

COUNTY COUNCIL

21 JANUARY 2015

QUESTION FROM MR S ASHFIELD

Thank you for taking my question today, I would like to ask again, for the third year running - Why is it that the school sports primary finals for County Durham are all taking place on the same day? Not only may this result in disadvantaging any child who is competing in more than one event but it may also exclude others from competing because of a clash of events.

If I can remind the Council that one of the swimming teams that won the county finals last year went through to compete at the National School swimming Championships. They performed very well, but because of the clash of events at the county final, they did not put through their strongest team, as one of the schools strongest swimmers chose to take part in the athletics final instead on the same day at the same time. Obviously, they still did very well, but the team consisted of the fourth strongest swimmers. They may have done better.

I have asked this question before and been told it would be looked at for next year, however, as far as I can see nothing has changed.

Response

Can I thank Mr Ashfield for his question. The Level 3 School Games is part of the Sainsburys School Games and follows a national format, whereby multisport competitions are held on the same day (often at the same venue). This takes place nationwide.

In County Durham they are now organised by County Durham Sport (who are the Local Organising Committee or LOC). This issue has been raised several times at the LOC, and although it is regrettable that these clashes happen, it does provide more opportunities for pupils to access a level 3 competition.

With regards to previous times the question has been raised; in 2012 when Educations Development Service last organised the Level 3 competition, consideration was given to schools who had multiple entries in different sports, however, this is a real challenge as the timing of the Level 2 competitions (School Sports Partnership events) often take place very close to the Level 3 County Finals.

With reference to swimming example provided by Mr Ashfield -

Whilst I appreciate it is unfair on pupils who have represented the school and done so well at the Level 3 event, and qualified for the National Finals, there is nothing to stop the school from taking different swimmers as part of this team, although this is something I would not personally advocate.

I hope this meets the needs of Mr Ashfield, if not, I would recommend further correspondence with the Local Organising Committee.