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## Press release

Embargoed until 00.01 hours, Tuesday 29 April 2008

### **Sport participation falls as planning for the Commonwealth Games begins**

**Fewer people are regularly taking part in sport and many facilities need improvement. Hosting the 2014 Commonwealth Games provides a good opportunity to promote sport in Scotland.**

An Audit Scotland report, *A performance overview of sport in Scotland*, says that on average £558 million of public money is spent on sport each year. Councils are responsible for around 90% of this, with sportscotland and Lottery funding contributing the remaining 10%.

The level of participation in sport is declining. In 2001 49% of adults took part in sport at least once a week. By 2006, this had dropped to 42%. Participation by younger people also falls short of targets. However, good progress has been made in improving elite athlete performance, with 283 Scots winning medals in international competitions by 2007, against a target of 250.

Scotland has about 7,000 public sports facilities. Between 2002 and 2007 councils spent £385 million on building and improving facilities such as swimming pools and outdoor pitches. In 2006 sportscotland estimated that about £110 million a year was needed for the next 25 years to bring all sports facilities up to an acceptable standard.

There are no clear links between the national sport strategy and sports investment across Scotland. The Audit Scotland report says that the Government should discuss with local government how the contribution of sport to achieving national outcomes can be recognised and acted on.

Robert Black, Auditor General for Scotland, said: "Over half a billion pounds of public money is spent each year on sport, but more needs to be done to link the national strategy for sport to sports investment across Scotland. Many sports facilities still need improvement to ensure that they are attractive."

The report also highlights that £298 million of public money has been committed to the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and it summarises the possible risks involved in staging this major event.

Mr Black said "The Commonwealth Games are an excellent opportunity to promote sporting activity and to showcase Scotland internationally. The Games must be delivered against a deadline that can't be moved, and they will involve many different organisations and groups. Strong leadership and tight management of the risks will be essential. I have asked Audit Scotland to monitor how these risks are being managed."

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**Notes to Editors:**

1. The Scottish Parliament's audit committee will consider the report on Wednesday 30 April.
2. The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Government and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament.
3. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland.