
Recruitment process starts prior to AGM	September
Recruitment completed	December
CEO commences following notice period.	February

Funding the SSA

- 8.13 Work should be undertaken to consider ways of increasing the income of the SSA to meet the requirements of delivering the new strategy. This should include a review of membership fees and earned income and the SSA working with **sportscotland** to be recognised as a National Partner and to secure a funding agreement with **sportscotland** by April 2027.

Securing additional funding for SSA – Proposed next steps

Action	Dates
Secure agreement for Active Scotland funding being protected and channelled through sportscotland	September - December
sportscotland agrees 'in-principle' that the SSA will be recognised and funded as a National partner, subject to any detailed funding agreement.	November
sportscotland provides an initial start-up award to support CEO recruitment to cover (likely) increased salary and on costs.	September
The membership and fees review is undertaken to explore the potential to increase membership income from 2027 onwards.	September – February
Consideration given to a funding envelop/ball-park figure for an annual award being agreed in-principle by sportscotland for the SSA, subject to the finalisation of the strategy and business plan	November
Initial award from sportscotland to SSA is approved	April

SSA executive capacity

- 8.14 Work should be undertaken to review the SSA executive capacity and structure and to align this to the delivery requirements of the new strategy. This should be developed alongside the strategy and aligned with the available budgets and be completed by April 2027.

Considering the executive capacity requirements of the SSA - *Proposed next steps*

Action	Dates
This will be further developed and refined as part of the strategy development and aligned with the available budgets.	February
CEO is recruited	December
Executive structure of the SSA confirmed and new roles recruited.	January – May

SECTION NINE: APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The Methodology

Stage One: Process design, discovery and diagnosis

(4 days - weeks 1- 3)

- 1.1 Desk study of relevant prior work
- 1.2 Meeting individually with key stakeholders: sportscotland (29.04), SSA (12.05), CEO Forum (24.04 & 14.05) to consider:
 - Initial perspectives and ambitions
 - Understanding of opportunities and challenges
 - Consider and agree 1:1 engagements throughout the process
- 1.3 Meet Stakeholder Group (23.04) to:
 - Agree process and timelines
 - Agree meeting and reporting dates

KEY OUTPUTS FROM STAGE ONE: Desk study materials reviewed. Initials thoughts from key stakeholders gathered and considered. Key milestones and dates in the process agreed

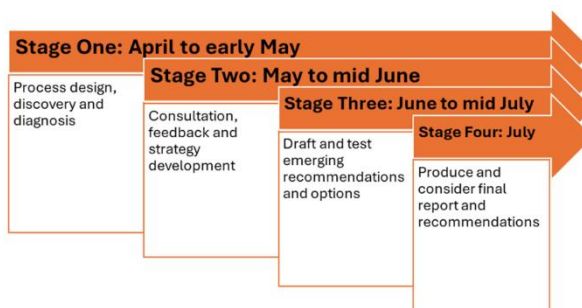
Stage 2: Consultation, feedback and strategy development

(24 days - weeks 4 - 10)

- 2.1 Engage several times and in depth with SGBs
 - Survey
 - Meetings with the CEO Forum Executive Group
 - Meetings with non funded sports
- 2.2 Engage several times and in depth with CEO and executives of the SSA, and appropriately with the Chair and board members
- 2.3 Engage several times and in depth with CEO and executives of sportscotland
- 2.4 Engage with the Scottish Government
- 2.5 Engage on a 1 to 1 basis with national landscape partners in Scotland to explore how they engage or may engage with the SGB collective

KEY OUTPUTS FROM STAGE TWO: Views of all stakeholders gathered and discussed. Possible options to meet the ITT brief, drafted and explored with key stakeholders.

Interim report with draft recommendations in June with final report in August



Appendix 2. The Implementation Plan September 2026 – May 2027

Confirm the SSA as the single, unified body for SGBs	
Action	Dates
Final Report shared with SGBs and other key stakeholders, together with an announcement of next steps and timelines.	September.
The Parties sign the MOU to confirm their commitment to collaborating in the delivery of the Implementation Plan and supporting the transformation of the SSA to become the recognised, unified and independent body for SGBs.	September.
Changing the name and brand of the SSA	
Securing the budget to commission the brand review and name change.	September.
The name change is included within the brand review commission and this is completed.	October – January.
Members' approval to adopt the new name to be secured.	February.
Registration completed with Companies House and IPO and follow up with all parties.	February.
All follow up completed to register the change of name with all statutory agencies and suppliers.	March.
Rebranding the organisation is phased, to replace all references to SSA.	August 2027.
Purpose	
The Purpose is approved within the Recommendations and accepted as a starting point for the development of the new SSA strategy.	27 August
Ambitions	
The Ambitions are approved within the Recommendations and accepted as a starting point for the development of the new SSA strategy.	27 August
The Strategy	
The Purpose and Ambitions of the SSA are approved within the Recommendations.	27 August
Discussions within the SGB landscape, networks and forums are facilitated to explore how the Ambitions could be activated within the new structure of the SSA and to prepare a draft strategy.	December
A membership review is undertaken as part of the strategy process.	September – January
A governance review is undertaken as part of the strategy process.	September – January

A review of SGB services is undertaken as part of the strategy process	September – January
Initial work is undertaken to develop the funding model for the strategy/SSA, including a National Partner funding agreement with sportscotland	September - February
Initial work is undertaken to develop the people plan/executive capacity requirements to meet the requirements of the emerging strategy and to align within the funding model	September - February
The name change and brand review is undertaken as part of the new strategy process and the new strategy is launched with the new brand in place.	March
Key strategy consultation dates are established for the new CEO to manage.	January
New strategy approved by the board of SSA.	April
Membership review	
A working group, including officers from the SSA, SGBs, National Partners and sportscotland is established to conduct a membership review. Terms of reference to be agreed but may include: • Review membership trends over the last five years. • Confirm current members and implications for new principles of membership • Membership renewals process • Consider any revisions to categories of membership and level of membership fees • Consider membership benefits • Consider how SGBs can be encouraged into membership and how the expectation of membership can be activated • Consider how membership feedback is gathered in the future through satisfaction surveys and satisfaction benchmarking • Consultation with members on emerging proposals	September – February
Board approval of new membership proposals	March
Governance review	
A governance working group is established to include officers and board members of the SSA and a SGB CEO to oversee the governance work outlined below.	September

The Articles are redrafted to align with the recommendations from this review. These are presented to AGM for approval.	September
Committee structure and Terms of Reference for the Committees of the Board of SSA approved by the Board.	October
Skills and diversity audit of the current board undertaken and analysed.	September
Board succession plan developed and approved and board vacancies agreed.	October
Director recruitment planned and activated including recruitment pack and adverts, selection processes and dates.	October
Director policies reviewed in advance of new appointments including: letter of appointment, directors code of conduct, directors declaration of conflict of interest, declaration of good character or director screening.	November
New Directors recruited.	December
Board governance policy reviewed and approved.	January/February
Annual calendar of board and committee meetings approved.	January
Board governance policy reviewed and approved.	January/February
Annual calendar of board and committee meetings approved.	January
Review of network groups and forums	
Establish the working group to map and review the current network groups and forums operating within the SGB landscape and develop proposals for the structure within the SSA.	September Review and make proposals by end November
The committee structure of the SSA, including the CEO/COO Forum and SGB Chairs' Forum, is approved.	December
Consultation, development and board approval of the terms of reference for the working groups and forums.	January
Review SGB services	
• Create a working group with relevant officers from SSA, sportscotland and CEOs/SGBs to conduct an analysis and create a strategy for SGB services. The terms of reference are to be agreed but may include: • Review current services, levels of use and satisfaction scores • Explore improvements of expansions to these services	September – February

• Confirm areas of greatest latent demand for new services • Explore options for the provision of new shared services, including host bodies and costs • Consult with SGBs and stakeholders on the emerging proposals • Consider funding and capacity requirements • Clarify the role of SSA in SGB service delivery or coordination of services.	
Recruit the CEO	
CEO role description developed based on the proposition emerging from this review and approved by the Parties to this review.	August/September
Salary and benefits approved and funding confirmed to meet the costs of the new role.	August/September
CEO recruitment planned and activated, including recruitment pack and adverts, selection processes and dates.	September
Recruitment process starts prior to AGM	September
Recruitment completed	December
CEO commences following notice period.	February
Funding SSA	
Secure agreement for Active Scotland funding being protected and channelled through sportscotland	September - December
sportscotland agrees 'in-principle' that the SSA will be recognised and funded as a National partner, subject to any detailed funding agreement.	November
sportscotland provides an initial start-up award to support CEO recruitment to cover (likely) increased salary and on costs.	September
The membership and fees review is undertaken to explore the potential to increase membership income from 2027 onwards.	September – February
Consideration given to a funding envelop/ball-park figure for an annual award being agreed in-principle by sportscotland for the SSA, subject to the finalisation of the strategy and business plan	November
Executive Capacity within SSA	
This will be further developed and refined as part of the strategy development and aligned with the available budgets.	February
CEO is recruited	December
Executive structure of the SSA confirmed and new roles recruited.	January – May

This will be further developed and refined as part of the strategy development and aligned with the available budgets.	February
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Email: david.joy@sportadvisor.org.uk

Mob: 07801 634189

Paul Bush OBE

Email: pbush@bushsport.co.uk

Mob: 07836 284205