STRATEGIC CAPABILITY IN COMMUNITY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled 'Strategic Capability in Community Sport and Physical Activity' represents the results of my own work except where specified in the thesis.

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Abstract

The construct of strategic capability and emergent theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a) is currently unexplored in the community sport context in the UK and requires critical examination through empirical research. The strategic capability construct provides a useful lens through which to explore the setting of Greater Manchester (GM), UK, where developments in the governance of community sport use integrated working between national and regional entities, a central component of the theory of board strategic balance. The new approach integrates Sport England in direct partnership with the National Health Service in GM (NHSGM) and GM Combined Authority (GMCA) through a programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group. Due to the infancy of the new approach to governance, the strategic capability factors that influence the board's ability to make an optimal strategic contribution remain unexplored, supporting the need for empirical research in this context. Optimal performance is of critical importance, due to the requirement for improved effectiveness of services in regions such as GM to reduce long term inequalities. Improving effectiveness is made more challenging due to austerity measures and a growing deficit between the cost of public services and the amount of tax raised.

Empirical evidence has been collected, following an interpretive case study design, using semi-structured interviews and corroborated with document analysis across three areas of data collection: board member perspectives of the GM Moving Executive Group; management level perspectives from the three partner organisations; and local commissioner and provider perspectives from localities and key organisations in GM. Key findings support the notion that the strategic capability of the GM Moving Executive Group is enhanced by integration between national, regional and local entities; in the context of GM this is through integrated governance mechanisms and architecture. To further optimise performance, board, strategic management and wider system inputs are integrated through systems leadership and organisational learning processes. These findings require a revised conceptualisation of strategic capability in the community sport and physical activity context to support the emergent theory of integrated community sport governance: the theory of integrated board strategic cycles.

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1.0 Introduction

The following chapter introduces both the thesis and a rationale for using strategic capability as a theoretical lens to explore a new governance approach for social outcomes in community sport and physical activity. For the purpose of this research, community sport and physical activity will be defined using the following definition of physical activity, which incorporates both terms (Department of Health, 2004:81):

> [Physical activity is] any force exerted by skeletal muscle that results in energy expenditure above resting level […], this term therefore includes the full range of human movement, from competitive sport, to active hobbies, walking and cycling or activities of daily living.

This chapter outlines the rationale for focusing in the thesis on strategic capability, a construct that has developed from sport governance in the professional sport context in New Zealand and Australia (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). The strategic capability framework and emergent theory of board strategic balance builds on governance models developed in the UK by Edwards and Cornforth (2003), with the key addition of integration between national and regional entities making it a suitable construct to aid the examination of the new approach to governance in the UK.

In England, current community sport and physical activity is focused on five social outcomes outlined in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Sporting Future policy (2015):

1. Physical Wellbeing
2. Mental Wellbeing
3. Individual Development
4. Social and Community Development
5. Economic Development

To contribute to these social outcomes, the Sporting Future policy (DCMS, 2015) steers Sport England, the quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation (quango) responsible for community sport and physical activity, to engage with regional entities such as local government and health bodies, advancing on current governance via County Sport Partnerships (CSPs). The first example of this new approach in the UK was the sport and physical activity partnership ('the Partnership') between Sport England, Greater Manchester

Combined Authority (GMCA) and the National Health Service in Greater Manchester (NHSGM), as documented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the three bodies (Rowley, 2016a) and the Partnership's programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group (Lever, 2017: presentation). However, little is known about the new approach to governance in community sport and physical activity, and empirical research is required to develop an understanding of the enablers and constraints and required inputs and processes, for the new way of working to deliver a strategic contribution to the social outcomes.

How the strategic capability framework and the theory of board strategic balance developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) are useful to community sport and physical activity in the UK will be explored, to develop an understanding of the factors that enable and constrain the GM Moving Executive Group and the required inputs and processes for optimal performance. However, the thesis acknowledges that a revised conceptualisation is required, based on empirical findings in England in the Greater Manchester (GM) context. As such, the focus on the strategic capability of the GM Moving Executive Group provides the aim and objectives for the thesis; this is documented in Section 1.2. Finally, to support the research objectives, this chapter will provide an overview of the thesis structure, including literature review, methodology, empirical findings, discussion in relation to the wider academic literature and conclusion.

1.1 Research rationale

From a review of the sport governance literature, strategic capability has been identified as an appropriate lens through which to examine the new approach documented in Chapter 3. The strategic capability construct has been developed through years of theorising (e.g. Ferkins et al., 2005; Ferkins, 2007; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010, 2015a), leading to the development of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). The framework builds on earlier work by Edwards and Cornforth (2003), which acknowledges the importance of context, board inputs and board processes; however, most relevant to this work is that the developed framework incorporates a central focus on national sport organisations integrating with regional entities in a power-sharing role. Ferkins and Shilbury

(2015a) suggest that by integrating with regional entities, through network governance, national sport organisations can develop their ability to function and their development potential to think and act in a strategic manner (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a).

As theory on strategic capability is emerging and is, as of yet, unexplored in the community sport context in the UK, it requires critical examination through empirical research. Further, it must be acknowledged that despite the benefits of moving to a networked form of governance and collaborative approach, challenges may occur. The following literature review will explore the challenges involved in integrated partnership with regional entities in more detail and bring together the literature on two disconnected yet related areas, strategic capability and partnerships. The review will explore the factors that enable and constrain organisations developing and delivering strategy through partnership and provide a deeper understanding of the barriers and challenges involved.

Ferkins (2007) suggests that due to the complex nature of strategic capability, the use of multiple theories is required to explain the construct. Support for a multi-theoretical conceptualisation is also put forward by Tricker (2000), who recommends the use of different theories to illuminate different governance dynamics. Moreover, the theory of board strategic balance developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) (as documented in Section 3.2) incorporates the use of multiple theories that will be explored through the literature review. The critical examination documented in the following literature review is supported by empirical research in new contexts (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a) and the context of community sport and physical activity, as documented in the methodology and findings chapters and discussed in relation to the wider academic literature in the discussion (Chapter 8).

To date, strategic capability in the community sport context in the UK has not been explored; however, it provides a suitable framework for exploring the new approach in GM, due to the focus on integration between national sport organisations and regional entities. Furthermore, it outlines a range of other influences on effectiveness, providing a useful sensitising device for the researcher to gain an understanding of the different influences on the ability of sport boards to function and develop. Moreover, the multiple layers of the

framework provide breadth to explore the holistic influences on the community sport governance process, including: macro-level (contextual) dynamics; meso-level (inter-organisational) dynamics; and the micro-level, organisational (or board) dynamics of the GM Moving Executive Group. Detailed exploration across the levels produces a consultable record of the new way of working and identifies the enablers and constraints of the partnership and its programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group. This consultable record can be used by Sport England and GM and other regions adopting similar approaches, to develop an understanding of the enablers and constraints involved in the new approach to governance. The explanatory value of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance will be assessed alongside any potential theoretical development required based on empirical findings in the community sport context.

As acknowledged above, the community sport context for the research will be GM. Due to the complexity of achieving social outcomes, the Sporting Future policy emphasises the importance of collaboration and partnership in regions such as GM (DCMS, 2015), proposing that building integrated relationships between the national sport organisation, Sport England, and local government and health bodies can develop sustainable solutions in terms of finance, governance and capability (DCMS 2015; GM Health and Social Care Partnership [GMHSCP], 2017). The national government wanted to identify the best way for national, regional and local organisations to work together to get the most value from sport and physcical activity as local government evolves (DCMS, 2015). The government focus led to commissioned pilot work by Rowley (2016a) that explores the integrated working in GM proposed in the GM Moving strategy (2015), 'providing a framework of activity that can be enhanced in localities through working together' (GM Moving, 2015:3). The work by Rowley (2016a) developed an MoU between Sport England, GMCA and the NHSGM (Rowley, 2016a). The partnership has been formed to:

> …provide an agreed framework to work together to develop an insight and behaviour change approach to Sport and Physical Activity partnerships across GM in order to impact on the health, social and economic outcomes for the area. The Programme Board will explore delivery of both the Government's and Sport England's strategies for Sport and Physical Activity at the GM level, while contributing to the strategic priorities of GM Combined Authority and GM National Health Service.

The Partnership identified in GM trials a new approach to governance of community sport and physical activity in the UK by the DCMS and Sport England. The new approach advances beyond the hierarchical mechanisms used between national sport organisations, national governing bodies and CSPs (Grix, 2011; Harris, 2013); instead, it appears that an integrated governance approach is being utilised in collaborating with regional entities, with GM as a test bed for integrated working. In the new approach, sport and physical activity will be integrated into core structures, strategies and plans (GM Moving, 2015). However, empirical evidence is required to explore, through the lens of strategic capability, the underlying mechanisms involved in community sport and physical activity in GM and the enablers and constraints to integrated working. This empirical examination will develop an understanding of the inputs and processes required in community sport in GM for the GM Moving Executive Group to function and develop towards making a strategic contribution to social outcomes. Further, the empirical evidence will enable critical examination of the strategic capability framework and emergent theory of board strategic balance in this context, developing the following research aim and objectives.

1.2 Research aim and objectives

It has been identified by the researcher that a new approach to governance has been adopted by the national sport organisation, Sport England, through the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group; however, it is not clear how effective this new approach is, or what is required for optimal performance, resulting in the following aim and objectives:

Aim: To explore the strategic capability of the sport and physical activity partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM and its programme board the GM Moving Executive Group.

- Objective 1: To review the academic literature on strategic capability and sport and physical activity partnerships.
- Objective 2: To identify enablers and constraints of integrated working for the GM Moving Executive Group at strategic and operational levels.

- Objective 3: To critically evaluate the strategic capability of the GM Moving Executive Group.
- Objective 4: To critically examine the explanatory value of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance, and develop a revised conceptualisation if required, based on empirical findings.

1.3 Thesis structure

In order to meet the aims and objectives of this research, the thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter 2 provides background and context to the literature review and Chapter 3 provides a review of the academic literature on strategic capability and partnerships, focusing on integration between national and regional entities, the types of governance, governance mechanisms and pros and cons of inter-organisational working. Additionally, in accordance with the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance, contextual dynamics as well as board inputs and board processes that may enable or constrain the ability of the board to function are reviewed.

Chapter 4 utilises the literature review and research setting to outline an interpretive methodological approach. An interpretive position is used, based on the requirement to gain insider perspectives that may vary due to different social constructions of sport and physical activity and governance in the community sport context in GM, across three areas of data collection:

- GM Moving Executive Group board members;
- Management level employees from the partner organisations Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM;
- Local commissioner and provider perspectives from the localities in GM.

Chapter 5 collates all data collected from the above areas to provide empirical findings on the formation of the Partnership and macro-level contextual dynamics influencing, and being influenced by, the GM Moving Executive Group.

Chapter 6 collates all data collected from the three areas to provide empirical findings on the meso-level inter-organisational factors that influence the ability

of the GM Moving Executive Group to function and the development potential of the GM Moving Executive Group to think and act in a strategic manner.

Chapter 7 collates all data from the three areas of data collection to provide empirical findings on the micro level: board inputs and board processes, which are required to produce the optimal strategic contribution from the GM Moving Executive Group towards social outcomes.

Chapter 8 discusses the findings from the macro, meso and micro levels in relation to the wider academic literature, exploring existing and emergent themes with regards to strategic capability in the community sport context in the UK.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by addressing each objective of the research, providing recommendations for theory, policy, practice and future research. In addition, the researcher's reflections on the choice of theoretical framework and methodological approach and the research process are documented. Finally, the contributions to practice, policy and theory identified through empirical evidence are underlined.

2.0 Literature review background and context

The following chapter provides the background and context to community sport and physical activity, set in the wider context of international development, before exploring national and local government policy that has led to the integration of national and regional entities in the UK in regional sport and physical activity boards such as the GM Moving Executive Group. This wider literature provides the background and context to the central literature review in Chapter 3, examining the themes and sub-themes of strategic capability in sport and physical activity partnerships. The thesis is set in the context of community sport development in GM, England; it is important, however, to first understand sport development in the wider context of policy for development, from international to national and local levels, and, in particular, place-based approaches.

2.1 International context

The link between sport and development started with co-operation between the International Labour Organisation and the International Olympic Committee in 1922 (Beutler, 2008). In 1945, following World War II, the United Nations (UN) was created, with the signing of the UN charter. The charter focused on peace, human rights, justice, social progress and better standards of life (United Nations, 2017). At a national level, specifically in the context of England, this focus on social progress and standards of life filtered down into national welfare policy. Between 1950 and 1970 there was a consensus between the Conservative and Labour parties about the role of the state and the central role of welfare provision (Houlihan and White, 2003). In 1976, economic crisis led to the end of Keynesian economics, and pressure from neo-liberal economists about the role of the state in providing welfare (Houlihan and White, 2003), as well as the introduction of performance management practices and a change in the role of local government from service provider to enabler and facilitator. The Conservative Party wanted to encourage self-reliance and awareness of responsibilities (as opposed to rights), which forms the foundation of the neo-liberal ideology experienced today (Houlihan and White, 2003). In 1972, an executive Sports Council was formed. Co-operation between the Manpower Services

Commission and the Sports Council marked a shift from developing a social policy for sport to the role of sport in social policy (Houlihan and White, 2003).

A key event on an international scale occurred in the 1980s, when the term 'sustainable development' was given international recognition following the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987). Sustainable development was defined as:

> [the] ability to make development sustainable to ensure that we meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(WCED, 1987:12)

The report emphasised that:

> The environment is where we live, and 'development' is what we do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode; the two are inseparable.

(Kates et al. 2016:2).

International policy suggests that, when considering future generations, sustainable development requires a balanced approach, as illustrated by the three pillars of sustainable development in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Venn diagram illustrating the overlapping nature of sustainable development (Source: Strong, 1996:2).
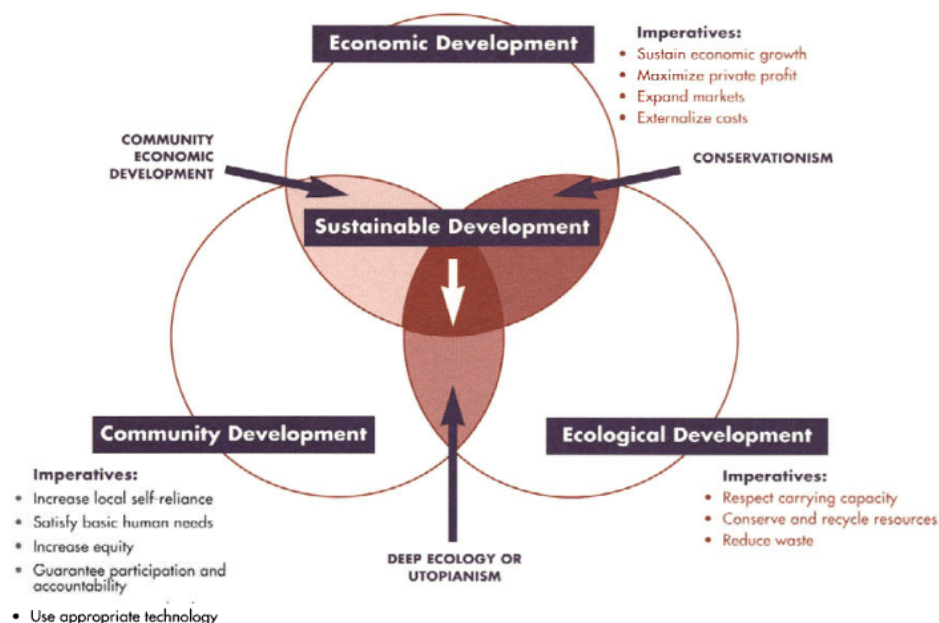
This balanced approach gained traction with the introduction of detailed actions and agreements on environmental factors in Agenda 21, at the so-called Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Kates et al., 2016). A core focus of Agenda 21 was the imperative to begin the process of giving real substance to sustainable development at a local level (Freeman, 1996). It was suggested that local-level working required participation from community stakeholders in order to provide them with an effective voice in decision making: essentially, people have to know what the issues and constraints are and the impact of their own lifestyles. Crucial to the process is that 'effective power-sharing is dependent upon shared knowledge' (Freeman, 1996:68). In order to implement the agenda, governance models were created by local authorities to enable participation of all stakeholders in any particular place. In order to support the agenda, a planning guide was introduced by the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives, emphasising the importance of engaging residents, key institutional partners and interest groups (often known as 'stakeholders') in designing and implementing action plans. This guide highlights that sustainable development requires balance between the three processes of economic development, social development and ecological development – and that this balance requires planning and implementation through partnerships (Strong, 1996).

In 2000, the UN introduced its Millennium Development Goals and the link between sport and development gained traction, with the formation of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force in 2003. A range of literature then emerged to create a body of knowledge in this field (Burnett, 2015). The UN Inter-Agency Task Force produced a report highlighting the benefits of sport as a development and peace intervention and as a cost-effective method to promote values and goals. The key goals identified were health, education, sustainable development, peace and interpersonal communication skills (Schnitzer et al., 2013). The Olympic movement and committee have also progressed sport for development; this is described as:

> …the use of sport to contribute to the realisation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, with a focus on education, public health, community safety, social cohesion, and helping girls and women, youth at risk, persons with HIV/AIDS and persons with disabilities in lower and middle-income countries.

(Kidd, 2008:373)

Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) highlight how numerous authors have identified sport as an engine for development initiatives. Levermore (2010), for example, highlights the roles of sport and business as the new engines in development due to an inefficient public-sector, while Beutler (2008) suggests sport is a proven means of achieving development goals; it also offers an opportunity to think about critical development issues in a relatively non-threatening way (Darnell and Hayhurst, 2011). This supporting evidence for sport and physical activity as a development tool resulted in a UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) report suggesting eight points of contribution of sport to the Millennium Development Goals (UNOSDP, 2010). In addition, the growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace is identified in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN General Assembly [UNGA], 2015). The Millennium Development Goals ceased to exist in 2015 and were replaced by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with an increase in the number of goals from 12 to 17.

In recent work, Lindsey and Chapman (2017) demonstrate the contribution of sport to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically:

- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies.
- Goal 17: Implementation through partnerships to achieve the scale and ambition of the sustainable development goals.

Although Lindsey and Chapman (2017) have provided detail on the contribution of sport to these goals, it could be argued that they have applied a narrow lens, for example, by excluding the contribution of sport to ecological factors. In contrast, the UNOSDP (2015) provides substantial insight into how sport contributes to all of the sustainable development goals – social, economic and ecological. Similarly, Dingle (2017) highlights that sport

depends on energy and transportation systems that rely on fossil fuel and generate greenhouse gas emissions. Also, Lindsey and Chapman (2017) fail to acknowledge the role that active travel (such as cycling and walking) can play in the reduction of pollution, and the contribution this can make to Goal 13, which is focused on climate action (UNOSDP, 2015; Transport for Greater Manchester [TFGM], 2016). Extending this further, due to the links between sport and physical activity and healthy diet (UNOSDP, 2015; NHS, 2018), an under-researched area is the contribution to Goal 12, which is focused on responsible consumption and production. Further, research is needed to explore the inter-relationships between sport and physical activity and ecological factors (Mallen et al., 2011; Dingle, 2017). Critically, vertical integration is required between international (e.g. the holistic and balanced UN policy) and national and local government (e.g. the narrow and unbalanced UK sport policy that only includes social and economic outcomes). Research in this area is needed on both the inside-out factors, i.e. how policy, organisations and individuals affect ecological limits, and outside-in factors, i.e. how ecological factors impact on policy, organisation and individuals in sport and physical activity (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Dingle, 2017). The risk with focusing sport and physical activity on social and economic outcomes and excluding an ecological outcome is that this could lead to unbalanced development that has longer-term adverse effects. Short-term thinking may result in positive results that can be celebrated by organisations and governments; however, without balanced development, it may contribute to future crises. This potential for future crises is something that is acknowledged by the Welsh government in their legislation, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in which a balanced focus is introduced and required of all public bodies in Wales.

The focus of this research is on the contribution of sport and physical activity to health, due to the extensive research on the subject, the solid evidence base and its prominence in UK sport policy. Public health is a major concern of our time and is listed, as stated above, as Goal 3 in the sustainable development goals. Importantly, the focus of public health and wellbeing in GM is moving towards prevention (GMHSCP, 2015). Despite acknowledging the focus on health, it is important also to acknowledge the integrated nature of social, environmental and economic goals (as illustrated in Figure 1). For example,

improving population health reduces health care and benefits costs and potentially acts as an enabler to employment, boosting the economy. Also, it is important to take into account ecological factors, such as pollution and the detrimental effect this has on health, with 29,000 lives lost each year to air pollution (Ayres and Hurley, 2010). Critically, although sport and physical activity has the potential to be utilised as a development tool, it is found that a balanced approach to policy and delivery is required. This balanced approach requires, economic, social and ecological outcomes to be integrated into sport development policy and strategy, in line with international sustainable development policy as exemplified by The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2.2 Sport development

It is important to explore the varying nature of sport development, as it is evident that sport is a social construct and dependent on place (Wilson and Piekarz, 2015). Social constructs mean that different people can define and understand the term in different ways, leading to the potential for disagreement in the literature and implying the importance of exploring differences in national contexts. Sport development looks at sport and physical activity within countries, with the emphasis on increasing participation. Nicholson et al. (2010) highlight that despite rising government interest in this area, in some areas participation rates have only increased slightly, and in others have declined or became stagnant. A wide range of authors focus on sport development in terms of its contribution to developing elite sport. Sotiriadou et al. (2008), for example, focus on recruiting, retaining and developing athletes. De Bosscher and Van Bottenburg (2011) identify that participation influences elite success due to the continuous supply of young talent and the higher level of training and competition; however, they also acknowledge that there is scarcely any data available with regard to this. Houlihan and Green (2011) take a much broader view and suggest that the term 'sport development' encompasses three orientations. First is the promotion of sport for all objectives. The second prioritises talent identification and nurturing talent pathways and supports the view of Sotiriadou et al. (2008), above. The third links to other policy objectives (such as health and community development) in a more holistic way; the importance of this last orientation is emphasised in

a review by Coalter (2012) for UK Sport and Sport England. Furthermore, Rowe et al. (2013) evidence findings by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2004, 2009) and link physical inactivity to a range of health issues. Kohl et al. (2012) refer to this as a pandemic and point to physical inactivity being the fourth leading cause of death; however, they suggest that despite evidence on the benefits of physical activity being available since 1956 it is only recently that government action has developed. One of the reasons for this lack of action is put forward by Bloyce et al. (2008) and Sam (2009), who highlight that the cross-cutting nature of sport development makes it difficult to manage. Additionally, Casey et al. (2012) highlight that while there is now an acknowledgement of the link between sport and physical activity and health, strategies to address this issue are underdeveloped.

It is difficult to find consensus on the correct approach for sport development, with much debate in the literature and competing government strategies on the use of sport and physical activity for elite performance or to address social issues such as health (Sotiriadou et al., 2008; De Bosscher and Van Bottenburg, 2011; Houlihan and Green 2011; Coalter, 2012; Rowe et al., 2013). Houlihan and White (2003) suggest that varying objectives within sport development policy have led to inconsistencies in practice. One view is that an active childhood leads to an active lifestyle, with Bailey et al. (2015) finding that physical activity has particularly significant benefits when undertaken early in life. Others evidence a demonstration effect, i.e. being inspired by watching role models succeeding in sport at events such as the Olympics (Hunt, 2010); however, despite the benefits of large events and the excellent performance of the GB Olympic team in 2012 and 2016, unfortunately this does not appear to correlate with sustained increased participation, which would be required for health benefits. Recently, Grix et al. (2017) evidenced an overall decrease in participation in numerous sports post-Olympics, suggesting limited benefits to participation from hosting the Olympic Games. Furthermore, Widdop et al. (2017) identify that the Active People survey 2008–2014 does not show any impact of elite-focused development policy on sport participation. However, it must be acknowledged that the 2002 Commonwealth Games in GM has had evident benefits on regeneration in the city-region (such as development in East Manchester), leading to the increased satisfaction of local residents with their area, despite not improving sport participation (McCartney et al. 2010).

The focus of this chapter is community sport development to deliver social objectives such as health. Sport development is set in the wider field of sport management, which encompasses all areas of sport and business, from retail and events to education and community. As previously stated (in sections 1.1 and 1.2), the literature suggests that sport and physical activity has substantial benefits, both for the environment in which it operates and for the people that participate, in terms of economic and social outcomes. Further support is provided in research collated by NIke (2012), which indicates that physical activity goes beyond creating good health and that investment will improve individual assets and drive economies forward; however, they highlight that the use of physical activity is due to cost–benefit analysis, i.e. the lowest cost for the most effective treatment of issues such as obesity. The term 'treatment' here is key, as it is suggested that in order to reduce the current deficit and cost to health and social care services, it is necessary to move past treatment to prevention and embed sport and physical activity throughout the whole course of life (GM Health and Social Care Partnership [GMHSCP], 2015).

Despite the benefits of sport and physical activity, Wilson and Piekarz (2015) suggest that it is important not to become closed-minded and think that sport is all good. There are also widely acknowledged and deeply rooted issues in sport that shine a less positive light on it, including doping, corruption and product marketing. Corruption comes in different forms, e.g. fraud and bribery, and continues to threaten the integrity of sport governance (Kihl et al., 2017). It is suggested that a key factor is the commercialisation of sport, which can exacerbate scandal and criminality (Budd, 2001). Gardiner et al. (2017) suggest the need for integrity, which has become the central standard in competition governance. They highlight that integrity requires taking responsibility for one's self and one's commitments to maintain reputation and effective stakeholder dialogue. It has been proposed that if corruption is not addressed, it could lead to a growing cynicism about the reputation and place of sport in society (Kihl et al., 2017). From a health perspective, there is a risk that injury and passive viewing of sport can lead to consumption of unhealthy food and drink, both of which can have negative effects on health (Wilson and Piekarz, 2015). Despite this acknowledgement of negative aspects, the link between sport and development areas such as health is increasingly recognised (Kidd, 2008; Coalter, 2012; Nike, 2012; Lindsey and Chapman,

2017). It has been identified that although it is important to acknowledge the negative issues in sport, sport development can bring a range of benefits, including the development of specific sports, the development of elite athletes and (importantly for this research) development outcomes such as health. This is evident in national government policy in the UK and will now be explored further.

2.3 UK national government

In England, it is evident that there have been shifts in government policy from elite performance to the social benefits of sport and physical activity. For example, a key moment in the political history of sport policy was a report by the Policy Action Team 10 (1999), emphasising the New Labour agenda. The New Labour vision moved away from the Conservative agenda initiated by John Major in the Raising the Game strategy (Department for National Heritage, 1995), which focused on elite and competitive sport (Phillpots, 2013). Sport development policy progressed to the strategy A Sporting Future for All from the DCMS (2000), with a focus on giving people a sporting chance. Within the report by the Policy Action Team 10, evidence is provided on the use of sport and physical activity as a tool to tackle social issues such as social exclusion (where people feel disconnected from participation in society) (Policy Action Team 10: 1999).

After the success of the bid for London to host the 2012 Olympics, the Labour Government's strategy shifted to a focus on participation, competition and elite development. The new coalition government reiterated this shift in focus in 2010, with a new strategy for sport and physical activty set out in the DCMS (2010) report A Sporting Habit for Life. This DCMS (2010) policy refocused on the competitive element of sport, in effect moving away from the wider social benefits for all to a strategy clearly focusing on the demonstration effect, as highlighted in a statement from Hunt (2010:1): 'choose London for the Olympics, and we will inspire a whole generation of people to take up sport'. It is evident within this strategy that the focus is on competition, with the narrative around building competitive sport in schools, and links with clubs where competition is dominant. There is no mention at all of the benefits this may have regarding outcomes such as health or individual development. In addition, the focus is mainly on hierarchical forms of governance by the DCMS

and Sport England, such as whole-sport plan contracts. Despite some acknowledgement of improving links between sports and clubs, there is virtually no recognition of the benefits of partnership with local government. Instead, policy focuses on work between the national government, Sport England and other agencies (DCMS, 2010). However, in developing elite sport, the use of hierarchical forms of governance is commonly found to be the most appropriate option; Lynn and Robichau (2013) suggest administrative hierarchy is fundamental to performance, providing support for its use in elite sport, based on performance benefits (Sam, 2017).

After the 2012 Olympics, despite record achievements in the medal table, it was evident that the new strategy was not achieving increased participation (Widdop et al., 2017). Furthermore, in some sports, the years following the Olympics recorded a decrease in participation (Grix et al., 2017). It could be argued that the coalition government reverted to a strategy focused on sport for social benefits, previously put forward by the Labour Government in the Sporting Future for All strategy (2001). As stated earlier, the focus here was social inclusion to reduce social exclusion. The term 'social exclusion' has gained traction, and as a result is present in national and European Union (EU) policy, with sport being confirmed by the EU in 2010 as a driver of social inclusion (Collins and Haudenhuyse, 2015). EU policy has been followed by socially inclusive policies such as Sporting Future (DCMS, 2015), to facilitate employment and access to resources and services (Haudenhuyse and Theeboom, 2015). The change in strategy is supported by new evidence of how sport and physical activity can contribute to society, in a review of the social impacts of culture, sport and physical activity, which states 'the estimated cost of physical inactivity to the National Health Service is £8.3 billion per year' (Taylor et al., 2015:30). Within the new Sporting Future strategy (2015), the evident shift is not just from elite development to social benefits, but from outcomes such as medals and participation to social outcomes. The five core outcomes are described below in more detail.

1. Physical wellbeing, i.e. how sport can contribute to improving physical health.
2. Mental wellbeing, i.e. how sport can contribute to improving mental health.
3. Individual development, i.e. how sport can increase self-confidence and help deliver education and/or employment benefits for the individual.

4. Social and community development, i.e. how sport can help society more broadly, building trust in communities and increasing social capital.
5. Economic development, i.e. how sport can contribute to the economy.

(DCMS, 2017:10)

It could be argued that this new government policy pays more attention to the pandemic being created by levels of physical inactivity highlighted earlier (Kohl et al., 2012). However, it fails to comply with international policy and lacks any inclusion of ecological development, as required for balanced sustainable development (as illustrated in Figure 1 above).

Within the literature, one of the criticisms of national sport organisations challenged with the task of implementing policy is their inability to be strategic (Ferkins et al. 2005; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010, 2015a). The new government strategy emphasises the need to ensure that partnerships are sustainable (in terms of finance, governance and capability) as a strategic management approach (DCMS, 2015). In order to improve this process, Sport England and UK Sport have developed a new Code for Sport Governance (Bitel and Carr, 2017). Principle 1 of this code states that:

> Organisations shall have a clear and appropriate governance structure, led by a board which is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the organisation and exclusively vested with the power to lead it.

(Bitel and Carr, 2017:10).

It could be argued that one area neglected in the Code of Sport Governance is responsibility to ecological factors. Examples of best practice include South Africa, where a holistic approach to governance codes has been developed. Characteristic 7 of the South African Code of Governance is social responsibility:

> A good corporate citizen is increasingly seen as one that is non-discriminatory, non-exploitative and responsible with regards to environmental and human rights.

(Tricker and Tricker, 2014:101)

Similalrly, the sport and physical activity policy and strategy of the Welsh Government feeds directly into their one-planet vision of a sustainable Wales, ensuring a balanced approach to ecological, social and economic outcomes (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) and enforced through legislation (as

documented above) in The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As highlighted above, sustainable development requires the balancing of three pillars: economic, social and ecological. It is evident that the UK Code of Governance follows a similar practice to the DCMS policy and Sport England strategy and ignores ecological development, producing unbalanced sustainable development. This lack of focus ignores earlier policy by the DCMS (2008) which developed a sustainable development action plan. Critically, currently publicly funded organisations in England are not required or steered to integrate ecologically responsible practice into their strategy and operations in line with sustainable development principles, as are publicly funded organisations in Wales.

It is acknowledged that governments provide the vast majority of funding for community sport facilities, either nationally, locally or through education services. However, some authors contest whether this can be examined as sport policy (Bergsgard et al., 2007). The decision to focus on sport as a means to deliver social outcomes is relatively low cost and low risk, at the same time having relatively high visibility (Houlihan, 2015). The focus of strategy and investment in sport and physical activity partnerships for social outcomes is based on the positive social impacts having economic value. Social impacts are means and effects that are non-market, i.e. not traded for money. These include health care costs, benefits costs, criminal justice system costs, the value of improved human capital, social capital and combined social impacts (Taylor et al., 2015). Examples include the £8.3 billion noted earlier as the cost of physical inactivity, and worklessness, which costs £2.4 billion per year in benefits claims (Full Fact, 2015).

The three main areas of funding for sport development are elite sport development, youth sport development and adult mass participation. Houlihan and Green (2013) suggest there is a focus on youth sport and elite sport, the implication being that adult mass participation has been neglected. The benefits of focusing on investment in older adults are supported by evidence that the older-adult population will grow from 506 million in 2008, to 1.3 billion over the next 30 years (Pringle and Zwolinsky, 2017). However, the categorising of older adults varies within the literature, from over 50s (GMCA, 2017a), to over 65s (Department of Health, 2010; GMHSCP, 2017),

highlighting the combined authorities' focus on ageing to keep people in employment for longer. Taking this variation into consideration, the British Heart Foundation have removed age from their literature and now focus instead on a person-centred approach across three categories: the active, those in transition (i.e. showing a physical decline) and the frail (Pringle and Zwolinsky, 2017). Due to the number of older adults failing to meet physical activity guideline levels, they are a public health priority.

The continual shifting of national government funding between elite development to social outcomes creates a challenge to the consistency of delivery for organisations and managers (Houlihan and White, 2003). Hylton and Totten (2008) describe the variation in sport development as a continuum, with elite development at one end and community wellbeing at the other. It could be argued that having changing objectives has led to flat (and in some areas declining) levels of participation (Grix et al., 2017; Widdop et al., 2017). Research by Vail (2007) suggests the focus should not be on one or the other, but rather on enabling local leaders to increase participation and benefit the community. Rowe et al. (2013) support this and emphasise the importance of bringing the two worlds together to achieve the required outcomes.

By focusing on social and economic outcomes, the Sporting Future policy of the DCMS (2015) steers sport and physical activity to contribute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The policy requires Sport England to improve the effectiveness of sport and physical activity interventions, despite budget cuts. An opportunity is provided by steering Sport England to engage with local government and health bodies during the process of devolution. Engaging directly with local government changes the governance mechanisms previously used by Sport England, which focused on contracts with national governing bodies and CSPs (Harris, 2013), who then facilitated relationships with regional entities. However, the opportunity presented by devolution, with additional powers and budget for regional entities, creates potential for benefits to be gained by engaging in direct and power-sharing relationships. These potential benefits require critical exploration in the literature review and through empirical research, to investigate whether the new approach is more effective for Sport England and to develop an understanding on the required inputs and processes for optimal performance.

2.4 Devolution

Devolution occurred during a period of austerity in the UK, defined by Blyth (2013:2) as:

> …a form of voluntary deflation in which the economy adjusts, through the reduction of wages, prices and public spending to restore competitiveness, which is (supposedly) best achieved by cutting the state budget, debts and deficits.

The ensuing process of devolution in the UK was underlined by a comprehensive spending review, which outlined £81 billion in cuts to government departments and £61 billion in cuts to public expenditure, with a particular focus on local governments and those on social benefits (Parnell et al., 2016). This required the reform of public services in GM, leading to the devolution agreement, devolving power and budget as set out in the GM agreement (GMCA, 2014). However, the requirement for governance reform was also supported by the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) (2008), leading to the formation of the GMCA in 2011 and GMHSCP in 2015. An example of the devolution of budget is the £6 billion health and social care budget, with a £450 million transformation fund to manage the £2 billion deficit between the cost of public services and the amount of taxes raised (Butcher, 2016). The interpretation of this in this thesis is that as well as devolving power and budget to the regions, national government are also devolving accountability for budget cuts through a form of meta-governance (Bevir and Rhodes, 2016), while managing the regions to improve efficiency and effectiveness of services for a reduced budget.

It has been found in the academic literature on sport policy that focusing budget cuts on local government and social services has directly affected the disadvantaged in society, who depend on these services. For example, Collins and Kay (2003) find that not only was poverty the central issue with regards to social exclusion, but that it was made worse by stringent cost-cutting measures introduced through austerity. It is suggested that austerity has increased poverty, directly contributing to the problems being faced by deprived communities in localities across the country (Collins and Kay, 2014). Furthermore, as highlighted by Widdop et al. (2017), austerity has had a notable impact on sport development and community recreation, with

Ramchandani et al. (2018) providing evidence that sport and physical activity for disadvantaged groups has been negatively impacted by a requirement for leisure providers to focus on financial stability during a period of austerity. Widdop et al. (2017) also suggest that there are geographical differences (e.g. between deprived and wealthy localities) with regards to sport participation; however, this becomes less obvious when the category is broadened to wider physical activity. Walker and Hayton (2017) find that organisations navigate austerity in different ways based on their dependence on resources. It is also found that the way people, organisations or places navigate austerity is based on "meaning in action" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, 2016), i.e. that practices can be understood by exploring dilemmas, traditions and beliefs. It is suggested that individual and collective beliefs, not structure, guide action (Bevir and Rhodes 2006, 2016). Extending this notion, people in different places may have different perspectives on and approaches to a dilemma such as austerity, based on their traditions and beliefs, theories of the world and theories in use, leading to different approaches by organisations and/or places to the same dilemma (Bevir and Rhodes, 2016). An example of this is GM following an integrated approach to public services, while other regions have opted to break up and contract out public services (Chakrabortty, 2018).

It should also be considered that although the dilemma of austerity has been present for the past ten years, inequality is an even longer-standing feature in GM. For example, inequality is evidenced in unemployment trends, which suggest that the figure of more than 200,000 unemployed (Office for National Statistics, 2016) has stayed relatively consistent over the past 40 years. The consistency of inequality in GM raises the question of whether this is an issue of the amount of resource reduction due to austerity, or of national siloed working practices resulting in ineffective programmes and poor use of resources, or a combination of factors. Widdop et al. (2017) point out that in some areas, innovative cross-sector partnerships are emerging with the acquisition of funding from the devolution of the health and social care budget. They suggest further research is needed, including detailed studies of specialised and localised approaches. The GM Moving 'Blueprint' (2015) proposes GM as a test bed for integrated working and new innovative approaches to commissioning, as part of the devolution process. The role of local government in sport for development will now be explored further.

2.5 Local government

Despite the importance of the Raising the Game strategy (Department for National Heritage, 1995) in raising the profile of sport, the contribution of local government was absent (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013). This changed, however, with the election of the Labour Government in 1997. The new labour government recognised the need for better relations in order to achieve broader policy goals (particularly the use of sport to achieve broader policy objectives as stated above) putting sport at the heart of corporate objectives and central to the lives of communities (DCMS, 2000). In 2009, concerns about inefficiency led to the use of national governing bodies and CSPs as the key strategic delivery agencies for sport and physical activity receiving core funding Sport England to deliver performance targets (Mackintosh, 2011). Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) suggest this could be seen as a way of enhancing central control by creating new bodies to bypass local government. They also find that local government looked to form partnership with services such as health, based on resource dependencies. They propose that in a time of austerity there is a clear need for local leadership in sport and suggest that there are concerns over whether the impetus and capacity to provide such leadership is present in local government (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013).

In contrast, a core element of the recent Sporting Future strategy (2015) and Sport England's Towards an Active Nation strategy (2016) is engaging with local government. The emphasis is on integration with local delivery systems and partnership working, potentially moving to a networked governance approach. Network governance mechanisms are supported to tackle 'wicked problems' such as health (Ferlie et al., 2011). There is a need for sustainable programmes, which is easier to address when funders are tied together in partnerships and local people are involved at all stages from diagnosis to delivery (Lindsey, 2008). Place-based approaches are supported by the WHO, which identifies a shift to a settings approach that focuses on populations of people rather than individuals (WHO, 2017). The definition of a healthy setting is:

> …the place or social context in which people engage in daily activities, in which environmental, organisational and personal factors interact and affect health and wellbeing.
>
> (Health Promotion Glossary, 1998:29)

In order to achieve healthy settings, a whole-system approach based on key elements such as community participation and partnership is required (WHO, 2017). Place-based approaches are defined in the regional GM commissioning work by Rowley (2016b:22) as 'public services working together in a place free from restriction and fragmentation of organisational boundaries'. The importance of place-based approaches should be acknowledged as key: for example, Houlihan (2015) highlights the significance of understanding delivery in context and suggests that sport is a secondary concern attached to other key areas such as health and welfare.

In the GM context, the cost of physical inactivity to NHSGM is £26 million per year (GM Moving, 2017). The economic value of physical activity is highlighted in the GM Moving blueprint (GM Moving, 2015:3), which states:

> A combined focus will enable physical activity and sport to contribute to closing the £2bn gap between the tax we generate and the cost of public services across GM.

Although £26 million may not seem like a large contribution to the deficit, it is found that the wider benefits of activity can include a contribution to employment, reducing demand on services and increasing taxes raised and growth in the region. Evidence from the MIER (2008) identified worklessness, i.e. where people are involuntarily excluded from the labour market and are in receipt of benefits (Barnes et al., 2011), as a severe barrier to economic growth for the region. A series of local strategies have attempted to address this problem: the GM strategies (2009, 2013, 2017), Taking Charge (GMHSCP, 2015) and the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017). These documents address the issue of economic growth in GM by improving population health and reducing worklessness (GMHSCP, 2015; GMCA, 2017a). Evidence in the evaluation of the Working Well programme suggests that there are strong links between worklessness and physical and mental health (SQW, 2016). A recent study of 5,000 unemployed people in GM identified that 62% rated physical health as a severe barrier to work, and 68% rated mental health as a severe barrier to work (SQW, 2016).

The Sporting Future policy (2015) places emphasis on how sport and physical activity can have a positive impact on people's lives; as documented earlier, this includes social outcomes such as physical and mental health. With further support at the regional level in the GM Moving blueprint (2015), the objective

is to move past participation for elite competition to identify what can be done to make a physically active life truly transformative (DCMS, 2015). For the first time, GM has produced a population health plan, which has sport and physical activity embedded as a central premise based on the recommendations of the GM Moving blueprint (2017). It highlights:

> …ground-breaking strategic partnerships with national bodies such as Sport England, to develop insight-led radical new propositions to address our high levels of physical inactivity and with philanthropic and charitable organisations, focusing on shared aims of tackling health inequalities.

(GM Moving, 2017:43)

The Partnership aligns with Objective 3 in the Population Health Plan:

> To develop a comprehensive plan to reduce inactivity and increase participation in physical activity and sport that is aligned to the Population Health Plan priority themes and wider reform agenda.

(GMHSCP, 2017:43)

It must also be acknowledged at this stage that, as emphasised by Bailey et al. (2015), sport and physical activity have particularly significant benefits when undertaken early in life. The GM Moving blueprint (2015) and GM Moving plan (2017) support a focus on active childhood, but Sport England's key performance indicators only start at age five. The Marmot Report (2010) provides evidence to suggest that an early years focus is vital for child development, acknowledging the potential role of Play England, who focus on this younger age group, with early years being a key focus in GM (GM Moving, 2015).

It has been identified by the researcher in the background and context to the literature review that the use of sport and physical activity to contribute towards social outcomes is acknowledged by international, national and local government. However, current sport and physical activity policy in the UK is focused on social and economic outcomes, potentially leading to unsustainable development. Further, with budget cuts for national and local government, national sport organisations have been steered to engage with regional entities during the process of devolution. This requires a governance approach of innovative new partnerships for national sport organisations. These partnerships engage directly with local government and health and social care bodies to address social and economic outcomes, progressing

beyond current practice with CSPs. A history of integrated working in GM has developed the city-region as a test bed for the new approach to governance recognised in the Sporting Future policy, as documented in the GM Moving blueprint (2015). However, due to the unique nature of the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM, the new approach to governance in community sport is currently under-researched. To develop understanding, an in-depth review of the sport governance literature in relation to strategic capability and partnerships between national and regional entities is required to support the empirical research.

3.0 Literature Review

The following chapter takes the literature review into the field of governance; specifically, variations in sport governance will be outlined, before the concept of strategic capability is explored in depth. Due to the emergent nature of this governance theory, a critical exploration of the framework and theory of board strategic balance is required, exploring the use of key components such as integration with regional entities, board inputs, shared leadership and monitoring and control. The breadth of strategic capability will be covered across multiple levels, exploring types of governance in the community sport context. In accordance with Tricker (2000), Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a), multiple theories and constructs are used to help explain the complex dynamics of governance. Concentrating on strategic capability in the community sport context, the focus will be mainly on resource dependency theory and stakeholder theory; however, key constructs, including systems leadership and organisational learning will also be explored. The review will also outline the themes that have been identitfied in the literature on strategic capability and partnerships. These themes include the role of context and governance mechanisms, inter-organisational relationships and board inputs and processes; also acknowledged is the potential requirement for inputs and processes to be balanced and/or integrated to achieve optimal performance. Gaps in knowledge in sport and physical activity governance are proposed, including: the exploration of strategic capability in community sport and the use of multiple governance mechanisms through integrated governance; also (with regard to board inputs) the introduction of a strategic manager and (with regards to board processes) the process of systems leadership; and finally, in terms of monitoring and control, utilising organisational learning to enable partnership boards to function and develop.

These themes and gaps in knowledge have been identified from a review of the sport and physical activity literature on strategic capability and partnership, using key words including Governance, Strategic Capability, Board Performance and Board Effectiveness. To critically explore the role of inter-organisational relationships, further keyword searches included: Inter-Organisational Relationships and Partnership and Collaboration. Results returned relating to non-profit sport and sport development (including

community sport, elite sport and professional sport) were included, as well as cross-sector, public–public, public–non-profit and non-profit partnerships. Snowball sampling of key literature was also used, to explore citations and articles citing key journal articles.

Results that were excluded included partnerships relating to private–non-profit, public–private, private–private and intervention-focused partnerships. More specific exclusion criteria were used to ensure relevance to the research into community sport. Articles excluded included those relating to: advertising, betting, child protection, coaches, commercial, community capacity building, corruption, corporate sponsorship, customer equity, data analytics, diversity, equality, European Finals, events, E-sports, facility utilisation, franchising, gender, identity, inclusivity, international success, Internet, LGTBQ+, marketing, match fixing, media, leagues, national sporting success, Olympics, Para-Olympics, philanthropy, psychology, public relations, refereeing, recruitment or retention, religion, role models, safeguarding, spectators, sponsorship, sport broadcasting, sports clubs, sport clusters, sport economics, social-network analysis, sport pedagogy, school sport, sport stadia, sports consumption, sport fans, sport for development (international), social media, sports products, talent development, talent identification, talent selection, ticket sales, viewership, volunteering, workplace emotion, world championships, World Cup,

3.1 Governance

Within the sport management setting, strategic capability stems from the field of sport governance. It is proposed that the difference between management and governance is that 'management is about running a business and governance is about seeing that it is run properly' (Tricker, 1984:7). Tricker (1984) suggests that this involves being able to create, use and limit power to direct, control and regulate activity. O'Boyle (2013:1) provides a generic definition of governance as the 'process of granting power, verifying performance, managing, leading and/or administering within an organisation', whereas Lynn et al. (2000:2) state that:

> [Governance] refers to the means for achieving direction, control and co-ordination of wholly or partly autonomous individuals or organisations on behalf of interests in which they jointly contribute.

It could be suggested that these definitions fall within an operational perspective that focuses on procedures and processes that direct and control organisations and citizens i.e. the inhabitants of a particular place.

More developed governance concepts build on control and incorporate the requirements for relationships and engagement with stakeholders. For example, from a relationship perspective, the focus is more on roles, rights and responsibilities of the board, managers, shareholders and stakeholders, with emphasis placed on internal procedures, rules and laws (Tricker, 2015). Ackoff (1974) provides support for the inclusion of stakeholders, suggesting that governance issues can be resolved by interacting with stakeholders to redesign institutions. However, Ansoff (1965) suggests economic and social issues should be separated, and that social issues may constrain economic performance (Freeman and Reed, 1983). A broader definition incorporates stakeholders and suggests:

> Governance covers the activities of the board and its relationships with shareholders or members, and with those managing the enterprise, as well as with the external auditors, regulators and other legitimate stakeholders.

> (Tricker, 2012:4)

This definition has particular resonance with strategic capability research, as it highlights the role of the board and, in particular, their ability to manage both internal and external stakeholders. This management is viewed as critical to board effectiveness and optimal strategic contribution (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010, 2015). However, the term 'legitimate stakeholders' is vague, due to the vast number of potential stakeholders within community sport with a legitimate claim to be involved in decision making, limiting the use of this definition. Further, support for including external stakeholders is found in non-profit governance (Brown, 2002). Jansen and Kilpatrick (2004) find that managing stakeholders is a key factor in non-profit governance, and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015b) highlight the requirement for stakeholder management, based on the responsibility of a board to make decisions on behalf of others.

Incorporating the inclusion of social issues, Letza et al. (2004) suggest governance incorporates mechanisms to improve social responsibility, and limit fraud and abuse of power. Extending the inclusion of social issues, Tricker (2015) proposes a societal perspective, where the focus is on managing

interests, goals and resources for both individuals and society. Ward (2014) finds that non-profit organisations are more focused on their social mission, as opposed to corporates that focus on financial objectives. However, the broad social perspective lacks any real clarity, due to the varying nature of different interests within society (as highlighted by polarised opinions in recent elections and referendums in the UK). Moreover, it can be suggested that all four perspectives on governance (operational, relationship, stakeholder and social) are evident in the literature on strategic capability and partnerships. It can also be argued that incorporating stakeholders and social issues within governance creates better governance. Due to the range of perspectives on governance and range of governance mechanisms, empirical research is required to explore the types of governance that are most appropriate to deliver social outcomes in community sport in England, UK. Governance through partnerships is espoused; however, closer investigation is required to identify whether there are multiple mechanisms being used, such as hierarchical and market forms of governance.

3.1.1 Sport governance

The variations in perspectives on governance continue as the focus moves to sport governance. A recent scoping review of the sport governance literature by Dowling et al. (2018:2) identifies seven definitions of sport governance, which are documented in Table 1.

Table 1: Seven definitions of sport governance (Source: Dowling et al., 2018:2)

Author	Definition of sport governance
Australian Sport Commission (2015:2)	'…the system by which organisations are directed and managed. It influences how the objectives of the organisation are set and achieved, spells out the rules and procedures for making organisational decisions, and determines the means of optimising and monitoring performance, including how risk is monitored and assessed.'
Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald (2009:245)	'…the responsibility for the functioning and overall direction of the organisation and […] a necessary and institutionalised component of all sports codes from club level to national bodies, Government agencies, sport service organisations and professional teams around the world.'
Hoye and Cuskelly (2007:9)	'...the structure and process used by an organisation to develop its strategic goals and direction, monitor its performance against these goals and ensure that its board acts in the best interests of the members.'
Hums and Maclean (2017:5)	'...the exercise of power and authority in sport organisations, including policy making, to determine the organisational mission, membership, eligibility, and regulatory power, within the organisation's appropriate local, national or international scope.'
King (2014:5)	Distinguishes between political governance, which focuses 'on how power is exercised, who has influence, who decides and who benefits from decisions and action', and administrative governance, 'where governance is fundamentally concerned with: setting the rules and procedures for making organisational decisions; facilitating effective, entrepreneurial and prudent management; determining the means of optimising performance; ensuring statutory and fiduciary compliance; monitoring and assessing risk; and meeting ethical standards.'
O'Boyle (2012:1)	'...the process of granting power, verifying performance, managing, leading and/or administrating within an organisation.'
Sawyer, Bodey and Judge (2008:11)	'...how governing bodies are directed and controlled. The governance mechanism (e.g. formal documents, organisational structure) specifies how rights, authority and responsibility are distributed among the participants in order to monitor performance and achieve goals.'

In addition, the variations in governance are highlighted by Henry and Lee (2004), who find three main types of sport governance: organisational, systemic and political. Organisational governance 'is concerned with the

normative, ethically informed, standards of organisational behaviour'. Systemic governance is 'concerned with the competition, co-operation and mutual adjustment between sport organisations in business and or/policy systems'. Political governance is 'concerned with how governments or governing bodies steer rather than directly control organisations' (Henry and Lee, 2004:24). Dowling (2018) suggests that research which explores the inter-relationships between each type of governance is required. A construct that has the potential to explore each type of governance when applied to the community sport sector is strategic capability.

3.2 Strategic capability

The construct of strategic capability has developed from the seminal work by Lenz (1980) on strategic management, which defines strategic capability as 'the capability of an enterprise to successfully undertake action that is intended to affect its long-term growth and development' (Lenz, 1980:226). Lenz focuses on private enterprise, but, even at this early date, he builds on the work of Chamberlain (1968), who criticises previous research into organisational capability by identifying that capability for strategic action is not confined to the resources an organisation owns or controls. Chamberlain (1968) and Lenz (1980) identify the importance of networks between an organisation and the environment in which it operates. Ferkins et al. (2005), Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2012, 2015a) have developed the concept of strategic capability in the field of sport governance through exploring the governance of non-profit sport boards in the professional sport context.

The development of the construct and definition of strategic capability by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) has incorporated research by Ingley and van der Walt (2001, 2005) and van der Walt and Ingley (2000) exploring corporate boards from a strategic capability perspective, as well as Kim et al. (2009) on board structure and strategic action capabilities. Ferkins et al. (2005) were the first to explore board strategic capability in the non-profit sport context with national sport organisations. They argue that:

> Understanding the factors that both constrain and enable sports boards to think and act strategically may provide an empirical basis to build their strategic capabilities.

A key finding of the research by Ferkins and Shilbury (2010) is that national sport organisations can develop their strategic capability through relationships with regional entities. These findings, based on research into national sport organisations in New Zealand, incorporate the notion of systemic governance, which is relevant to policy systems (Henry and Lee, 2004). These findings add to previous frameworks of board effectiveness by Dulewicz et al. (1995) and Edwards and Cornforth (2003), which acknowledge the importance of context, board inputs and board processes to effectiveness. The framework in Figure 2 below illustrates Edwards and Cornforth's (2003) adaptation of Dulewicz et al.'s (1995) conceptualisation of the people on boards and how they define their roles and responsibilities, which incorporates the role of context (such as institutional influences) that can both constrain and enable board function.

Figure 2: Influences on board outputs (Source: Edwards and Cornforth, 2003)
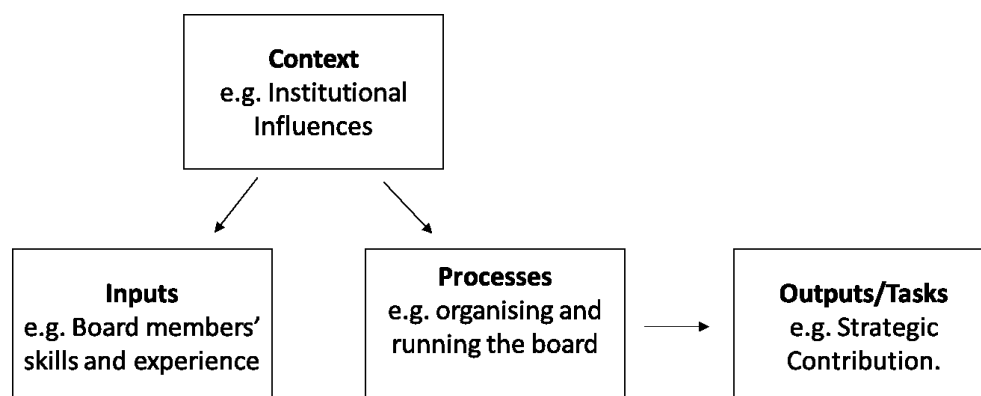
Edwards and Cornforth (2003) highlight that boards do not operate in a vacuum and are influenced by the environmental context, including legal, economic, technological, social and cultural demands; they acknowledge, however, that these institutional pressures are often contradictory, requiring approaches that can manage varying contextual influences to develop a strategic contribution (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003).

In research focused on sport participation, Rowe et al. (2013) also acknowledge the importance of contextual dynamics in active travel, recreational activity and elite sport. Rowe et al. (2013) support a holistic approach to sport and physical activity and use a socio-ecological model to

emphasise the role of contextual factors, in addition to social and individual factors relevant to sport and physical activity participation. They argue that it is important to consider the range of holistic factors that are creating barriers to participation (Rowe et al., 2013). Using cycling as an example, Rowe et al. (2013) demonstrate the holistic nature of contextual factors such as policy and funding for sport and physical activity, as well as infrastructure, transport and planning. The contextual dynamics are suggested to affect the physical environment factors that influence participation, such as the number of paths, road linkages and distance between cyclists and cars. Additionally, social factors, such as a network of friends or family members that cycle, knowing others who commute to work, driver culture and driver behaviour, are also found to influence participation (Rowe et al., 2013). Further considerations are individual factors such as age, gender, confidence, ability, knowledge and enjoyment. The holistic range of factors across the whole system influence the nature of sport and physical activity participation (Rowe et al., 2013).

GM Moving also acknowledges the use of a socio-ecological model (GM Moving, 2017), with a plan that highlights the requirement for whole-system approaches through co-production, stating 'population level changes require whole-system approaches' (GM Moving, 2017:19). Critically, for boards in community sport attempting to achieve social outcomes (such as the GM Moving Executive Group) it is evident that, as well as being influenced by contextual dynamics, they can use a holistic whole-system approach to address contextual dynamics and social and individual factors that create barriers to sport participation. This two-way interaction between the board and the contextual dynamics of its general environment is also acknowledged in research into collaborative governance by Shilbury et al. (2013, 2016). Specifically, they identify potential contextual influences on collaborative governance, including resources, policy and legislation, political power, network connectedness and culture within a system (Shilbury et al., 2016). From a strategic capability perspective, to manage these contextual dynamics Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a) emphasise integration with regional entities as a central construct to develop optimal performance; however, critical examination of the use of integration with regional entities in the community sport context is required to identify the barriers and challenges involved.

The adapted framework in Figure 3a below places the focus on integration, with regional entities in a central position (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010). Furthermore, Ferkins and Shilbury (2012) suggest sub-themes to board inputs and processes that are required for a strategically capable non-profit sport board. Utilising research on the tripartite model of power and influence by Pettigrew and McNulty (1995), sub-themes to board inputs include board members who can see the bigger picture using a mix of strategic skill and will; also (building on the work of Edwards and Cornforth [2003]) a balance between strategic and operational knowledge. The sub-themes for board processes include strategic vision and the ability to monitor performance towards that direction (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003), and shared leadership (Nadler, 2004). It is proposed that inputs and processes must be balanced (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003) and integrated (Nicholson and Kiel, 2004) to develop optimal strategic performance.

Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a:490) define the construct of board strategic capability as:

> the ability of the board to function strategically and recognise the development potential of the board to think and act in a strategic manner.

The focus on capability acknowledges the dynamic nature of the board and moves beyond competence to enable the board to develop (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). The below framework (Figure 3a) identifies in yellow the areas that Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) adapted from the original framework illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 3a: The strategic capability framework (Source: Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a:495)
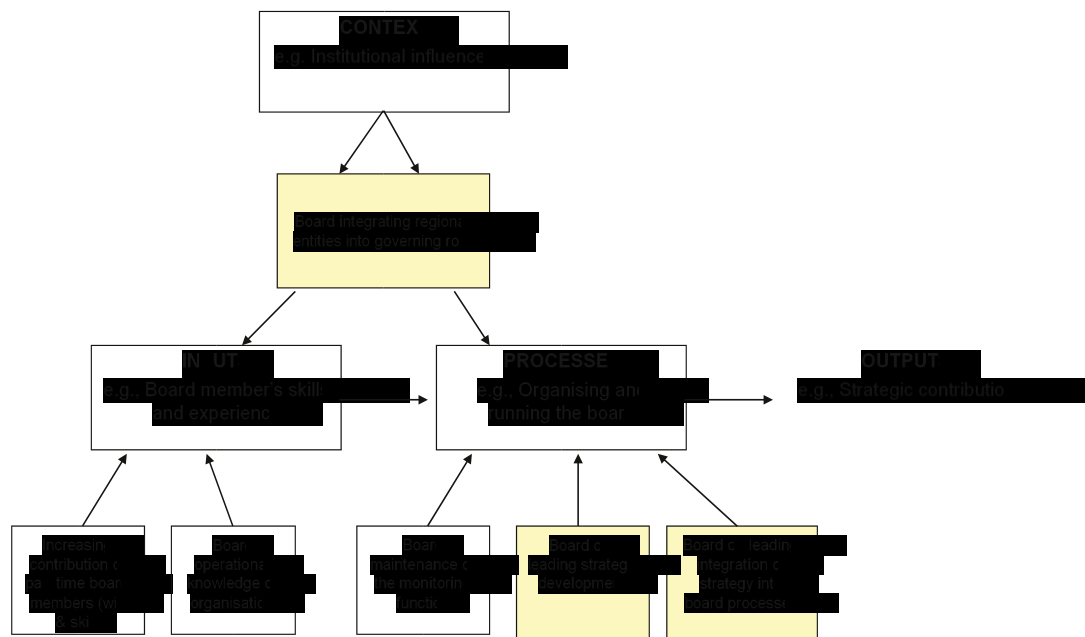
To explain the strategic capability framework, Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) have developed the theory of board strategic balance, as illustrated in Figure 3b. This builds on the identification of sub-themes to suggest six influences on the strategic capability of sport boards, including: will and skill of volunteer board members, board operational knowledge, integrating regional entities into a power-sharing role, maintenance of monitoring and control and shared leadership in strategy development, and integration of strategy into processes.

Figure 3b: Theory of board strategic balance (Source: Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a:496)

(A)

INPUTS ←———————————————————————————————→ PROCESSES

Increasing contribution of volunteer part-time board members (Will & Skill

Board operational knowledge of organisation

Board integrates regional entities into governing role

Board maintenance of the monitoring and control function

Board co-leading strategy development

Board co-leading integration of strategy into board processes

Context
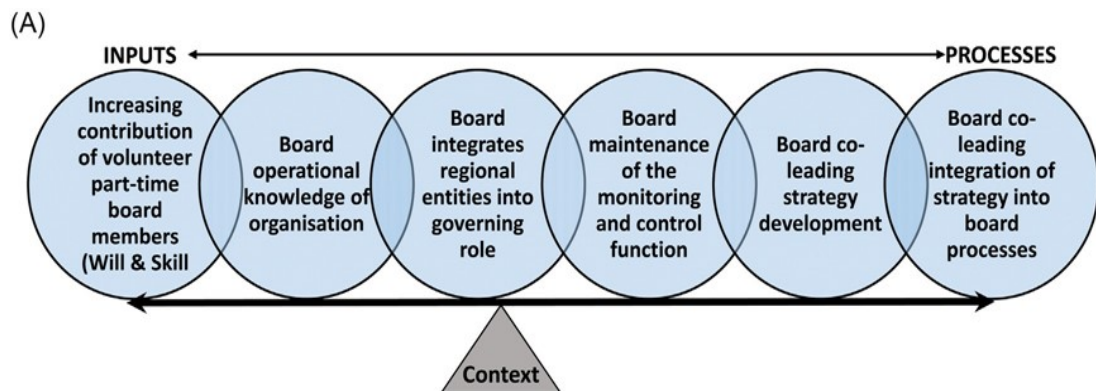
The theory of board strategic balance regards the integration of regional entities into a governing role as central to the effective functioning of the board.

However, the theory acknowledges that optimal strategic function is also dependent on the first two circles of influence, will and skill and board operational knowledge, which in turn require balancing with board processes, including shared leadership in strategy development and integration of strategy into processes, with monitoring and control viewed as an overarching function. The following section critically explores the emerging theory of sport governance, specifically the concept of integration with regional entities and partnership or collaboration as a sole governance mechanism.

3.2.1 Integration with regional entities

This section and associated sub-sections explore the governance requirements underpinning national and regional government relations and, in doing so, identify the proposed use of network governance. This concept covers a spectrum of governance approaches, which are influenced by policy implementation and inter-organisational relationships; the latter can be further explained by resource dependency and stakeholder theory. The conceptual framework developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) suggests that network governance is the most appropriate mechanism for national sport organisations to engage with regional entities through inter-organisational relationships. More recently, Shilbury and Ferkins (2015) and Shilbury et al. (2016) propose the use of collaborative governance to develop an understanding of collaborative relationships within a system. The following sections will critically explore the use of unitary governance mechanisms and explore the possibility that multiple mechanisms may be utilised within integrated regional systems.

In relation to governance mechanisms to support integration with regional entities, Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a) suggest the use of network governance to develop board strategic capability and in particular to facilitate national and regional relationships (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010). They emphasise the importance of moving away from the traditional hierarchical model of telling, controlling, requesting and consulting; instead, they propose a network governance model embracing features such as collaboration, partnership, co-ownership, power-sharing and empowerment. As highlighted earlier in the review on sport governance, network governance is also known

as systemic governance (Henry and Lee, 2004), which acknowledges engagement with the wider policy system.

Henry and Lee (2004:29) highlight three major implications of systemic governance:

> First, it is clear that in such a context, significant policy change can only be achieved by negotiation and/or trade-off between various parties in the network. Second, governing bodies of sport in such contexts no longer govern, or wholly control their sport, or at least if they do, they do so by virtue of their ability to negotiate outcomes rather than by dictating those outcomes to passive recipients of their message. Thirdly, this has implications not only for the organisations but also for the skills required of the people who work within them. The skills are much more those of negotiation and mutual adjustment than of rational, ordered planning and control.

Provan and Kenis (2007) enter into more detail and identify three different approaches to network governance: participant-governed, lead-organisation governed and network administrative-governed. The participant-governed approach is where responsibility is taken by the board members; it is associated with high levels of trust, low-level membership and shared goals. In a lead-organisation governed environment there are lower levels of trust and variations in goals among a large number of members; as a result, the responsibility of managing the network falls to the lead organisation, which consequently has much greater power over decision making, producing a form of hierarchy. The final approach is network administrative-governed, where control over the management of the network falls to an external organisation (Provan and Kenis, 2007).

Network governance is promoted for its connectedness, trust, civic renewal and active citizenship (Adams, 2014). However, due to the complexity of network governance, hierarchies are favoured in some settings for their ability to control from a central core or organisation. For example, Lynn and Robichau (2013) support the ability of administrative hierarchy to compel performance, and Sam (2017) acknowledges the benefits of hierarchy for elite sport performance. Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) make the distinction between elite and community sport policy implementation in the UK, highlighting that in community sport development the need for network governance emerges, as national sport organisations and central government agencies do not have the capability or capacity to achieve policy objectives themselves. In part, this is

due to a lack of expertise and resources to enable the delivery of objectives without entering into partnerships (Skelcher, 2000). However, it can be argued that the use of market governance is more effective, as it makes organisations compete, which may potentially produce better performance (DeLeon, 2005). Phillpots (2013) suggests that market governance gives a sharper sense of purpose, as successful organisations will be rewarded. An example highlighted by Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) is the contractual agreement between local governments and leisure service providers; however, Phillpots et al. (2011) claim that this tightly controlled relationship becomes more akin to a hierarchy than a market model (Sam, 2017). McDonald (2005) identifies that partnerships can act as a form of network governance between hierarchical modes of governance at the state level and market forms of governance at the operational level; however, it is acknowledged that marketisation is not conducive of true collaboration (Lindsey, 2014).

3.2.1.1 Policy implementation

Within the literature on public policy implementation, network governance is also supported as the most appropriate form of governance. Hill and Hupe (2009) state that it is unlikely that public policy of any significance could be developed by a single actor. Houlihan (2015) states that interactions between multiple actors are required due to resource dependence. A need for shared resources is supported by Skelcher (2000), who suggests a lack of capacity, resource and expertise in central government agencies, whereas Ferlie et al. (2011) suggest networks provide the capacity to solve wicked problems. Sam (2017) supports Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a), proposing that networks act as a coordinating mechanism between national and regional levels, providing both legitimacy and efficiency. Moreover, Ferkins and Shilbury (2010) highlight that national sport organisations can develop their strategic capability through network governance by developing power-sharing relationships with regional entities. In community sport in England, Sport England has recently been steered by the DCMS to engage with regional entities; due to the devolution of power to GM, this extends beyond the existing relationships between Sport England and the CSP to include a more holistic range of regional entities in the wider policy system, as highlighted in the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (Rowley, 2016a).

It could be argued that, due to the challenges involved, the implementation of community sport policy is mainly aligned with network governance, with the incorporation of market governance for delivery contracts. However, Grix and Phillpots (2011) suggest that it is important to be aware that behind the multi-agency networks is a dependence on resources, ensuring that national government retains hierarchical control over decisions on policy development and delivery. For example, Harris (2013) finds that community sport follows a top-down and hierarchical process and that quasi-autonomous national sport organisations are controlled by central government resource direction.

It has been argued that a further criticism of network theory is that it is more appropriate for studies that focus on the management of inter-organisational relationships, as opposed to governance (O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2018). This argument is used to propose collaborative governance as the foundation for sport governance research in systems (Shilbury et al., 2016). Further, it is argued that, in federal systems such as the UK, horizontal structures develop where the national sport organisation does not have direct control over organisations within the network (O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2016). Despite acknowledging the pyramid structure and evident hierarchy in governance from local level to national level, O'Boyle and Shilbury (2016) propose that within a system (or regime, as it is termed in collaborative governance theory) that hierarchy is removed. Extending this further, O'boyle and Shilbury (2016) suggest that horizontal integration is found, as opposed to various mechanisms of governance operating together, and collaborative governance theory is the most appropriate overarching theory through which to develop an understanding. Based on recent developments in sport policy in England, empirical evidence is required to determine the current governance mechanism(s).

Hybrid governance is developed when multiple mechanisms are integrated, for example, in social welfare, where governments contract out services to the non-profit or private sector (Selsky and Parker, 2005). Further examples of hybrid governance include cases where national sport organisations such as Sport England use partnership as a form of local governance through CSPs, but retain hierarchical control through performance contracts, acknowledged by McDonald (2005) as a form of strategic partnership. Lindsey (2014)

supports the notion that collaboration has become embedded within performance management, and highlights the hierarchical power that government can exert on local partnerships. Harris and Houlihan (2016) acknowledge that partnership should refer to equal relationships, as opposed to the (prevalent) unequal power relationships based on contractual agreements that enforce performance requirements. In contrast, Lindsey (2014) highlights that within some sport and physical activity alliances, with the exception of the competitive bidding process, Sport England has had less influence on the partnership, suggesting a more equal approach. This type of partnership is more aligned to the network model of governance characterised by an open system, where working together should develop win–win solutions (McDonald, 2005); however, McDonald (2005) points out that even within these open systems, dominant asymmetrical power relations can be produced. Further, if the goal is to increase participation, he suggests a self-governance approach may be more appropriate to empower citizens and increase their motivation to become active (McDonald, 2005). Critically, self-governance focuses more on processes such as co-design than on pre-determined outputs or outcomes that require control (McDonald, 2005).

The use of integrated governance within the NHS is acknowledged by the Good Governance Institute (2016), who suggest that although governance is the focus of the board, integration implies that there are no boundaries. The Good Governance Institute emphasises that we operate in a collaborative/market world, which requires the use of the patient's eyes in board decision making (Bullivant, 2016). With the new partnership between national sport and national health bodies being trialled in GM, further empirical research is required in this context to explore whether there is a unitary governance mechanism currently being used in community sport that can be explained by network or collaborative governance theory, or whether a hybrid of mechanisms are being used in an integrated governance system, as promoted by the NHS (Bullivant, 2016). It has been identified that the national sport organisation Sport England has formed an inter-organisational relationship with GMCA and NHSGM through the partnership documented in the MoU between the three bodies (Rowley, 2016a). In addition to a critical examination of the range of governance mechanisms operating across the

system, the use of partnership as part of this system also requires critical examination.

3.2.1.2 Inter-organisational relationships

The use of inter-organisational relationships is put forward by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) to enable national sport organisations to develop their strategic capability, highlighted earlier as the key addition to the earlier framework developed by Edwards and Cornforth (2003); furthermore, the DCMS (2015) steer Sport England to use a type of inter-organisational partnership as a governance mechanism to engage with wider regional entities and take advantage of the devolution agreement. The following section will critically explore the use, definitions and types of inter-organisational relationships. The academic literature highlights wide variations in use and meaning of the term, as well as the advantages of partnership working. Importantly, the challenges that have been found, which may constrain the ability of a board to function and the development potential of a board to think and act in a strategic manner, can develop the understanding of the use of partnership as an effective solution.

The use of partnership is by no means new to academic text, policy and strategy documents. Miller and Ahmed (2000) highlight, throughout the 90's collaborative and partnership working has been viewed as an efficient way of delivering quality services. Furthermore, Shaw and Allen (2006) identify that partnerships among organisations have been a key feature of leisure and sport provision since 1986. Mansfield (2016) acknowledges the use of partnership in health policy, especially in public health, and also more recently in sport policy, where there is a requirement for cross-government approaches to improve health and reduce inequalities. Furthermore, Babiak et al. (2018) acknowledge partnership and collaboration as valued processes in the policy of the UK, Australia and Canada. Babiak (2007) suggests inter-organisational relationships have become the main organising principle, due to increased uncertainty in environmental conditions, as they create value, innovation and effectiveness. It is this innovative ability that supports the use of partnerships to tackle wicked issues, where solutions are dependent on multiple factors, requiring input from multiple agencies (Perkins and Hunter, 2014). Extending this further, Perkins and Hunter (2014) suggest that although bringing key

leaders together to promote wellbeing and tackle health inequalities has benefits, solutions will need to come from the bottom up. This bottom-up notion is also supported by Miller and Ahmed (2000); however, they suggest this should extend past consultation to community ownership (Miller and Ahmed, 2001). In contrast, MacDonald (2005) supports the notion that partnerships can offer progressive forms of governance and (in some cases) lead to community empowerment, but highlights they may be ideological fig leaves for dominant powers. Mansfield (2016) acknowledges that budget cuts have resulted in increasing, rather than reducing, the influence of central government and that despite the rhetoric of partnership, intended and unintended consequences can maintain the status quo as opposed to leading to community leadership. Another challenge is the vast array of definitions and types of partnership, which leads to complexity in the literature (Lindsey, 2009).

Relationships are cited throughout the literature, under a plethora of different titles, including: inter-organisational relationships, collaboration, partnerships, strategic alliances and networks (Sam, 2017). Proulx et al. (2014) add to this list, including joint ventures and consortiums. However, through exploration of the varying definitions, similarities appear. For example, Gazley and Brudney (2007) use a definition of partnership provided by Sink (1998:1188):

> …a process by which organisations with a stake in a problem seek a mutually determined solution, pursuing objectives that they could not achieve alone.

Frisby et al. (2004) also highlight that partnerships are used in place of siloed working practices and cite the definition provided by Kernaghan (1993:61):

> …a relationship involving the sharing of power, work, support and/or information for the achievement of joint goals or mutual benefits.

Lawrence et al. (2002:282) are more specific about the governance mechanisms involved and define collaboration as:

> …a co-operative, inter-organisational relationship, that is negotiated in an on-going communicative process, and that relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms for control.

However, it has already been acknowledged that collaboration may rely on hierarchical/market forms of governance with service delivery contracts for delivery at an operational level (McDonald, 2005). More recently, Babiak (2007:339) defines inter-organisational relationship as:

A voluntary, close, long-term, planned strategic action between two or more organisations with the objective of serving mutually beneficial purposes in a problem domain.

Similarly, Guo and Acar (2005:342–343) define partnerships as:

[situations where] organisations work together to address problems, through joint effort, resources, and decision making and share ownership of the final service.

In these varying definitions, the similarity that becomes apparent is that, compared with siloed working practices, working together increases the chances of solving problems or achieving goals or objectives. However, a more up-to-date definition that is relevant to the context of this research extends from goals and objectives to outcomes (Mansfield, 2016:716):

Partnerships are defined by a universalising cross-government approach emphasising that government departments should engage in joined-up working towards shared public health and social value outcomes of sport.

Despite there being common themes across the definitions of inter-organisational relationships, it is evident that some focus on outputs, whereas more recent definitions have developed to focus on outcomes. Empirical research is required to explore the benefits of focusing on outcomes, rather than outputs. What also becomes apparent in the literature is that there are varying types of partnership.

Types of partnership discussed in the literature include: cross-sector (McDonald, 2005; Babiak, 2009; Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Marlier et al., 2015); private–non-profit (O'Reilly and Brunette, 2014); and public–private (O'Reilly and Brunette, 2013). Kara (2014) provides more detail on the variations in cross-sector partnership, identifying public–private, private–third sector, public–third sector, and public–private–third sector, with the third sector relating to voluntary or non-profit organisations. Proulx et al. (2014) suggest that to reduce some of the complexity around the varying types of relationships, these can be placed on a continuum to explore partnership in terms of formality. They acknowledge that the less formal end of the continuum is based on short-term relationships, which are more transactional and in which less innovation occurs, while the more formal end of the continuum includes longer-term relationships that may result in mergers and which have the potential to result in high levels of innovation (Proulx et al. 2014).

Now we focus in on the term 'partnership', which is the term used to describe the relationship between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM. It has been found that different types of partnership can be distinguished using characteristics outlined by Marsh and Rhodes's (1992) typology, such as membership, integration, resources and power (Lindsey, 2006). In the context of sport and physical activity, Lindsey (2006) proposes three types of partnership: local authority community, wide network/tight core and inter-organisational network. More recently, Kara (2014) suggests that on closer examination it is also possible to differentiate between: specialist and generalist partnerships, strategic and operational partnerships, open-ended and fixed-term partnerships, and equal or unequal partnerships (where equality is based on levels of power). McDonald (2005) differentiates between strategic and communicative partnerships and highlights that, although strategic partnerships may be effective, communicative partnerships with the involvement of all actors within the system may be the most appropriate mechanism to develop and empower active citizens (McDonald, 2005). This focus on communicative over strategic partnerships suggests it may be more appropriate for partnerships to think and act communicatively, as opposed to strategically. However, McDonald cautions that it is important to empirically examine the use of partnership espoused as more effective than other governance mechanisms (McDonald, 2005), and research into partnerships supports the notion that it is important to critically examine their use as a progressive form of governance. The literature suggests that although advantages are present, challenges may occur, and requirements that should be in place for effective partnership working have been proposed. Extending this further, it highlights the need to apply a critical lens to the emerging theory that places integration with regional entities at the centre of their conceptualisation for optimal board performance (Ferkins and Shilbury 2015).

The advantages of partnerships have been put forward as including improved responsiveness, greater effectiveness and efficiency and increased prominence, recognition and status for partners (Miller and Ahmed, 2000). Similarly, Babiak (2007) suggests improved efficiency and effectiveness of resources, adding improved legitimacy and power over other actors' resources. Babiak (2009) adds access to resources and enhanced services, while Babiak and Thibault (2009) suggest additions including reduced

uncertainty and improved problem-solving. Gazley (2010) also identifies that partnership buffers against uncertainty and includes the opportunity for organisational learning. This notion of learning is also found in Kara (2014), who identifies learning by gaining new knowledge and by understanding that knowledge. Babiak et al. (2018) also support the notion of shared learning and highlight a gap in the literature with regards to organisational learning in partnerships.

It is acknowledged that benefits in a partnership may be unequal and that certain actors may gain power over others in the relationship (Babiak, 2009), forming asymmetric power relationship (Babiak et al., 2018). Further, Harris and Houlihan (2016) point out that governments can take advantage of the use of partnership to retain control over a wider range of interests, reducing their risk and distancing themselves from potential failure, while espousing democratic participation. Babiak and Willem (2017) suggest that partnerships create a strategic competitive advantage for actors, but caution against the costs and challenges involved. Research by Devine et al. (2011) uses Huxham and Vangen's (2005) model and adapts competitive advantage to what they call collaborative advantage. However, it becomes apparent that for advantages to be achieved there are requirements that should be present or followed.

Huxham and Vangen (2005) put forward factors that need to be present in order to gain advantage from partnership working, including: common aims, mutual benefits, shared resources, trust, attention to operations and interactions, adopting the correct culture and structure, key personnel who have the ability to create action, power, credibility, democracy and communication. Adams (2014) suggests that to make collaboration a success, it is vital to build trust within the network between the participating organisations. The requirement for trust is also supported by Nicholson and Kiel (2004), who explore the role of social capital in board performance; a history of successful collaboration, trust, shared purpose, political support and expertise is proposed by Gazley (2010); and the requirement for trust is also acknowledged, alongside complementary goals and shared vision and transparency about needs, by Proulx et al. (2014). More recently, Shilbury et al. (2016) have built on Ansell and Gash's (2008) work; they highlight three

influences that dictate readiness for collaboration: power and knowledge resource asymmetries, incentives or constraints on participation and pre-history of co-operation. They also acknowledge components for collaboration proposed by Emerson et al. (2012), such as principled engagement, shared motivation and capacity for joint action (Shilbury et al., 2016). Kara (2014) finds that capacity is critical in terms of time and resources of the partnership involved. It becomes apparent here that, as well as the dependency on context, there are a range of requirements that can hinder the advantages of partnership being realised; due to these requirements and the complexity involved in partnership working, challenges occur, resulting in a high rate of failure.

It has been found in the literature that despite the benefits of forming relationships to achieve objectives, outputs or outcomes, relationships also create challenges that, if not managed effectively, can become barriers to policy and strategy implementation. Frisby et al. (2004) suggest that up to 60% of partnerships fail; this high failure rate is also acknowledged by Babiak and Thibault (2009), while Babiak and Willem (2017) point out that, by some accounts, two-thirds of partnerships fail, and suggest that this is due to only 31% of partnerships introducing performance measures. Houlihan and Lindsey (2008) suggest that, apart from the rhetorical benefits, partnership does little to reconcile objectives and sport can become marginalised by other activities.

A key issue in failure is capacity (Gazley, 2010); this is supported by Babiak and Thibault (2009), who highlight the high levels of capacity required for partnership working. Harris and Houlihan (2016) also cite capacity for collaboration, including skills, attributes and attitudes, resources and willingness to collaborate over competition for resources. A lack of capacity can result in a lack of planning, or lack of space for innovation within planning (Proulx et al., 2014); lack of planning may in turn result in a lack of strategic alignment between national and regional organisations (O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2018). Further, a lack of capacity can result in difficulty in evaluation and miss management, with detrimental effects (Jones et al., 2018). Babiak (2009) and Gazley (2010) also highlight the challenges in evaluating partnerships, which result in difficulty evidencing the benefits of partnership working (Kara, 2014; Jones et al., 2018). Further, it is acknowledged that, as there is the potential

for destructive (as opposed to constructive) conflict to occur, partnerships require effective conflict-handling management and monitoring capacity (Van Bussell and Doherty, 2014).

Huxham and Vangen (2005) point out that, although collaborative advantage is possible, in practice, collaborative inertia is often what occurs, due to varying interests, cultures and lack of trust; Jones et al. (2018) add poor communication and issues of trust. These findings are supported by O'Boyle and Shilbury (2018), who highlight a lack of shared understanding, lack of a history of interdependence in the system and lack of communication. Additionally, there are the presence of adversarial relationships, history of conflict within the system and lack of trust; adversarial relationships may arise from organisations within the system competing and collaborating at the same time, known as co-opetition (Proulx et al., 2014). Alternatively, issues may arise due to competing institutional logics, i.e. historical patterns, both symbolic and material, formal and informal, that set the rules of the game (Bryson et al., 2006), which make legitimacy, leadership, trust and conflict management difficult. These organisational variations are also acknowledged by Miller and Ahmed (2000), who highlight both philosophical and cultural organisational variations. Babiak and Thibault (2009) highlight differences in goals, language, procedures, culture and power and the clash of values. These variations and a lack of trust within the system may give rise to protectionism, reducing the chances of learning through collaboration (Lindsey, 2014).

It has also been identified that there are numerous costs to partnership working: institutional costs of alliances, including mission drift, loss of autonomy, or public accountability; co-optation of actors; financial instability; more complicated evaluation procedures; increased time taken to achieve objectives; and additional resources used in supporting collaborative activities (Gazley and Brudney, 2007). Further, large and unwieldy membership can lead to mission drift, lack of consensus, powerful members dominating, cultural differences and bureaucratisation (Harris and Houlihan, 2016). Kara (2014) highlights the challenges created by policy changes, lack of accountability, conflicts of interest, the concealing of important differences and negative experience, and the potential that lack of understanding or time required to gain understanding may hinder progress (Kara, 2014). Numerato and Baglioni

(2011) identify the potential for collaborations to form what they term 'the dark side of social capital', which includes features such as building strategically exclusive coalitions and misusing relationships for economic and political interests and merely portraying a democratic and transparent process. Exclusion is also found when key organisations that lack the resources to take part are excluded (Kara 2014).

A key challenge that emerges regularly centres around power within partnerships, or more specifically power imbalance. Power is dependent on levels of funding and/or dependence on resources and has been highlighted as a key challenge to partnership working (Thibault and Harvey, 1999; Walker and Hayton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018), along with power imbalances, conflicting loyalties and different levels of commitment (Thibault and Harvey, 1999; Bryson et al., 2006). Conflicting goals can lead to powerful partners' goals being assumed by less powerful members (Thibault and Harvey, 1999). Macdonald (2005) also suggests that existing power relations can be reproduced and that conflict may be suppressed through fear of dissent; moreover, that government may actually increase its hegemonic influence by appearing to give away direct control. The idea that existing power relations can be reproduced is also argued by Harris and Houlihan (2016). It is further acknowledged that decisions being overseen by powerful actors can create a challenge for less powerful members (Babiak et al., 2018).

One theory used to explain the formation of partnerships and the dynamics around power is resource dependency theory (Babiak et al., 2018), widely used in research on non-profits and suggesting that organisations act in ways associated with their dependence on various resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). This theory recognises the influence of external factors on performance and that managers can act to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence (Hillman et al., 2009). Davis and Cobb (2010) also suggest that organisations seek to manage their environments, while Cornforth (2003) proposes that boards can reduce uncertainty by managing stakeholder relationships that provide the organisation with consistent access to resources. Resource dependency theory builds on earlier work on power dependence (Emerson, 1962) suggesting that one person's power over another is based on the level of dependence in the relationship, not on individual attributes.

Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) also explore the role of power within organisations and dependence on resources; their work is further corroborated by Hillman et al. (2009). Davis and Cobb (2010) explore this further and suggest the key is to understand the source of power or dependence and that this may determine function. Babiak and Willem (2017) emphasise the role of power and propose that having power and control over resources can be more beneficial than ownership. Walker and Hayton (2017) suggest that although the focus is on external agency partnership, resource dependency theory does not overlook intra-organisational processes and internal distributions of power. Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a) also utilise this theory in their research on developing strategic capability. They emphasise that resource dependence theory and stakeholder theory are both relevant to boards seeking to enact their strategic priorities through a regional network. Critically, it is important to explore the underlying uses of power based on resource dependence, which may result in hierarchical control (underminding collaborative work) (Grix and Phillpots, 2011).

It could be argued that resource dependency theory is limited in scope when explaining partnership working, as partnerships can extend to include a wider range of stakeholders who do not hold any equity or power (Phillips et al., 2003). Bryson (2004) supports the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders in policy implementation, including stakeholders who do not hold any power. In developing stakeholder theory, Freeman (1984:2010) classes stakeholders as a wider group than equity shareholders, as people or entities that impact an organisation's decision making and/or are impacted by the organisation's decisions. It is still evident within stakeholder theory that certain stakeholders may hold more power than others, due to their access to resources and the power that they may wield (Phillips et al., 2003); however, the theory suggests that a much wider range of stakeholders than those that hold equity or power can make a legitimate contribution to decision making (Phillips et al., 2003). Murdock (2004) contends that the nature of the relationship, the strength of the relationship and the direction of the relationship all require consideration; however, Ferkins and Shilbury (2015b) caution that although all stakeholders count, it is critical to remain focused on primary stakeholders or stake owners, while ensuring engagement with wider stakeholders.

In partnerships, Savage et al. (2010) highlight that stakeholder relationships require effective management if balance is to be achieved between partnership objectives and the wider social outcomes of the partnership. Despite evident challenges involved in managing stakeholder relationships, it is suggested that forming relationships between stakeholders with shared interests, objectives, values and outcomes is required (Babiak, 2007; Coalter, 2013; Harris and Houlihan, 2016). Moreover, this shared thinking can lead to improved organisational effectiveness and efficiency (Babiak, 2007). A benefit of engaging in stakeholder relationships is identified as the creation of stakeholder value, as opposed to shareholder value (Laasch and Conaway, 2015). The pros and cons of stakeholder engagement have led to a discussion in the literature on whether or not wider stakeholders should be included as board members. However, it is acknowledged that stakeholder engagement, incorporating the views of people, groups or organisations that affect or are affected by board decisions, has implications and requires consideration (Ferkins, 2007). Ferkins (2007) finds that a board's ability to engage with stakeholder perspectives can affect its strategic development, and Tricker (2012:4) proposes including stakeholders, suggesting:

> Governance covers the activities of the board, and its relationships with shareholders or members, and with those managing the enterprise, as well as other legitimate stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory is incorporated into the work of Ferkins and Shilbury (2010), to support the notion of integrating with regional entities as primary stakeholders (Ferkins, 2007); subsequently, stakeholder theory is used alongside resource dependence theory to inform the central concept of Ferkins and Shilbury's (2015a) theory of board strategic balance. Elsewhere, they highlight the importance of reciprocity and responsibility relative to the notion of the stake owner (i.e. the loyal stakeholder with a genuine stake), and that applying this to the non-profit sport-organisation setting could enhance capability (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015b). Furthermore, the links to strategic capability of the board and social partnerships highlight that stakeholder theory will contribute to explaining strategic capability in the context of sport and physical activity partnerships. The contribution of stakeholder theory is illustrated by its central role in the theory of board strategic balance to explain integrating regional entities into a governing role. However, which stakeholders

are being engaged and which stakeholders are included or excluded from decision making requires further empirical research in the community sport context.

Although evident challenges are found in the literature on inter-organisational working, Ferkins and Shilbury's research (2010, 2015a) proposes that developing regional relationships is a key component of strategic capability for national sport organisations, and as a result it is a central premise in the framework for board strategic balance (see figures 3a and 3b). Historically in community sport in England, these regional relationships would be with CSPs; now, developing regional relationships with health bodies and local government advance on the use of CSP contracts and are included in the Sporting Future policy (2015) and the Sport England strategy (2016), suggesting support for the explanatory value of the theory put forward by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) and the use of systemic governance. However, the emergent nature of the theory of board strategic balance and the unique nature of the partnership between Sport England and the regional entities GMCA and NHSGM highlight the need for empirical examination – critically, of the potential for multiple governance mechanisms being used in the regional system in the community sport context. This empirical examination will address this gap in the knowledge of the explanatory value of the theory of board strategic balance in the community sport context. The new partnership that Sport England has engaged in centres around the formation of a programme board (the GM Moving Executive Group), and the literature also acknowledges a range of board inputs that may enable and/or constrain board performance.

3.2.2 Board inputs

As illustrated in the strategic capability framework in Figure 3a and theory of board strategic balance in Figure 3b (Section 2.2), board inputs are a key requirement for the ability of a board to function strategically and the development potential of a board to think and act in a strategic manner. The literature on board inputs such as will and skill and operational knowledge will now be explored in more depth.

3.2.2.1 Board member will and skill

At the micro level, another sub-theme that impacts board performance identified in the literature is the input of skills, knowledge and experience of

board members and their will to commit to objectives and obtain resources. These sub-themes are illustrated in Figure 3b in the first two circles of influence: contribution of volunteer part-time board members (will and skill) and board operational knowledge. The notion of will and skill stems from work by Pettigrew and McNulty (1995) on power and influence, which identifies a trinity of influences: macro-level structural and contextual factors, which can be mobilised as sources of power to form a power base and a credible and legitimate position; and the willingness to use sources of power and skill in tactically exploiting the available sources. Pettigrew and McNulty (1995) suggest that the key factor required is board member expertise and experience.

It is suggested that board knowledge, skill and ability to comprehend situations have a direct impact on board effectiveness (Nicholson and Kiel, 2004). Nicholson and Kiel (2004) cite research Castanias and Helfat (2001) who highlight that the ability of a board depends on the expertise its members and their capability to fully comprehend a situation. Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) build on the work of Nicholson and Kiel (2004) and acknowledge that the ability of individual board members plays a crucial role with regards to internal and external legitimacy. Legitimacy is the perception that board members have the correct technical expertise to function and is required externally, so stakeholders buy into the partnership; however, especially with regards to the function of the partnership, internal legitimacy is equally important. This importance is based on the merging of different cultures, values and co-objectives, as well as the potential difference between paid and volunteer staff. It has been found that function may be difficult to maintain and that trust cannot be developed if internal legitimacy is not maintained (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). Board legitimacy is key, and is proposed to be determined on having the expertise to function in the required role; however, the extent to which the will and skill of individual board members impact on the board's ability to think and act strategically are, as yet, unexplored (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a).

Focusing on collaborative work, O'Boyle and Shilbury (2018) highlight the requirement for leadership skills and abilities. Further support is provided by Lindsey (2014), who acknowledges the need for skills and resources in what he describes as collaborative capacity. Harris and Houlihan (2016) expand on

this and suggest collaborative leadership skills and ability are required to lead through times of uncertainty and complexity and that this requires a focus on broader outcomes, as opposed to individual interests. They also suggest this requires long term commitment and energy to support these skills to leverage the full potential from partnership working (Harris and Houlihan, 2016). Some have identified collaborative leaders spanning operational boundaries to allow the development of shared trust and meaning (Harris and Houlihan, 2016). Bryson et al. (2006) suggest collaborative leaders might include co-chairs, and that they must possess formal and informal authority, long-term commitment, integrity, relational and political skills; however, from a stakeholder perspective, incorporating a broad range of stakeholders on boards (as opposed to solely those who have the required skills and/or resources) may provide benefits and incorporate a broader range of social interests (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003). It has also been acknowledged in the literature that despite the requirement for strategic skill and the ability to think beyond operational boundaries, having operational knowledge can benefit decision making.

3.2.2.2 Board operational knowledge

The second circle in the theory of board strategic balance (Figure 3b) is operational knowledge; this builds on earlier work by Edwards and Cornforth (2003) on what influences the strategic contribution of sport boards. Edwards and Cornforth (2003) identify the importance of operational detail and that a board member's operational experience enhances (rather than hinders) their ability to make strategic decisions. They do caution, however, that this operational experience needs to be provided within a strategic framework. This perspective on the benefit of operational knowledge is in contrast to other authors, who believe the boundary is more blurred, and that it is possible to become bogged down in operational detail when making strategic decisions, reducing board members ability to take a critical stance. (Brauer and Schmidt, 2008). Moreover, Senge et al. (2015) suggest that participants in collective leadership must have the ability to see the larger system and not become focused on organisational parts of the system, which may create conflict.

3.2.2.3 Strategic management inputs

Babiak and Thibault (2009) acknowledge the role of leaders and managers in partnership working. Frisby et al. (2004) claim that leaders often neglect the management function. They also state that the management of partnerships once they are established is a key factor for success and highlight the challenge this poses for local government in partnership. Frisby et al. (2004) find that a key challenge is developing the correct management capacity, while Babiak and Thibault (2009) highlight the challenge of insufficient resources and time dedicated to management. Edwards and Rowe (2019) propose the need for a stronger evidence base on the challenges that managers face. It is suggested that, in addition to board leadership, awareness of senior management inputs plays a key role in the success of partnership boards; however, the role of strategic managers introduced by partnership boards is an under-researched area and a gap in the literature. Further empirical research is required to identify the challenges strategic managers face, how they enable boards to function and how they relate with board members and wider stakeholders within the system to overcome constraints on the board's ability to function. The theory of board strategic balance proposes that in addition to board inputs, in order to achieve optimal strategic function, they should be balanced with appropriate board processes.

3.2.3 Board processes

The strategic capability framework illustrated in Figure 3a highlights the requirement for effective board processes to optimise board inputs. Further, the theory of board strategic balance illustrated in Figure 3b suggests that, to achieve optimal performance, balance or integration between board inputs and processes is required (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a).

3.2.3.1 Shared leadership

Ferkins (2007) identifies that the process of shared leadership is of key importance to strategic capability and that a collaborative process is required (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). As a result, the importance of shared leadership is emphasised within two circles of influence for board processes: the first, co-leading strategy development, and the second ensuring that this shared leadership is sustained to integrate strategy into processes. Babiak and Willem (2017) suggest that effective leadership is a way of maintaining balance. The

notion of shared leadership is developed from earlier work by Nadler (2004), who identified the benefit of value-added engagement between the board and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), acknowledging that the CEO should lead strategic decision making, but engage with the board at every step of the process. An alternative definition of shared leadership is provided by Pearce and Conger (2003:1):

> [A] dynamic, interactive process, among individuals in groups, for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals.

Grint (2005) highlights that leadership has been explored as a person, as a position, as results and as a process, with Coffey (2010) extending this to leadership as a system. Leadership as a system in sport is supported by Ferkins et al. (2018b:77) who term leadership in sport management, organisations and systems 'sport leadership'. Critically, they acknowledge that:

> Social construction of leadership goes beyond the leader-centric, and acknowledges the multiple, collective contribution, values, social and relational interactions and recognises the significance of context.

(Ferkins et al., 2018b:79).

Examples published in sport management include: shared leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, experience-based leadership, gendered leadership and leadership in non-western contexts (Ferkins et al., 2018b). Missing from this list, however, is the role of systems leadership in sport development, highlighting a gap in the literature.

3.2.3.2 Systems leadership

The notion of leadership as a process or system emphasises that leadership does not necessarily reside with one person and is instead shared, distributed or generated collectively (Ferkins et al., 2018a). Ferkins et al. (2018a) highlight that collective leadership is how a board comes together to generate leadership and progress key strategic initiatives within and across a network of affiliated bodies. Research by Shilbury and Ferkins (2015, 2016) highlight that further research is required on understanding collective board leadership. Also along these lines, earlier work by Senge et al. (2015) suggests that systems leadership is required to foster collective leadership. Within the NHS transformation literature, the process of systems leadership is outlined by Ghate et al. (2013:13) as:

Leadership across organisational and geopolitical boundaries, beyond individual professional disciplines, within a range of organisational and stakeholder cultures often without direct managerial control.

In addition to the ability to see the bigger picture (as mentioned above), Senge et al. (2015) suggest a reflective process is required for systems leadership:

Deep shared reflection is a critical step in enabling groups of organisations and individuals to hear a point of view different from their own and to appreciate emotionally as well as cognitively each other's reality. Shared reflection is an essential doorway for building trust where distrust had prevailed and for fostering collective creativity.

(Senge et al., 2015:28)

Another requirement is to 'shift the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future' (Senge et al., 2015: 29). Despite the evident benefits, collective leadership is 'time, resource, and skill-intensive' (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2018b:9). Systems leadership is widely used in health research but is currently under-researched in the sport and physical activity literature, highlighting a gap in knowledge that requires further empirical research.

3.2.3.3 Monitoring and control

Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) state the requirement of the board to maintain a monitoring and control function and to assess outcomes and hold the CEO to account (Ferkins, 2007), building on Nadler's (2004) suggestion that strategic execution requires monitoring of performance and taking the required corrective action. As cited earlier, a failure to introduce performance measures – they were only introduced by 31% of organisations – may play a central role in increased failure rates (Babiak and Willem, 2017). Cravens et al. (2000) propose essential actions for partnerships, including determining the rationale and type of relationship and identifying strategic objectives and how they will be managed, measured and evaluated, as well as ensuring that this evaluation takes place. Kaplan and Norton (2004) emphasise the importance of metrics in quantifying performance; however, this does little to explore how performance is achieved. Babiak (2009), on the other hand, explores effectiveness criteria on three levels: community (i.e. trust and reciprocity), network (i.e. growth in membership/improved service) and organisation (i.e. improved outcomes and reduced costs). Babiak and Willem (2017) suggest that, to achieve effective monitoring and control, relationships within the partnership board need to be evaluated and assessed. This is something that

is often overlooked by busy executives, for several reasons, including the absence of objective measures by which to evaluate partnership, lack of evaluation skills within the partnership and lack of time to evaluate (Babiak and Willem, 2017). Due to the normative nature of previous research, there is little empirical evidence to aid understanding of the merging of cultures, capabilities and capacities and how this influences performance. It will be critical to explore the monitoring and control function of the GM Moving Executive Group and whether this function is in place.

Integral to the monitoring and control function is the process of learning. The methodology of Ferkins's (2007) initial thesis utilised mini cycles of learning within a wider action-research cycle, ensuring learning about learning, or meta-learning. Argyris and Schon (1978, 1996) identify double-loop learning and suggest that organisational learning requires processes that produce valid information for decision makers and the receptivity to corrective feedback from the individual or organisation. Single-loop learning is whenever an error is detected and corrected without questioning or altering the underlying values of the system, whereas double-loop learning is when mismatches are corrected by first examining and altering the governing variables and then the actions. Double-loop learning is essential in cross-sector partnerships operating within a wider system, to move beyond the theories in use of winning and control (evident in single-loop learning), to theories of valid insight and evidence. Building on the concept of double-loop learning, Argyris and Schon (1978, 1996) also highlight duetero-learning – learning about learning – or meta-learning, as identified by Ferkins (2007). Other authors have built on this concept, incorporating Bateson's (1972) levels of learning to develop the concept of triple-loop learning (Tosey et al., 2011). However, Tosey et al. (2011) suggest research to date has failed to explain how the third loop differs from or relates to primary or secondary forms.

The revaluation process developed by Darnton and Harrison (2015) builds on the work of Argyris and Schon (1978, 1996) and Tosey et al. (2011) and finds that a triple-loop process of organisational learning was required during the UK NHS Transformation Day. Darnton and Harrison (2015) also provide detailed insight into how the cycles relate: cycle one is action, cycle two is reflection and cycle three is value (i.e. the value of action and reflection). Depth is

provided on the cycle of value with three components of invisible and visible value: calculate, calibrate and capacitate. The Centre for Evaluation of Complexity Across the Nexus (CECAN) explains these key terms as follows (Darnton, 2017:2):

> Visible value is based on known data, that which is observed within a system and already collected (at least in some part of the system). As such visible value tends to relate to changes past. It can also be considered as direct value: intended impacts and outcomes, in line with the objectives of an intervention.

> Invisible Value is based on knowable data, which could be gathered and generated if actors or commissioners were interested in doing so. A simple example is Return on Investment data, in which wider outcomes are monetised (e.g. using proxy multipliers) to make their £ value visible. By extension, invisible value is also that which is hidden by actors (in systems where their work is not supported by commissioners) or which is indirect: not in line with (or unforeseen by) the intended outcomes of the intervention as commissioned. Value which cannot be observed at present, but is likely to emerge from the system in the future, should also be considered here.

> Calculate involves presenting quantitative outputs and outcomes, manipulating numbers (summing, or converting using proxy data and multipliers) to arrive at a single figure, usually in £s. The dominant metric in orthodox evaluation.

> Calibrate involves qualitative judgements about the relative merits (or cost/benefits) of different actions and outcomes. Based on how actors decide where to direct their efforts (and how much effort to make), both as individual decision making and socialised in groups.

> Capacitate involves measuring the characteristics and capacity of a movement or network, plus the potential of that network to increase its capacity in future, and thus the value it can generate (i.e. its emergent qualities). Included here are relational data, exploring the connections in a network including in space (e.g. maps) and time (e.g. calendars).

The learning from the reflection and value cycles controls further action integrating the three cycles of action, reflection and value. These cycles take place within the GM system, which is dependent on national contextual dynamics (CECAN, 2017).

It is suggested by CECAN (2017) that one of the main benefits of the revaluation process is self-evaluation, where participants generate learning and self-knowledge, as opposed to being observed by external evaluators. However, Tosey et al. (2011) advise caution on self-evaluation when attempting higher level learning, based on early work published by Bateson in 1972 on level-three learning (Bateson, 2000). In contrast to Argyris and Schon

(1978, 1996), Bateson views learning in levels or a hierarchy, but notes that higher levels of learning do not necessarily have more value than lower levels (Bateson, 2000). Moreover, Bateson highlights that during self-evaluation attempts at meta-learning or level-three learning may have damaging psychological consequences due to the potential abandonment of self-identity; it may also result in unintentional consequences or unlearning (Tosey et al., 2011). Findings suggest that care should be taken during self-evaluation or action research to incorporate safe and effective organisational learning that provides a holistic view of what is happening, how it is happening and why it is happening (Coghlan and Bambrick, 2001; Ferkins, 2007), while taking into account the value of this to board members and, importantly, to stakeholders (Darnton and Harrison, 2015). Furthermore, Bateson (2000) brings into question the interplay between learning and genetics, highlighting that certain boards may not be able to achieve increased effectiveness, based on board member genetic inputs, rather than experience or board processes, and emphasising the requirement for integration between board member inputs and board processes.

The use of cycles of action and reflection, or reflexivity, is central to organisational learning. Hardy et al. (2003) highlight the role of organisational learning, through knowledge sharing and transfer, but also through the creation of new knowledge through collaboration. They state that knowledge creation occurs through a dynamic, rather than static, process and requires engagement with wider stakeholders. Lindsey (2014) acknowledges the need for continuous improvement and highlights the need for both reflection and reflexivity. Mansfield (2016) suggests reflexivity requires a re-thinking of the normative ways of working, enabling knowledge production. Extending this further, she also acknowledges the role of reflexivity in partnership working, as the evaluation of oneself and the relationship dynamics of the partnership (Mansfield, 2016). She highlights that mutual learning is a fundamental dynamic of partnership working, to advance knowledge and build and evidence-base for sport and physical activity, which is central to the co-production espoused by local government (GM Moving, 2017; Mansfield, 2016). Babiak et al. (2018) acknowledge that organisational learning is an area that has received little attention in inter-organisational relationships in sport, representing a serious gap in the sport and physical activity literature, which

requires further empirical research. Furthermore, the notion of cyclic processes is key to building trust (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Bryson et al., 2006; Lindsey, 2009), with trust and the presence of collectivism being acknowledged as a key enabler to collaborative work (O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2018). The concept of integrated cycles of action and reflection, where outcomes tend to be more emergent than predefined, brings into contention the notion of balance put forward by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) and places more focus on the notion of integration.

3.2.4 Board strategic balance

Ferkins (2007) identifies that governance literature emphasises the balance between performance and conformance for boards. The underlying premise of the theory of board strategic balance is that the circles of influence in Figure 3b are interdependent, suggesting that in order to achieve optimal strategic performance, the influences identified need to be monitored and balanced to achieve optimal strategic capability (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). This concept of balance builds on work by Edwards and Cornforth (2003) suggesting that boards are required to manage tensions or balance demands placed on them. In their research on breakthrough board performance, Nicholson and Kiel (2004) propose an integrative approach, acknowledging, however, that any imbalance between dimensions or inputs and processes will have a detrimental effect on performance. The revaluation model focuses on monitoring and evaluation, not as separate processes, but as integrated into the development process as part of a learning system, where visible and invisible outcomes emerge (Darnton and Harrison, 2015). The use of revaluation methodology lends support to the focus on process, such as co-design (as opposed to pre-determined outcomes) (McDonald, 2005). As such, it follows that the notion of balance and/or integration will need to be explored through empirical research of the GM Moving Executive Group, who have commissioned a revaluation team to complete their process evaluation.

3.3 Conclusion

This review of the literature positions the research in sport governance, and the wider context of international and national development, through the mechanism of delivering national policy using partnerships in community sport

(Houlihan and White, 2003; Houlihan and Green, 2011; Rowe et al., 2013). Despite criticism in the literature, there is growing evidence to suggest sport can contribute to health (Kidd, 2008; Coalter, 2012; Nike, 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Parnell et al., 2016; Lindsey and Chapman, 2017). Furthermore, health is now a central focus in sport policy for social outcomes (DCMS, 2015). National sport organisations such as Sport England are tasked with delivering these objectives and managing the distribution of funds to delivery organisations. This shift in strategic focus from elite sport to sport for social outcomes has led to a change in governance, espousing a move from the traditional hierarchical and market forms of governance of previous policy to focus on collaborating with local government through a networked approach. However, underlying control by the national government through resource dependence may still be evident, as well as the use of market mechanisms. The devolution process adopted in England has created a potential opportunity to utilise new governance mechanisms in the reform of public services. It is proposed that GM, with its long history of partnership working and integrated blueprint for sport and physical activity, as evidenced in the GM Moving blueprint (2015, 2017) that utilises whole-system thinking in a place-based approach, provides an excellent test bed for this type of approach.

Within the sport governance literature, national sport organisations are often criticised for their inability to be strategic (Ferkins et al., 2005; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010, 2015a). It has been suggested that identifying the factors that constrain and enable sports boards to think and act strategically may provide an empirical basis on which to build strategic capabilities. Central to this premise are integration and the development of inter-organisational relationships with regional entities. However, strategic capability in a partnership context in community sport in the UK is currently unexplored. The strategic capability framework (Figure 3a) and theory of board strategic balance (Figure 3b) provide a useful structure to explain the different influences on the strategic capability of sport boards. Following the theory of board strategic balance, a multi-theoretical approach will utilise complementary theories of community sport governance to shine a light on different dynamics that influence governance through partnership in community sport.

The theory of board strategic balance is in its infancy, and a large amount of research to date is of a normative nature. Furthermore, as strategic capability is unexplored or documented in the community sport context in the UK, the themes of context, integration with regional entities, inter-organisational relationships, board inputs and board processes identified in the literature review will need to be explored in more detail through further empirical research. Exploration of these themes will enable a critical examination of emergent theory in the community sport context. This research will explore in practice the themes identified to build empirical evidence, while critically analysing the strategic capability of the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (the Partnership). This research will enable confirmation and/or extension of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance using empirical evidence collected in the community sport context in the UK. Furthermore, the review of the literature on strategic capability and partnerships has identified several gaps in knowledge, including the use of integrated governance approaches consisting of hybrid mechanisms; the use of strategic managers for partnership working and their relationships with the board and wider stakeholders to enable partnership working; the use of leadership processes (such as systems leadership) in the context of sport and physical activity; and, finally, the use of organisational learning to develop partnership boards, share knowledge and create new knowledge in sport and physical activity. The following chapter will outline the methodological assumptions and methods of data collection required to produce robust empirical evidence through an examination of the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group, enabling contributions to these suggested gaps in knowledge and potential contributions to theory, practice and policy.

4.0 Methodology

The following chapter explores methodology, defined by Sullivan (2009: 324) as 'a set or system of methods, rules and principles employed by a given discipline that govern how research is conducted'. The correct set or system of methods is dependent on the philosophical paradigm of the research. Within the social sciences, in which sport governance and management is based, methodological approaches include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches, influenced by the philosophical underpinning of the research by four core philosophical paradigms (Creswell, 2009). In general, quantitative approaches follow positivism, qualitative approaches follow interpretivism, and the mixed methods approach is supported by critical realism and pragmatism (Creswell, 2009). To ensure collection of the correct data to support the aim and objectives of this research, it is crucial that research methodology, methods, design and techniques are reviewed in depth.

Background information will be provided on ontological and epistemological assumptions, then the variances between quantitative and qualitative research explored. This chapter explores the theoretical frameworks and literature in depth, to support the choice of a qualitative approach based on ontological and epistemological considerations. Following a qualitative approach, a case study design using semi-structured interviews and document analysis is reviewed. The use of a single case study is suggested, to provide rich depth and context of the unique partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM. The limitations of an interpretive approach are explored, with critical realism and pragmatism being considered as alternative paradigms in addition to multiple case studies. However, the depth and rich context provided by a single case study with thick description, and the use of an interpretive approach, will develop the required understanding and support transferability to similar pilot projects and generalisability to strategic capability theory, enabling a revised theoretical conceptualisation and theory development based on the context of community sport in GM.

4.1 Quantitative vs qualitative

The following section will explore the debate between qualitative and quantitative research, before grounding this research in the qualitative field. The debate is supported by Smith and Heshusius (1986), who argue that the suggestion of the two approaches being intertwined or compatible is a concession by the qualitative camp to quantitative-orientated assumptions; however, Miles and Huberman (1994:41) suggest that the qualitative and quantitative debate is 'unproductive' and that the two methods are 'inextricably intertwined'. In order to provide support for the selection of a qualitative approach, it is important first to acknowledge the different approaches, exploring the main differences between the two and the concept of bringing both approaches together in research design. Subsequently, the use of qualitative research is outlined as the most effective approach to meet the aim and objectives of this research.

The quantitative vs qualitative debate is based on competing philosophical paradigms and assumptions. Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that each philosophy comes with its own set of assumptions about the nature of the world and the way in which it can be investigated. Ontological assumptions are focused on the nature of reality (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), whereas epistemological assumptions are focused on the grounds of knowledge and how it is obtained and communicated to the relevant audience by researchers (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The philosophical paradigm and subsequent ontology and epistemology guide the selection of appropriate methods to collect and analyse data (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Crotty (1998) suggests that when selecting an appropriate research design, it is essential to take into account four key elements: the theoretical perspective (i.e. the philosophical stance), the epistemology (i.e. the theory of knowledge), the methodology (i.e. the strategy) and the method (i.e. the technique of collecting and analysing data). Although ontology is not featured in the four elements, it sits alongside epistemology, as each theoretical perspective involves a certain way of understanding what 'ontology' is and a certain way of understanding what it means to know 'epistemology' (Crotty, 1998). What is clear is that to collect the correct data to fulfil the research objectives it is crucial to ensure that all of these elements are aligned.

Quantitative methods are based on the assumptions of positivism; the belief that the world conforms to fixed and testable laws of causation stems from the natural sciences (Fitzgerald and Howcroft, 1998). The word 'positivism' is often attributed to August Comte and was developed by the Vienna circle into logical positivism (Crotty, 1998). The ontological position of positivism is realism, i.e. the view that objects have an existence independent of the viewer (Cohen et al., 2007). The epistemological assumption of positivism is objectivism, i.e. that things have intrinsic meaning or truth and that it is the researcher's role to discover or confirm this meaning (Blaikie, 2007). The positivist view of research incorporates methods of testing and refining hypotheses or propositions in the real world and subsequently results in reliable knowledge. It is reductionistic in that it intends to reduce concepts into small ideas for testing; it can be argued that the overall aim of positivism is achieving an objective truth that can be proved true or false. Developments in positivism are known as post-positivism and question the claims to truth and objectivity, with the renowned post-positivist Karl Popper contesting the notion of true or false. Popper proposed that nothing can be proved to be true; rather, empirical findings are better than anything that has come before (Chalmers, 1982). Techniques used in post-positivist enquiry include experimental protocols, surveys, standardised scales and questionnaires. Research measurements use numerical data and statistical analysis to test and predict (Atkinson, 2012). The evident benefits of being able to prove something is true (or at least better than anything that has come before) are justified in quantitative research; however, it has been found that in social science the ontological and epistemological positions of positivism and quantitative research may not be appropriate. Consequently, a different approach to research, using a qualitative or interpretive method, is suggested.

The qualitative, or interpretive, method attempts to understand the social world from the perspective of the people directly involved in the social process. It was initially formed by Immanuel Kant, who was receptive to the range of ways different people interpret the world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Later, Max Weber proposed that human science is concerned with *verstehen*, or understanding (Crotty, 1998). Interpretive studies reject the possibility of an objective or true account of events and situations; instead, a relativist ontology is supported, proposing that realities are social constructions of the mind. The

notion of reality being a social construction opens the door to multiple realities dependent on understanding (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Shared understanding is essential from an interpretive perspective, as objectivity is nothing more than social agreement, as in quantitative research (Smith, 1983:10):

> What is objectively so, is what we agree is objectively so. This agreement is based on persuasion, which is a question of values and interests; agreement is not a product of an external reality.

Interpretive research follows a subjective epistemology and focuses on the complex and problematic nature of human behaviour and experience (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Generally, interpretive research attempts to understand or develop an understanding of phenomena in terms of the meaning that people assign to them (Lee, 1991; Walsham, 1995; Myers, 2013). In this way, it is concerned with the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). In qualitative inquiry, if people agree, it is based on them having similar values, interests and purposes (Smith and Heshusius, 1986). When attempting to understand how people construct and understand reality in a given context, techniques such as interviews, document analysis and observation are used (Atkinson, 2012). Despite the evident differences in the qualitative and quantitative approaches, it has been suggested that the debate dividing the two is unproductive and that the two approaches are compatible.

Critical realism, based on early work by Rom Harre, is a position that combines positivist and interpretive positions. However, the philosophy and term were developed by Bhasker in 1975 (Bhasker, 2008). Critical realism combines the use of positivism (to explain why something happens) with the interpretive approach (to understand how) (Grix, 2010). According to Bhasker (2008:242):

> Science then, is the systematic attempt to express, in thought, the structures and ways of acting of things that exist and act, independently of thought.

Critical realists suggest that we must acknowledge that our understanding of the world is based on description. However, Sayer supports the notion that certain descriptions and, importantly, explanations can be proved better than others (Sayer, 2000). In contrast to interpretive researchers, critical realists see objects and structures in society as having causal powers or being causal mechanisms; Sayer, however, acknowledges that interpretive understanding of those objects and structures is essential (Sayer, 2000). It must be

recognised that positivist and critical realist views differ on what can be counted as a causal power or mechanism. For example, in the positivist tradition, the emphasis is placed on how many times a causal mechanism has been observed or tested, whereas in critical realism the focus is placed on the identification of a causal mechanism and exploration of how it works, whether it is working and under what circumstances (Sayer, 2000). The critical aspect is that by identifying casual powers or mechanisms it is possible to create change and transform the status quo (Bryman, 2016). Importantly, causal powers or mechanisms can differ between actors, i.e. something that initiates action, and structures that constrain or facilitate (Grix, 2010). The difference here is known as the structure and agency debate, which explores whether it is actors that form context or, vice versa, the context that forms an individual's perspectives and actions (Grix, 2010). Some view the two as separate, using macro-level analysis to explore structures or systems and micro-level analysis to explore individuals; critical realism sees the two to be completely interwoven, while pragmatists make use of both approaches to achieve the required research outcomes. However, it can be argued that systems and policy are social constructions, providing further support for the interpretive position.

The concept that quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible and can be used as part of the same study, depending on the research objectives, is based in pragmatism. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the question is not, 'Can they be linked?', rather, it is, 'Should they be linked, how, and for what purpose?' Approaches to pragmatism vary between the three founding pragmatists, Dewey, Pierce and James. Pierce, for example, uses a realist ontology and abduction as a mode of discovery, as opposed to induction or deduction. Abduction begins by engaging with the world and identifying an anomaly or breakdown that is inconsistent with current understanding or theory (Van de Ven, 2007). Pierce intends pragmatism to be both a rational and empirical substantiation of knowledge claims (Van de Ven, 2007); James, on the other hand, views pragmatism as a compromise between empiricism (i.e. an objective world commands thought) and idealism (i.e. subjective thoughts construct the world), with an emphasis on experience. Finally, Dewey views pragmatism as a means of achieving societal goals, in what Pierce refers to instrumentalism; where Dewey differs from Pierce is in his view that success

is not based on inter-subjective epistemology and empirical evidence, but on the ability to realise societal development (Van de Ven, 2007). A suggested benefit of pragmatism is that the researcher can adopt both objective and subjective epistemological approaches, as truth is viewed largely in terms of its success at achieving pre-determined outcomes (Van de Ven, 2007). This benefit is highlighted by Rescher (1995), whose generalised account tends to reflect the popularised view of pragmatism (Rescher, 1995:710):

> The key characteristic of philosophical pragmatism is that efficacy in practical application, the issue of 'which works out most effectively', somehow provides a standard for the determination of truth, in the case of statements, rightness in the case of actions, and value in the case of appraisals.

The ability to adopt different methods, depending on the situation, results in pragmatism being highlighted as the philosophical underpinning of mixed methods, utilising both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Creswell, 2009). However, the differing views of Pierce, Dewey and James lead to confusion with this approach, and more recent attempts by Rorty (1982) and Rescher (1995) do not resolve this confusion, restricting its use as a philosophical approach for a doctoral researcher.

4.2 Qualitative choice based on ontological and epistemological considerations

After careful consideration of the potential approaches, a qualitative method has been used in this research as the most appropriate method to achieve the aims and objectives listed below:

Research aim: To explore strategic capability in the sport and physical activity partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM and its programme board the GM Moving Executive Group.

- Objective 1: To review the academic literature on strategic capability and sport and physical activity partnerships.
- Objective 2: To identify enablers and constraints of integrated working for the GM Moving Executive Group at strategic and operational levels.
- Objective 3: To critically evaluate the strategic capability of the GM Moving Executive Group.

- Objective 4: To critically examine the explanatory value of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance, and develop a revised conceptualisation if required, based on empirical findings.

As outlined in the research aim, the focus of this research is strategic capability. From a review of the literature, a theoretical framework (shown in Figures 3a and 3b) has been used to identify the themes and sub-themes in the field of sport governance and to guide the data collection.

Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a:498):

> …advocate research methods that gain insider perspectives and seek to understand the ongoing processes involved in the boards' role [and] develop further insight into the notion of board strategic capability.

The robust research conducted by Ferkins and Shilbury over a 13-year period make the strategic capability framework suitable for use as a guide for doctoral researchers. This research utilises the strategic capability framework to collect empirical evidence by gaining insider perspectives in a new real-world context: the community sport context in England; the supporting theory of board strategic balance is highlighted as an emerging theory for sport governance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). The requirement to collect empirical evidence in a real-world context is due to the strategic capability framework being in its infancy and (as mentioned) an emerging theory, requiring detailed critical exploration through empirical research to develop a more detailed understanding of the influences involved and explanatory value in different contexts. Due to the influence of context, Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) opt not to provide a hypothesis, as this would indicate universality. Universality would indicate that contextual issues are generic globally, with no variation across different populations and settings.

Different contextual influences are especially evident in the UK, with the process of devolution taking place in city-regions, providing power for regional entities to operate using place-based approaches. Nationally in England, the need to develop sustainable partnerships to deliver social outcomes through the use of sport and physical activity is evident: to address physical health, mental health, individual, community and economic development (DCMS, 2015). Sport England has engaged with local government and regional entities such as the GMCA and NHSGM (Rowley, 2016a) during the devolution process. In addition to 12 confirmed pilot projects across the country (Sport

England, 2017), within GM this has resulted in the formation of the executive programme board (Rowley, 2016a) the GM Moving Executive Group (Lever, 2017: presentation). Ferkins et al. (2005:219) suggest that:

> Understanding the factors that both constrain and enable sports boards to think and act strategically may provide an empirical basis to build their strategic capabilities.

To understand influences that enable and constrain boards, this research will need to focus on the experience and insider perspectives of the board and relevant stakeholders surrounding the partnership. Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) highlight that the role of the researcher is to use research methods that gain insider perspectives and seek to understand the ongoing processes of the board. The use of insider-participant perspectives through an interpretive approach is also supported by Parker in research on processual and institutional perspectives on boardroom strategizing (Parker, 2007).

The approach that is deemed most suitable for this type of study is qualitative and interpretive, in the sense that the focus will be on developing shared understanding (Crotty, 1998) of effective partnership practice, due to the unique nature of this partnership. The partnership is deemed unique as it is the first time Sport England have engaged in partnership with a regional combined authority and health and social care organisations. Developing a shared understanding is important because, from an interpretive perspective, objectivity is nothing more than social agreement (Smith, 1983), as in quantitative research. This interpretive approach will not aim to predict or test a hypothesis as in positivist research, but seeks to describe and explore current practice in the partnership (Myers, 2013). Support for the use of a qualitative and interpretive method has been found at the macro, meso and micro levels of this research.

At the macro level, support for the use of a qualitative method in this research stems from the acknowledgement in the literature review that sport is a social construct and that different people understand the term in different ways (Wilson and Piekarz, 2015), which suggests different perspectives in different contexts. The notion that people understand terms in different ways is supported by a relativist ontology, which posits that realities are social constructions of the mind. Moreover, variations in previous perspectives on the demonstration effect vs active childhoods, and elite development vs social

outcomes, have shifted whole strategies and consequently funding mechanisms and approaches to implementation in sport policy. It could be argued that the role of perspective in national government and quangos such as Sport England has resulted in shifts in strategy, thus offering support for the view that perspective plays a crucial role in community sport in England. For example, it could be argued that policy and strategy is socially constructed based on the beliefs of individuals in the DCMS (and subsequently Sport England) around the correct approach to achieve outcomes. The same argument can be put forward in GM, with sport and physical activity strategy being determined by individuals in GMCA and organisations co-funded by GM and Sport England (such as Greater Sport), while also taking into account consultation and perspectives from stakeholders in local authorities. This would further support the view that the reality of what is happening in GM is socially constructed and subjective in nature.

Support for the interpretive approach and the notion of reality being socially constructed is also found in the governance literature. Tricker (2015) suggests that definitions of governance are dependent on perspective, proposing four perspectives: operational, relationship, stakeholder and social; all four perspectives are evident in the literature on strategic capability and partnerships. Dowling (2018) identifies seven different definitions of sport governance and three different types, as documented in Section 2.1. The varying definitions, dependent on perspective, highlight the subjective nature of governance as socially constructed and remove the plausibility of there being any universal truth in this context that would support positivist research.

The importance of context plays a central role throughout the review of the literature. For example, the WHO promotes a healthy-settings approach, where a whole-system approach is used in a given context. Similarly, Houlihan (2015) highlights the significance of understanding delivery in context. In addition, context takes the centre of the framework of board strategic balance, to denote the important contextual issues on which strategic capability is delicately balanced (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). Furthermore, it is evident from the literature review that different governance mechanisms are used depending on context and the perspective of actors within each setting. These include hierarchical, market and network governance, with each type having

pros and cons depending on context (Stoker, 2006). The use of network governance is supported by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) in their strategic capability framework. However, delving deeper into network governance, it is evident that different types of network governance are used depending on context and perspective. For example, in situations characterised by shared goals, high levels of trust and low-level membership of the board, a participant-governed approach is favoured, while in situations where there are varying goals, low levels of trust and larger boards, a lead organisation is selected, despite this resulting in a form of hierarchy (Provan and Kenis, 2007). The potential variations between types of governance (and network governance being a central aspect of strategic capability theory) highlights its subjective nature. At the macro level, it has been found that perspectives on sport and governance differ; this, in addition to the importance of contextual factors, especially when using place-based approaches, provides support for the use of an interpretive approach.

Support for an interpretive approach is also found at the meso level. For example, following a network governance approach, importance is placed on three types of relationship: intra-organisational (i.e. between board members and management), inter-organisational (i.e. between the partner organisations) and extra-organisational (i.e. with external stakeholders such as customers and service providers); Nicholson and Kiel (2004) similarly identify intra-board, board-to-management and extra-organisational relationships. Relationships are also cited by Tricker (2012:4):

> Governance covers the activities of the board, and its relationships with shareholders or members, and with those managing the enterprise, as well as other legitimate stakeholders.

Thus, the wide range of relationships emphasises the variety of perspectives of individuals involved in the governance process. Differing perspectives are also found by Babiak (2007); however, she identifies that stakeholders with common interests and goals can lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness in inter-organisational relationships.

A further aspect of relationships relates to the challenges created by the complex nature of multiple stakeholders having differing interests and goals. Managing differing interests and goals is of critical importance in the functioning of effective partnerships, due to the emphasis placed on shared

goals, values and outcomes (Coalter, 2013; Harris and Houlihan, 2016). Shared goals, values and outcomes are also found by Ferkins and Shilbury (2010:236), who highlight:

> …the issue of stakeholder representation and the extent to which the board assimilates the views of individuals and groups affected by the work of the organisation.

However, it must be acknowledged that differences in language and communication between individuals in different organisations create barriers to relationships (DeLeon, 1995). Different language and communication styles demonstrate the complexity of understanding different perspectives and the requirement for shared understanding. The reason shared understanding is important is that from an interpretive perspective, objectivity is nothing more than social agreement based on shared values and interests (Smith, 1983).

The strategic capability framework also illustrates the importance of micro-level influences based on individual experiences and perspectives. The role of personal experience is supported by Castanias and Helfat (2001) and Nicholson and Kiel (2004), who assert that the ability of the board depends on the expertise and capability of members to fully comprehend a situation which, it is suggested, has a direct impact on board effectiveness. In addition to knowledge of strategy, Ferkins and Shilbury (2012, 2015a) emphasise the importance of operational knowledge. Ferkins and Shilbury's research builds on Edwards and Cornforth (2003), who note that strategic issues are often brought to light by understanding operational details. The requirement for understanding operational information suggests that board members' ability to make strategic decisions is enhanced by individual experience that can develop their social construction and ability to think and act strategically. Similarly, the legitimacy of board members (i.e. the perception that board members have the correct technical expertise to function) is also proposed as an influence, and is required both externally (so that stakeholders buy into the partnership) and internally, especially concerning the function of the partnership. It has been found that if internal legitimacy, based on the merging of different cultures, values and co-objectives, is not maintained, function may be difficult to maintain and trust cannot be developed, with a direct effect on relationships (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a); this highlights the importance of personal experience and shared understanding. It has been found that at the

micro level, inputs are based on social construction, developed from the board members' individual experiences (which impact their ability to think and act strategically), and the social constructions of people external to the partnership and their perspective on the legitimacy of the board members and the partnership. The importance of perspective and context has been outlined from macro, meso and micro levels. The review provides support for the requirement to develop a deeper understanding of strategic capability theory and partnership working through empirical research using a qualitative approach to provide rich data in the real-world setting of community sport in GM.

4.3 Qualitative approach

Due to the focus on context, perspective and understanding throughout the literature, the method that is proposed as suitable for this type of study is qualitative and interpretive (Crotty, 1998; Grix, 2010; Atkinson, 2012). A decentred approach, similar to Lindsey (2014), has been adopted for this research.

> To decentre is to highlight the diversity of an aggregate concept by unpacking the actual and contingent beliefs and actions of those individuals who fall under it.
>
> (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003:3)

Lindsey (2014) suggests this requires collecting the different perspectives of the individuals involved in order to develop understanding. The qualitative method will aim to be responsive to different claims, concerns and issues of individual stakeholders, each holding different constructions; however, each group must confront the constructions of all the others through a process of hermeneutic dialectic, i.e. the interpretation and investigation of diverse perspectives (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). It is important to acknowledge that this research will use an individualising method, rather than the generalising method used in positivist research (Crotty, 1998). This interpretive approach will not predict or test hypotheses in the way of positivist research, but aims to describe and explore current practice in the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM, using the strategic capability framework as a guide (Myers, 2013).

Using an interpretive approach, linguistic, rather than mathematical, data will be collected, through interviews. It will therefore be vital to ensure attention is paid to the language used by both researcher and participants. Dummett (1993) identifies that the way in which we describe our thoughts is through language and that this conveys our perception of reality. In light of this, particular attention must be paid to removing any ambiguity between the participants and the researcher. Further, the background and context to the literature review acknowledges the requirement to focus on a particular place or setting. As such attempting to find a generalisable solution could lead to failing to devise solutions with local meaning that meet the needs of local people (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The focus of interpretive research is to make descriptions and interpretations of society available in consultable records, not to generate truth or social laws. The focus here is to provide 'thick description' of details in the study, such as subjects, location, methods and role (Bryman, 2016). By providing thick description in a consultable record, the reader can make judgements on whether the findings are transferable to their particular research setting (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bryman, 2016); in addition, findings are transferable to similar projects, such as (in the case of the present study) the 12 pilot partnerships being introduced by Sport England. The research findings will also generalise to theory (Walsham, 1995); to enable a revised framework and theory development, a retroductive approach has been used, incorporating deduction and induction. A deductive approach has enabled the application of the existing framework of strategic capability as a lens through which to explore the real-life context of community sport in England; however, the research does not aim to confirm or disprove theory on strategic capability, but simply uses the constructs to guide data collection. The use of induction has made sense of the data and ensured that themes can emerge from the enquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These emergent themes have supported the development of a revised conceptualisation and a developed theory for board strategic capability in the community sport context. Following this approach, the selection of the correct research design and data collection techniques was key to enabling the capture of the empirical evidence that contributes to the research aim and objectives.

4.4 Research design

Following an interpretive approach, the appropriate method to capture empirical data in this setting is the case study, i.e. (Myers, 2013:78):

> …research that uses empirical evidence from one or more organisations where the attempt is made to study the subject matter in context.

The use of the case study design is supported by Willig's (2001:74) suggestion that single-case designs are useful when 'applying existing theories to real-world data'. Similarly, support is provided by Eisenhardt (1989) and Walsham (1995), who suggest the case study is particularly useful when looking at what are perceived as new topics, when theory building is required. It is proposed that this is representative of this research applying the strategic capability framework to a real-life community sport context in GM and developing a revised conceptualisation of strategic capability based on this context.

4.4.1 Case study

The case study in this research is the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (Rowley, 2016a) (the Partnership), within the context of community sport in GM. Following an embedded case study design, the individual organisations will act as individual units of analysis (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Illustrates the partnership case study

Although it is argued in some research that there is a hierarchy of evidence, with randomised control trials being seen as good and multi-centre studies being seen as excellent, while case studies are seen as poor (Evans, 2002), there is a strong argument for the use of case studies in exploring partnerships

in non-profit and community sport (Babiak, 2009; Lindsey, 2013; Harris and Houlihan, 2016). The use of single case studies is supported when cases are rare or unique (Edwards and Skinner, 2009). The partnership used in this research is unique, as it is the first of its kind in England, making the use of a single case study an appropriate approach to provide a rich description of the phenomenon under study (Meriam, 1998). Further support is provided by Willig (2001), who (as acknowledged earlier) supports the use of case studies in the application of existing theory to real-world data, which is represented in this research applying the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance to a real-life community sport context in GM. The case study also facilitates the identification of factors that enable and constrain the strategic contribution of the GM Moving Executive Group. This position is supported by Eisenhardt (1989) and Walsham (1995), who suggest that the case study is particularly useful when looking at what are perceived as new topics, when theory building is required. Myers (2013) finds that case studies are particularly helpful in convincing other researchers of the applicability of a particular theory or proposition. Furthermore, the case study approach has been adopted by leading governance research authors in their studies of collaborative sport governance (O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2016). It has been claimed that when using case study research to illustrate concepts and generalise to theory, using three or four case studies is no more convincing than using one (Eisenhardt, 1991); however, Stake (1995, 2006) suggests that using multiple cases offers multiple perspectives on the issue. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate that the use of multiple perspectives contributes to a deeper understanding, highlighting a potential limitation of this research if only a single case study is used. Taking the requirement for multiple perspectives into account, perspectives on the GM Moving Executive Group have been gained from three different areas (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Illustrates the areas of data collection
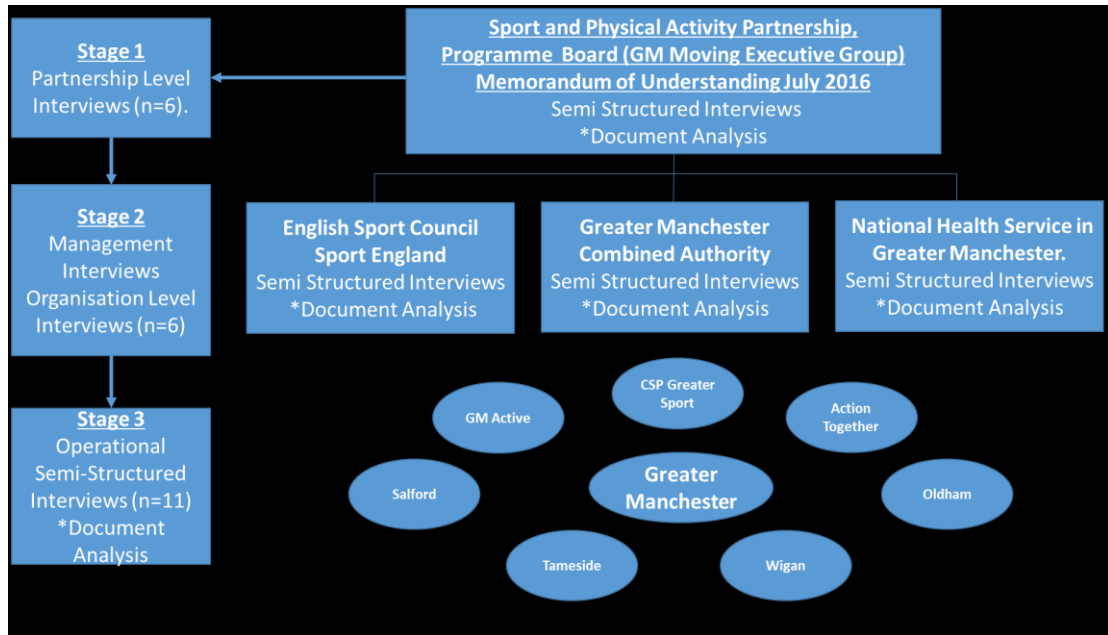
Full information on each stage depicted in Figure 5 is detailed in Section 4.5.2 and appendices 2, 5 and 6. In brief, this diagram illustrates that perspectives have been gained from multiple areas, including the members of the GM Moving Executive Group, management employees from each organisation forming the Partnership and key stakeholders in the local authorities where the work of the Partnership will be delivered. The use of an interpretive case study has allowed the researcher to present their own constructions, as well as those of all the participants, emphasising the researcher's role in the study. Further supporting the case study approach and use of interviews is the requirement that human interpretation is of central importance to practice, especially in partnerships where inter-organisational relationships are required (Walsham, 1995). Support has been provided here for the use of case studies and specifically a single case study approach, while the methodological limitations have been acknowledged. Single case studies are widely used in PhD research as, in addition to aiding feasibility, the depth and context improve the chances of producing useful findings, in comparison to multiple case studies with limited depth and reduced opportunity for valuable insights (Grix, 2010). Furthermore, the unique nature of the Partnership supports the use of a single case study approach and provides the opportunity to develop understanding of the phenomenon and produce a conceptualisation based on this context (Grix, 2010). The in-depth approach of the single case

study is also useful when attempting to advance theory. Critically, in developing theory, care has been taken in the interpretive research to ensure the case has not become disconnected from the theoretical literature (Grix, 2010) on strategic capability.

Action research was utilised in the research by Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015) that proposes the framework for strategic capability and theory of board strategic balance. Despite the evident benefit of this approach, it was deemed that action research and the development of an intervention were out of the reach of this PhD thesis, as only 22 months were available for the completion of data collection and writing up, and the identification of a problem and introduction of an intervention were not feasible within this time period. The case study approach in this research, unlike in action research, did not intervene but aimed to describe and explore the phenomenon (using the strategic capability framework as a guide) to provide a persuasive analysis. The interpretive approach is supported here, as the study did not aim to test the framework or theory but instead to describe a real-world setting, using the framework as a guide (Myers, 2013).

The rationale for defining research objectives when using an interpretive case study approach is the same as it is when hypothesis testing in positivist studies: without a research focus it is easy to become overwhelmed by the data. The requirement for focused research has also guided this researcher to identify the Partnership and the kind of data to be gathered (Eisenhardt, 1991). A key advantage of the case study method is the illustration of real-life events, providing a deep and broad view to enable useful interpretation (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 1998). It has been important to identify in an engaging manner, interesting, sufficient and complete evidence with alternative perspectives (Myers, 2013). The use of an interpretive case study has allowed the researcher to present their personal constructions as well as those of all the participants. The focus of interpretive case study research is to make these descriptions and interpretations available in a consultable record, rather than to generate truth or social laws; this clearly distinguishes the interpretive approach from the positivist tradition.

Despite the numerous benefits of using case study research identified, it is necessary to acknowledge several disadvantages. These include the difficulty

in accessing organisations; also, the difficulty for the researcher in controlling real-life situations, such as changes in approach from organisations in the Partnership. Additionally, as this research is carried out by a doctoral researcher, there has been a temptation to think that everything is relevant, which highlights the importance of using a theoretical framework to guide the research, data collection and analysis. Despite being less time consuming than other approaches, collecting data over three stages required efficient use of time and demanded the researcher's enthusiasm and commitment, in addition to the practical application of skills developed through the doctoral training programme (Myers, 2013). The data management skills developed avoided what Pettigrew (1988) calls death by data asphyxiation. Crucially, it was essential to avoid being swayed by elite respondents (Miles and Huberman, 1994) or dropping disconfirming evidence to fit prior conceptions (Nisbett and Ross, 1980). Drawing from a range of perspectives helped to resolve this, and it was important to look beyond initial impressions.

It must also be acknowledged that, despite entering the field with a particular framework, no construct was guaranteed a place in the resultant theory (Eisenhardt, 1991). For example, six influences are identified in Ferkins and Shilbury's (2015a) framework for strategic capability and detailed in Section 2.2.; despite these acting as a guide, they were not guaranteed a place in the developed theory. It is important to acknowledge that the findings may conflict with the literature but must nonetheless be explored, to give confidence in the findings and provide an opportunity for creative frame-breaking modes of thinking, thus providing more in-depth insight and sharpening the generalisability of findings (Myers, 2013). It is important to acknowledge that, with the subjective and context-dependent nature of this research, findings are not intended to be generalised universally; as with previous research by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a), there will be no attempt made to develop a universal hypothesis. In contrast, the focus will be to produce context-specific knowledge that may be transferred to other relevant situations (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015), exploring the ability of boards to function and the development potential of boards to think and act in a strategic manner. It is deemed in this research that, due to local context and practice in a particular place, context-specific knowledge holds more value than universal theory for social settings; this is in contrast to the perception that context-independent knowledge has

more value, resulting in contextual factors being controlled (Flyvberg, 2006). Hence the desirability that the researcher maintains a degree of openness and a willingness to modify initial assumptions and theories, which may result in expansion, revision or abandonment of concepts in a revised conceptualisation (Walsham, 1995). The research sample will now be explored in detail.

4.4.2 Research sample

The partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (the Partnership) has been identified as the case study based on its similarity to previous research looking at integration between a national sport organisation and regional entities (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). Although (as highlighted) the contexts are different, the theoretical concept of a national sport organisation integrating with regional entities to develop its capability is aligned. It could be argued that the CSP Greater Sport would be a more suitable fit as a case study; however, it was after exploring this partnership that the GM Moving Executive group was identified, where integration between regional and national entities was apparent in the newly formed board. Furthermore, at the time of data collection the Partnership and its board were unique in England in exploring how the new Sporting Future strategy steered Sport England to partner with regional entities, especially in areas where devolution was developing (DCMS, 2015). It could be argued that as the newly formed Partnership is not a legal entity, the framework provided by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) is not relevant; however, the use of network (or systemic) governance (Henry and Lee, 2004) as the central construct is not confined to legal entities and advocates the use of a wider range of organisations in a policy network, making the following case study a suitable sample.

The case study selected to explore strategic capability is the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM, as outlined in the MoU of July 2016 (Rowley, 2016a). This partnership provides a framework that enables effective governance across the ten local authorities of GM. The rationale of the Partnership is to:

> Provide an agreed framework to work together to develop an insight and behaviour change approach to sport and physical activity partnerships across Greater Manchester in order to impact on the health, social and economic outcomes for the area. The framework will

provide an approach to explore delivery of both the government's and Sport England's strategies for sport and Physical activity at the Greater Manchester level while contributing to the strategic priorities of Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the National Health Service on Greater Manchester.

<div align="right">(GMHSCP, 2016:2)</div>

This partnership is the first of a range of pilot projects in which Sport England are engaging with regional entities, as highlighted by the DCMS (2015:14):

> Sport England will, following a competitive bidding round, pilot focusing significant resources, including intensive staff input, to support development and implementation of local physical activity strategies in a number of selected geographic areas. These areas will have identified physical inactivity as a key priority through their Health and Wellbeing Strategies and will have close co-operation between all relevant local agencies, for example through new devolution deals.

As the above Partnership with GM is the first of its kind, it provides a unique case study for exploring the central concept of strategic capability: that national sport organisations can develop their ability to function by integrating with regional entities (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). The unique nature of the Partnership and similarities with the theoretical framework developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) make it an ideal sample through which to explore strategic capability in a new context, i.e. the community sport context in GM.

This study used purposive sampling, which is supported in case study research (Jupp and Oliver, 2011), to collect the necessary information. In order to explore the Partnership, a suite of interviews was required from multiple areas with a range of perspectives on the development and operation of the Partnership and its programme board the GM Moving Executive Group (Figure 5). The selection of appropriate participants was supported by the Chief Executive of Greater Sport, based on their knowledge of the programme board; subsequently, each board member recommended two management level employees as research participants; while locality representatives were identified by their positions as leisure providers and commissioners of sport and physical activity in GM. Together, these make up the three areas of data collection. Details of each area of data collection are provided in Section 3.5.1.

4.5 Data collection

To attempt to understand how people construct and understand reality in a given context, the two techniques selected and appropriate to this type of research are interviews and document analysis (Atkinson, 2012). Semi-structured interviews are the ideal technique to enable guided conversations using open (as opposed to structured) questions. To identify the appropriate technique, three interview styles were explored: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Structured interviews follow a strict and pre-determined line of questioning, typically focusing on the same set of closed questions, resulting in a restricted range of responses, such as 'Yes' or 'No'. The same set of questions are repeated to all participants, enabling answers to be compared, categorised and statistically analysed (Grix, 2010; Bryman, 2016). The benefit of a restricted line of questioning is that standardised questions and answers result in reduced error when asking questions: the list provides a useful guide, particularly for the novice researcher (Grix, 2010; Bryman, 2016). Additionally, the results produced are seen to be more accurate, enabling close comparison, easier processing and statistical analysis (Grix, 2010; Bryman, 2016). However, the lack of flexibility in structured interviews reduces the chance of emergent themes developing during interviews and restricts findings to the pre-determined list of questions (Grix, 2010). The standardised format makes the structured interview an ideal tool for surveys or techniques related to quantitative study, which produce little variation or error (Bryman, 2016), but it was felt to be unsuitable for this research, which aimed to explore different perspectives and understanding.

Semi-structured interviews, also known as in-depth interviews (Yin, 2009; Grix, 2010), differ from the structured interview in that they provide some flexibility. A list of questions is identified before the interview, based on the research aim, objectives and conceptual framework identified during the literature review (Ayres, 2008). (The approach of exploring a pre-identified conceptual framework or theory to the data is known as deduction.) However, the questions are flexible, and the researcher has a choice of whether or not to follow the list of questions. If required, the order of questioning can be adapted during the interview to explore emergent information not identified in the initial

question list (Ayres, 2008; Grix, 2010). The flexible nature of the semi-structured interview enables the researcher to keep an open mind about new information, and this may allow new concepts and theories to emerge from the data (Bryman, 2016). The process of information, concepts and theory emerging from the data is known as induction, and is common in qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). Using semi-structured interviews follows both a deductive approach (by developing an initial conceptual framework and set of questions) and also enables the process of induction (by permitting new information, concepts and theory to emerge from the data). The term 'retroduction' has been used to define the interplay of the two processes of deduction and induction (Ragin, 1994: 47; Grix, 2010).

The unstructured interview does not follow any pre-set list of questions. The interviewer may have a range of topics to be covered or just one; they generally start with one open-ended question and then respond to the interviewee's answers in an informal manner within an open conversation (Bryman, 2016). A key benefit of this approach is the opportunity to gain rich depth of understanding about the interviewee's perspective; it can be useful for both interviewer and interviewee, as areas that have not previously been thought of are allowed to develop (Grix, 2010). This style of interview also enables in-depth reflection on previous events (Bryman, 2016); however, the random direction that conversations may take, depending on the interviewee's perspective and social constructions, make the comparison of interviews less reliable and may create complications during the analysis process due to the potential for different lines of conversation in each interview (Grix, 2010).

The use of interviews to gain personal experience is highlighted by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a), as insider perspectives are required to document participants' tacit knowledge (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015) based on their context and in relation to the themes identified in the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance. It is important to acknowledge that using interviews creates challenges for the reliability of the data that requires interpretation of meaning by the researcher; interviewee responses may have different meanings or may be interpreted in different ways in the light of other evidence (Barbour and Schostak, 2005). Interpretation of meaning is key to the analysis of interview texts, where the

researcher recontextualises verbatim quotes and relates them to the wider context to develop understanding (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2016). To protect against variations in interpretation, an impositional strategy was used (Barbour and Schostak, 2005), drawing questions around the themes of the theoretical framework developed by experts in the field of sport governance, Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a), over 13 years of research. These questions were discussed with the supervisory team before being used on the research participants. Open-ended (rather than closed) questions were used, thus creating a semi-structured interview (Barbour and Schostak, 2005).

The semi-structured or in-depth approach was seen as the most appropriate interview technique for collecting the data required to achieve the aims and objectives of this research. Semi-structured interviews enabled the theoretical framework developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) to be used as a guide for producing the interview questions. (The interview questions used as a guide for this research are detailed in Appendix 1.) The interviews explored the range of influences outlined in the theory of board strategic balance (Figure 3b), while remaining open to the emergence of new information and concepts. In addition, probing questions were used during the interviews to gain perceived facts of the matter as well as the opinions of each interviewee (Yin, 2009). Importantly, the flexibility of the semi-structured approach enabled personal views to be expressed, providing the rich context needed for this research. A flexible approach also allowed information and concepts to emerge from the data to give an accurate description of the case study and present opportunities for theoretical development. It is suggested that with this type of case study research, 20–30 interviews should be conducted (Creswell, 1998). In total, 23 interviews have been completed, providing an acceptable sample size. All semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim and used as the leading primary source of data, i.e. data that has arisen as a product of the research process (Grix, 2010). Support for the use of interviews for sport governance research is provided by leading authors in the field using interviews as their primary source of data (O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2018: 336):

> Semi-structured interviews lend themselves well to fostering a greater understanding of the enablers and barriers to these systems on which little is known.

4.5.1 Entering the field

Three areas of data collection have been used to collect empirical evidence (Figure 5). The data collection took place over 12 months and was conducted from December, 2016 to December, 2017 (Appendix 2). The empirical research took place in the community sport context in GM, UK and consisted of three areas:

- Board interviews, giving insider perspectives of the members of the programme board the GM Moving Executive Group at its formation.
- Management interviews, giving perspectives of management-level employees from each organisation in the Partnership on the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group.
- Operational interviews with providers and commissioners of sport and physical activity from across GM, giving their perspectives on the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group and their value to the sport and physical activity agenda in GM.

The first area of data collection included interviews with members of the programme board documented in the MoU and later named the GM Moving Executive Group (Lever, 2017: presentation), which represents the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (the Partnership). NHSGM was renamed the GM Health and Social Care Partnership (GMHSCP) in 2016. The renaming follows an MoU between the NHS England, the Association of GM Authorities and the Clinical Commissioning Groups in GM (GMHSCP, 2016). The new name emphasises the wider social determinants of health; However, for this research both NHSGM and GMHSCP will be used, in accordance with the empirical data i.e. NHSGM being used in the partnership MoU, but under new branding now known as GMHSCP.

Stage one explored the Partnership and its programme board as documented in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a) and illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Illustrates the partner organisations and six founding members of the programme board (GM Moving Executive Group)
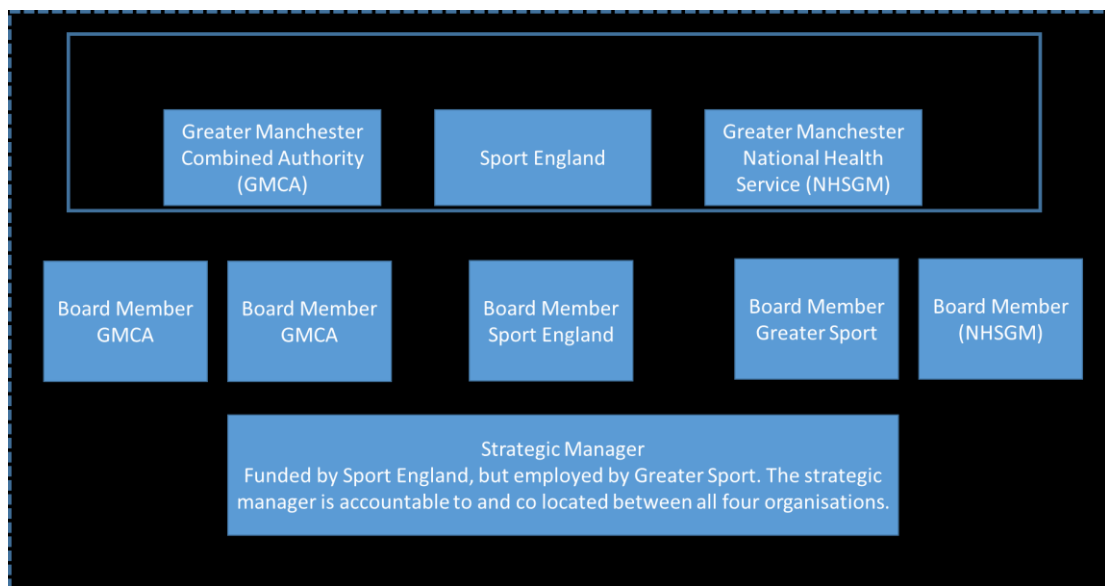
Board-level interviewees consisted of members of the GM Moving Executive Group at the time of board-level data collection (December, 2016 to March, 2017), and included: the Chief Executive of Tameside Council; Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA; Joint Chair for the Health and Social Care Commissioning Board and Chair of the GM Moving Leadership Group; the CEO for Greater Sport; the Strategic Manager for the Partnership; the Deputy Director of Population Health; the Executive Director of Community Sport for Sport England; and the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA.

Document analysis of key policy, strategies, plans and reports (see Section 4.5.2 and Appendix 5) were also incorporated to corroborate the interviews and provide a richer context for the study. The intention of stage one was to gain insider perspectives on the macro-level contextual factors surrounding the formation of the Partnership and the meso- and micro-level enablers and constraints to partnership-working from members of the GM Moving Executive Group.

Stage two consisted of interviews with two management-level employees from each partner organisation documented in the MoU, including: the Local Government Relationship Manager for Sport England; the Strategic Manager for the Partnership; a Strategic Lead for the GMCA; a Policy Officer for GMCA; the Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development for GMHSCP; and

the Population Health Project Manager for GMHSCP. The Strategic Manager for the Partnership was been interviewed multiple times, as Sport England only provided one direct employee for interview; however, the Strategic Manager, employed by Greater Sport, is funded by Sport England, and essentially operates across multiple levels between board and management and is co-located and accountable to each partner organisation, making this a fundamental role to the Partnership. The second interview with the Strategic Manager took place over two meetings, as documented in Appendix 2. Documentary analysis was also incorporated to corroborate interviews and provide a richer context. The focus of stage two was to gain management perspectives on the contextual factors surrounding the Partnership and to identify enablers and constraints from the perspective of members of each organisation.

Stage three consisted of 11 interviews with providers and commissioners of sport and physical activity across GM. Interviewees included: the Strategic Partnership and Development Manager for GM Active; the CEO for Active Tameside; the CEO for Oldham Community Leisure; the CEO for Salford Community Leisure; the Head of Strategy and Performance for Salford Community Leisure; the Director of Public Health for Tameside (who is also the Chair of the Directors of Public Health Group in GM); the Place Development Manager for Sport and Physical Activity for Greater Sport; the CEO of Action Together, which represents more than 1000 local charities and community groups across GM; the Programme Manager for Public Health Wigan; the Health Commissioner for Oldham; and the Managing Director of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, Wigan.

It is acknowledged that technically the Place Development Manager for Greater Sport is not a commissioner or provider; however, after they were given responsibility for the first allocation of funds to the Partnership by the GM Moving Executive Group, they were viewed as a key player in the Partnership and were included as a commissioner for the purpose of this research. Documentary analysis was also incorporated to corroborate interviews and provide a richer context. The focus of stage three was to gain perspectives from providers and commissioners of physical activity that fund, manage and deliver sport and physical activity in GM local authorities. The representative

of the voluntary sector interviewed works in the localities of GM and was also selected to be a member of the GM Moving Executive Group. Their selection for the GM Moving Executive Group provides insight into the voluntary sector during progression by Sport England towards an organisational neutral approach. The Sport and Physical Activity Commissioner in Oldham was also selected for a position on the GM Moving Executive Group, providing local-commissioner insight. The voluntary sector representative and local health commissioner were added to the GM Moving Executive Group after board-level data collection had been completed (Figure 7) and, as a result, were included in this research as operational-level providers and commissioners. However, due to their position on multiple boards in GM, including the GM Moving Executive Group, the Commissioners' Group and the Reform Board, they were able to provide valuable perspectives across multiple levels in the GM governance architecture.

Figure 7: Illustrates the revised programme board (GM Moving Executive Group) and strategic management capacity at stage 3 of data collection
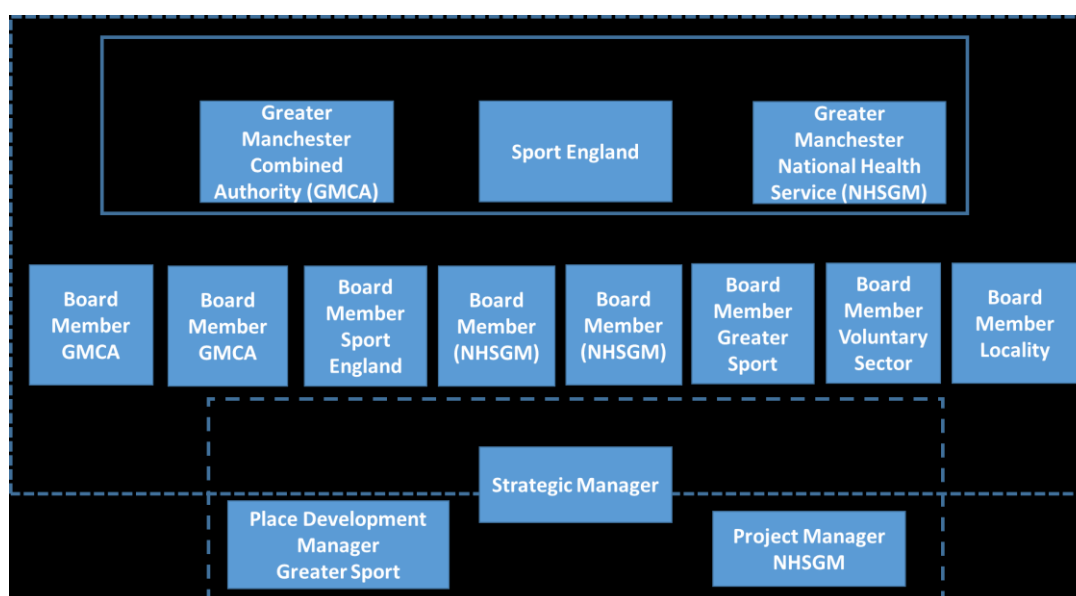
By stage three of data collection the programme board (GM Moving Executive Group) had grown to include additional GMHSCP, voluntary sector and local health commissioner representatives. In addition, additional strategic management capacity had been provided by GMHSCP and Greater Sport (funded via the GM Ageing Hub, GMCA).

To facilitate access to data, the researcher first approached the regional CSP, Greater Sport, to explore the current state of play within community sport in GM. As an organisation they 'broker and facilitate relationships to encourage genuine collaboration in Greater Manchester' (Greater Sport, 2018: online), thus providing an obvious starting place for this research. The Director of Studies for the research arranged an introductory phone call for the researcher with the CEO of Greater Sport. This conversation led to the arrangement of several meetings with key development managers and officers, which developed the researcher's understanding of what was happening in the area of community sport in GM. The researcher also took several volunteering opportunities to support Greater Sport and build rapport with the organisation. During one meeting with the Place Development Manager, five meetings were arranged with key stakeholders in sport and physical activity in GM. It was during these meetings that the research was refocused, from an impact evaluation of sport and physical activity partnerships, to an exploration of strategic capability in the new partnership between Sport England, GMCA and the NHSGM, based on the alignment of the theoretical framework with the Partnership as a case study.

To facilitate exploration of the Partnership, an in-depth interview was conducted with the reporting officer of the Partnership, who also signposted the researcher to the contact officer of the Partnership, who in turn provided an in-depth interview and sent out an introductory email to the GM Moving Executive Group members. From this email, interviews were arranged with those members. During the same period, the Strategic Manager for the Partnership was introduced to the researcher and a meeting was arranged. Following in-depth interviews with the GM Moving Executive Group members, suggestions were made and introductions arranged for two key members of each partner organisation to provide interviews for the second stage of research. In the second stage of research two interviews were completed with management employees in each partner organisation, except for Sport England, whose second recommendation declined an interview due to taking voluntary redundancy. The Strategic Manager, however, granted a second interview to fill this void; this was appropriate, as the Strategic Manager is funded by Sport England, despite being employed by Greater Sport and co-located across all organisations in the Partnership. Following interviews with

the partner organisations, interviews were sought with providers and commissioners of sport and physical activity in GM. Emails were sent to CEOs of leisure trusts and health commissioners in the ten localities in GM, with four localities responding. The Strategic Manager provided a third meeting at the final stage and also arranged interviews with key stakeholders from the voluntary sector and a health commissioner (both of whom had been awarded positions on the GM Moving Executive Group), as well as a development manager at Greater Sport who had been appointed in an additional strategic-management capacity and was in control of the first allocation of partnership funds for Active Ageing. The Place Development Manager was funded by the Ageing Hub, GMCA.

Support from the CEO of Greater Sport in particular and the team at Greater Sport, and later the Strategic Manager for the Partnership, was fundamental to gaining access. This support resolved the issues faced by many researchers of gaining a 'foot in the door' and obtaining personal accounts of events (Mikecz, 2012). However, once access was gained, the researcher had to work carefully to build rapport with each participant, while at the same time ensuring that a critical distance was maintained to reduce the risk of bias (Mikecz, 2012). Initially, emails were drafted and sent to each participant, to outline the nature of the research and arrange a suitable time for the interview. To encourage participation, the decision on the location of the interview was left with the participant, resulting in the majority of interviews taking place at the work locations of the participants. However, several interviews took place at Manchester Metropolitan University and several took place in neutral locations. The length of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour 50 minutes, depending on the level of detail the participants were willing to provide and the amount of time they had available. Interview questions were prepared in advance (see Appendix 1). The researcher influenced the direction of the interviews in line with the semi-structured interview approach, but remained flexible to allow for following the direction of participants' responses; due to the elite level of the participants, they were the ones in the know (Mikecz, 2012). Each interview was recorded and transcribed to enable detailed analysis and cross-referencing with secondary documents. The data collected from the interviews was corroborated with secondary documents, to provide a balanced approach (Grix, 2010).

4.5.2 Document analysis

With data collected from interviews there is a potential for researcher bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulation (Yin, 2009). In addition to the use of an impositional strategy using themes identified by experts in the field of sport governance, as previously acknowledged, it was important to corroborate the data collected (and the researcher's interpretation of said data) with relevant secondary data, to provide context to the study and aid the interpretation of meaning. Secondary data is any data produced by others about the same case (Grix, 2010). Essentially, this enables the primary data collected through interviews to be cross-examined with policy and strategy documents that have been published (Grix, 2010). The process followed in this research was the review of key strategy and policy documents to provide context to the research; in Chapter 4 interview extracts are used to emphasise the information found in the document analysis, which sets the scene. Further, once the themes had been identified from the verbatim text and interview transcription (see thematic table, Appendix 7), the documents were analysed to identify supporting or contradictory evidence. This was seen as the most suitable approach to corroborate interviews, as observation of board meetings was not permitted. Support for this approach is provided by Grix (2010) and Yin (2014), who suggest the contribution of secondary data to the research is the provision of context and confirmation or disconfirmation of the findings from interviews (i.e. support and confirmation of the interviews, or bringing into question the validity of the findings or the researcher's interpretation of those findings). It was important to select documents for analysis with care, to ensure they were able to provide reliable corroboration, being both related to the case being studied and comparable (Grix, 2010). The possible range of secondary data for the documents analysis includes (Yin, 2009:103):

- Policy statements, strategies and plans.
- Agendas, minutes, announcements, written reports of events.
- Administrative documents – proposals, progress reports, and other internal records.
- Formal studies or evaluations of the same cases being studied.
- News clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or community newspapers.
- Websites and online material.

Despite secondary data being a stable and robust source of evidence, it is important to acknowledge that access to some data was withheld, creating selectivity and reporting bias (Yin, 2009): access was not granted to email correspondence and personal documents, such as diaries, calendars and notes; in addition, access was not granted to agendas and minutes of meetings. Despite this, a wide range of documents were made available, including policies, strategies, plans, written reports of events, progress reports, formal studies and initial consultations. In addition, information was gained from websites and continuous monitoring of news articles and social media throughout the research process. A full list of documents analysed can be found in Appendix 5.

4.6 Data analysis

There are a range of approaches and techniques available for analysing qualitative data using coding. Coding can be defined as a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments and identifies or names categories or themes (Schwandt, 1997). First, a choice must be made between a literal (i.e. focusing on exact language and grammar), interpretive (i.e. attempting understand the meaning in the data) or reflexive (i.e. the researcher's understanding) approach (Welsh, 2002).

This research will attempt to interpret meaning using an interpretive approach to analysis. The range of coding techniques available for interpretive analysis includes: bottom-up coding, mid-range coding, thematic coding and top-down coding (Urquhart, 2012). Bottom-up coding lets concepts and themes emerge from the data, rather than them being pre-determined as developed in the literature. To enable themes to emerge from the data, a line-by-line technique is commonly used, providing rigour to the research. A benefit of the line-by-line approach to identifying themes that emerge from the data is that the bottom-up approach can provide new information and understanding and is widely known as the grounded theory method (Urquhart, 2012).

In many instances, the bottom-up approach does not lead to theory development (Urquhart, 2012). An alternative to this approach is where codes are pre-determined by the literature, for application to the data; however, in some cases of top-down coding, codes that emerge from the data are permitted in the write up (Urquhart, 2012). A combination of bottom-up coding

and top-down coding is known as mid-range coding. Using the mid-range technique, categories from the literature and common-sense categories that emerge are grouped; when groups of categories develop, they become themes (Urquhart, 2012). Themes identify some level of meaning or pattern that has overall importance with regards to the aims and objectives of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis uses both bottom-up and top-down techniques to explore and develop large categories, known as themes. There are two main options for thematic analysis. Option one explores themes suggested by the data and the patterns in the data (but not the relationships between the themes, as would be explored in grounded theory method), to develop a theoretical framework. Option two is to use a theoretical framework developed in the literature with themes that emerge from the data, enabling a revised framework and contribution to knowledge (Urquhart, 2012). Based on the use of a pre-determined theoretical framework developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) and the objective of the research to create a revised conceptualisation of strategic capability, option two in thematic analysis is the most appropriate technique for this research as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:79). It is important to acknowledge that themes do not just emerge from the data, and that the researcher plays an active role in identifying themes and selecting those which are of interest, based here on developing the theoretical framework for strategic capability, and then including them in the thesis write up (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To ensure rigour in the research, the analysis of interview transcripts was recorded using NVivo software (see Section 4.6.1). In total, 2,785 units of data from the 23 interview participants were analysed (see Appendix 7). Of those 2,785 units of data, 341 units were removed from the resulting theoretical framework, as they were not deemed relevant to the overarching construct of board strategic capability.

The table provided in Appendix 7 documents the core themes of context, organisational relationships, board inputs and board processes. However, due to the mature nature of partnership working in GM, advanced practices are found. New themes and sub-themes emerge from the empirical evidence, including the theme of integrated governance, developed from 23 sources and

327 units of data, which incorporates both horizontal and vertical integration using hierarchical, network and market forms of governance. New sub-themes include extra-organisational relationships (from 22 sources and 157 units of data), the board input of strategic management capacity (from 16 sources and 189 units of data) and advanced board processes, from shared to systems leadership (from 19 sources and 133 units of data) and from monitoring and control to organisational learning (from 23 sources and 288 units of data). Although it is acknowledged that the quantity of references is of limited value in interpretive research and that one quote can help unpack the explanatory value of a whole data set, the quantities have been left in to highlight that themes emerged from a range of perspectives across the GM system, providing support for the doctoral researcher's interpretation of key themes and sub-themes in the findings sections below.

Exploring the relationships between concepts that emerge and concepts present in the original theoretical framework links to a more analytically driven approach, which progresses past description and enables coding towards a specific research objective (Braun and Clarke, 2006), such as factors that enable and constrain the Partnership in functioning and developing. Importantly, with this approach attempts will be made to progress past the description of patterns to theorise their significance, relationship and implications (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Due to the requirement for interpretation of the data set during coding, issues of reliability are a concern. Ensuring high standards will require rigour and effective process and monitoring criteria (Guest et al., 2012), as outlined in Table 2 below and in Section 3.8.

Table 2: Phases of thematic analysis (Source: Braun and Clarke, 2006:87)

Phase	Description
1. Familiarisation with the data.	Transcribing, reading and re-reading data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes.	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes.	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes.	Checking that themes work in relation to coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes.	Ongoing analysis to refine specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report.	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts relating back to the research questions and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

As acknowledged, in addition to following a rigorous process and monitoring procedure, NVivo computer software has been used in the analysis; as well as the vivid extract examples used in the sections on findings, supporting verbatim quotes can be found in Table 7. Further, reference to existing theory is found both in the sections on findings and in the Discussion (Chapter 8).

4.6.1 Computer software package NVivo

The software selected to manage and analyse data generated by this research is NVivo. This was used to help shape and make sense of the data. It is important to recognise that this software does not replace the researcher's role in thinking; however, it does provide a workspace and tools to enable the researcher to work through the information collected (QSR, 2017). The

required range of data management techniques includes (Miles et al., 2014:340):

- Collect and Store Data.
- Code the data collected.
- Link data, connecting relevant data segments with each other, forming categories, clusters or networks of information.
- Draw and verify conclusions, aiding the analyst to interpret data and confirm findings.
- Build theory, developing systematic, conceptually coherent explanations of findings.
- Facilitate graphic mapping, creating diagrams that depict findings and theories.
- Prepare interim and final reports
- Generate implications for theory, policy and practice.

The use of NVivo software is a reliable and efficient way to analyse data in a rigorous and transparent manner (Welsh, 2002); however, manual coding has also been used to advantage in refining themes, highlighting the benefits of keeping an open mind and utilising the benefits of each approach (Welsh, 2002).

4.7 Ethics

When conducting research, it is important to acknowledge that, although the quality of the data collected is crucial, the way in which data is collected is equally important. This brings the focus on to ethical issues surrounding research and the integrity of research in relation to participants, colleagues and funders (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Throughout the process of this research, it was vital to take into account a range of factors, including initially the worthiness of the project (Miles and Huberman, 2014). This research was believed to be worthy from the outset, as it aimed to make a contribution in aiding actors involved in development through sport and physical activity; furthermore, it aimed to make a contribution to theory, contributing to academic understanding, thus moving beyond the personal benefits for the researcher of gaining funding, career opportunities and career progression (Miles and Huberman, 2014).

Another area of concern is competence boundaries (Miles and Huberman, 2014), including the competence of the researcher and the supervisory team. It has been touched on earlier in this thesis that the researcher was a novice. However, this being the case, there has been consistent focus on development

through the doctoral training programme, additional workshops provided by the university and mentoring and coaching by the supervisory team. The competence of the supervisory team was never in question, and regular meetings were conducted with full acceptance from the researcher that constructive criticism would need to be taken on board in order to develop the initial transfer report required for progression to the PhD. After the researcher experienced heavy scrutiny during the transfer viva, the Director of Studies deemed it necessary to bring in new supervision to support the direction of the research. This resulted in one supervisor stepping down and one supervisor stepping back, and the introduction of one active researcher in the area of community sport, who was able to provide vital supervision to develop the project. This resulted in transferring, with no further revision, and the commencement of data collection. It is acknowledged that the research was under-designed, due to the researcher's inexperience, and that this was remedied through working collaboratively with the research supervision team.

Once the research design was developed to the correct standard and accepted by Manchester Metropolitan University, it was vital to gain the informed consent of participants and to ensure that risk of harm to them was kept to a minimum (Miles and Huberman, 2004). To this end, participant information sheets outlining essential information were produced for the interviewees (see Appendix 3); in each email addressed to the participants, the opportunity for them to request any further information was provided; and at the start of each interview, in addition to the participant information sheet, an explanation was given by the researcher of the foundations of the research, and another opportunity for the participant to request any additional information was provided. Along with the participant information sheet, a risk assessment was completed and signed by senior management. However, to make sure the risk of harm was minimised, the participant information sheet offered the participants the right to read the transcripts and request that any information was destroyed if deemed capable of causing harm. Finally, the anonymity of each interviewee was granted by removing names from the quoted interview extracts and replacing them with titles, to remove the chance of information indicating specific individuals (Miles and Huberman, 2004); despite this, it must be recognised that due to public knowledge around the Partnership, full anonymity will be difficult to ensure. Finally, a strict practice has been followed,

recording interview transcripts and data analysis in NVivo and referencing documents and literature used (Yin, 2014), to ensure that plagiarism and falsifying of data do not occur in the write up of this research.

4.8 Quality of research design

Quality is a factor that needs to be taken into account throughout the research process to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the research are sound (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A variety of terms are used to define sound, including: 'reliable, valid, dependable, reasonable, and confirmable' (Miles and Huberman, 1994:276); some authors go so far as to call it the trustworthiness of research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, it could be argued that the ability to determine specific criteria to assess sound research is not aligned with qualitative research, which is heavily dependent on context and interpretive enquiry (Miles and Huberman, 1994). There is a consensus in the literature that to produce good or trustworthy research it is essential to take into account objectivity, reliability and external and internal validity (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Construct validity should also be included (Yin, 2014), as illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Judgement criteria for research design

Tests	Case study topic	Phase of research
Construct Validity	• Use multiple sources of evidence.	• Data collection
	• Establish a chain of evidence.	• Data collection
	• Have key informants review draft case study report.	• Write up
Internal Validity	• Do explanation building.	• Data analysis
External Validity	• Use theory (as this is a single case).	• Research design
Reliability	• Use a case study protocol.	• Data collection
Objectivity	• Review findings and conclusion with research supervisors.	• Write up

Adapted from Yin (2014); Miles and Huberman (1994); Lincoln and Guba (1985)

To avoid researcher bias, it was vital that the researcher entered the field without a preconceived position (Yin, 2014). This was a challenging task for the researcher, due to the completion of a prior literature review and the identification of a suitable framework (strategic capability) to act as a lens and identify common themes within the literature. Questions were kept open and interviews conducted conversationally to ensure the natural flow of information; furthermore, analysis has allowed findings that contrast with the initial review of the literature to emerge from the data (Yin, 2014).

As highlighted previously, the use of terms such as reliability and validity in qualitative interpretive research is questioned (Miles and Huberman 1994; Edwards and Skinner, 2009). For example, the term 'construct validity' (Yin, 2014) has required this research to define strategic capability based on specific concepts as outlined in the literature review and relate them to the objectives of this research. However, Yin's (2014) approach to using measures follows the positivist line of enquiry. This research will outline in the findings chapters the presence of these concepts and any new concepts that emerge from the data, to describe and interpret them. It will then attempt to explain them and then generalise to theory (rather than to a population) in the Discussion (Chapter 8). Theoretical generalisations are viewed as valid outcomes for interpretive research (Walsham, 1995), despite some questioning the strength of this generalisation in an empirical sense, requiring the use of multiple sources of evidence to support this generalisation, in accordance with case study method (Edwards and Skinner, 2009).

4.9 Strengths and limitations of the research

Critical exploration of the methodology discussed reveals that this research design has a range of strengths that support its ability to make robust theoretical, practical and policy recommendations. Initially, the research is based on insider elite level perspectives from senior leaders both within GM and nationally, who are essentially the architects of this new approach to integrated working for sport and physical activity in the community context. Access to elite-level interviewees provided a depth of insight into macro-level (contextual) dynamics that have influenced their roles on the Partnership board, both historically and currently, leading to the formation of the GM

Moving Leadership and Executive Groups, and to the key inputs and processes required for effective partnership working, from their perspective.

The next major strength of this research was the collection of data across multiple areas. In addition to board-level perspectives, the research also collected management-level perspectives and strategic and operational-level perspectives from localities. The multiple areas of the research provided a more holistic understanding and shone a light on additional perceptions of enablers and constraints to the GM Moving Executive Group, which may be out of the field of view at senior level. This potentially provides a more complete story of the GM Moving journey; however, it is acknowledged that this may develop further with the inclusion of further perspectives from across the system. Nonetheless, it did provide insight into how the work being carried out by the GM Moving Executive Group enables and constrains the tier below, from the perspective of that tier, as opposed to the perspective of senior board members, who do not manage delivery on a day to day basis. Despite data being collected from three different areas across the system, the data is presented as one GM system, showing a range of supporting and competing perspectives on the Partnership. These perspectives were combined in the themes indicated in the thematic tables in appendicies 7, 8 and 9, with reference to sources and units of data.

Despite the evident strengths of the research, potential weaknesses are also apparent. For example, access to key documentation (such as board minutes) that would have provided insight into the board agenda, was not granted. Also, the researcher was not able to interview all members of the board, due to mitigating circumstances for one board member. The research may also have benefited from interviews with members of boards above the GM Moving Executive Group, regionally and nationally, in order to gain their perspective on the work of the GM Moving Executive Group, which may have offered useful insight. Interviewing the workforce and people from lower socio-economic groups may also have provided insight into lived experience and identified barriers to participation that may or may not be affected by the work of the GM Moving Executive Group.

Both a strength and limitation of the research is its sole focus on GM. On one hand, this provided the rich context of the situation in GM, which acts as a test

bed for a new approach to community sport governance, leading integrated sport and physical activity work nationally; this required a single case study due to its uniqueness. On the other hand, exploration of other settings outside GM may have enabled comparison of different approaches in different regions; it may also have enabled the use of action research to intervene and introduce the integrated practice developed in GM, to improve the strategic contribution of senior leaders across the country based on GM findings. Also, vice versa to improve the strategic contribution of the GM Moving Executive based on findings from other regions.

It is evident from the strategic capability framework illustrated in Figure 3a that perspective and social constructions play a role at the macro, meso and micro levels, providing support for the qualitative approach. However, the suggestion that context and institutional factors play a role in a board's ability to function indicates that institutions and structures may influence the perspectives, beliefs and actions of individuals involved in the Partnership, giving more support to critical realism (Bhasker, 2008; Grix, 2010). For example, it could be argued (based on the requirement for funding) that strategy and policy shape perspectives in sport and physical activity. It is also acknowledged that an interpretive approach forgoes the notion of objective truth claimed by positivist research and instead uses objectivity based on shared understanding. Furthermore, due to the reliance on stakeholder views, control must be relinquished (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). It could also be argued that a solution to this would be to adopt a pragmatic approach, to enable findings to be tested in a statistical way, once themes have emerged from the data. Some would suggest that a pragmatic approach could provide evidence that is more reliable, by using mixed methods to enable triangulation; however, due to the confusion evident in the literature on pragmatism, even between the founders and more contemporary researchers, the pragmatic approach will not be utilised.

As the development of policy and strategy, and the inputs and processes required to deliver them, are based on initial social constructions, similar values, interests and purposes (Smith and Heshusius, 1986) that can create a shared understanding are required. Developing a shared understanding is central to the use of an interpretive approach, as objectivity is nothing more

than social agreement based on persuasion (Smith, 1983). Finally, the focus of this research is to understand influences and to identify factors that enable and constrain boards in making a strategic contribution, and, in the process, to develop understanding of this context, present this in a consultable record (using thick description to enhance transferability) and generalise to theory. This research will therefore generalise to theory (as opposed to a population), building on the theoretical framework of board strategic capability.

As highlighted earlier (and in the MoU), despite it evidently adding value to current practice in GM, the acid test for the GM Moving Executive Group will be to identify its strategic contribution towards outcome measures. The short-term nature of this research means it will end before outcome measures have been agreed. Furthermore, longitudinal research will be required to assess the relationship between the board's strategic contribution and outcomes in GM and nationally.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the debate between quantitative and qualitative research, discussing the ontological and epistemological variances based on the philosophical traditions of positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism and critical realism. From an in-depth review of the literature, it is evident that the requirement in this research is to gain insider perspectives though and interpretive and qualitative approach; this is key, due to the varying social constructions on sport and governance. Furthermore, the theoretical framework used to guide the data collection highlights the variations based on context, relationships and individual experience/perception of others, all of which are social constructions and steer the research away from an objective-truth or universal approach. Importantly, the focus is to develop an understanding of the phenomena through thick description, with the objective of gaining shared understanding between actors. Due to the focus on collecting perspectives, the most appropriate approach is induction, as this enables concepts to emerge from the data; however, using a theoretical framework as a guide follows a deductive process; the result is a combination of the two approaches, which has been termed retroduction.

Potential limitations to the interpretive approach have been considered for this research. Limitations include loss of an objective truth, universality or

generalisation to a population, in addition to relying on stakeholders for data and the relationships between structure and agency, which could lead some to argue towards a critical realist or pragmatic approach. However, based on all systems and policy being originally social constructions, and the focus being on gaining insider perspectives to understand the phenomena, this research is firmly based in the qualitative and interpretive traditions. Following the interpretive tradition, the most appropriate research design has been outlined as the case study, using the single case of the Partnership (between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM), based on its uniqueness and the requirement to gain a rich depth of data and thus develop thick description to support shared understanding, with potential transferability to the 12 pilots currently being explored in the UK by Sport England.

Interpretive data analysis techniques were used to understand meaning in the interviews, using thematic analysis that supports the retroductive approach of using a theoretical framework to guide data collection, while enabling themes to emerge from the data to support a revised conceptualisation of board strategic capability and theory development; NVivo software was used to enhance efficiency and rigour in the data analysis. To ensure integrity and minimise risk, ethical considerations and practices, including the Manchester Metropolitan University Ethics and Risk procedures, have been followed. Finally, care has been taken to ensure that the research is trustworthy, taking into account objectivity, reliability and external and internal validity. The use of multiple sources to develop a chain of evidence through a case study protocol was used, to support the findings and their transferability to other research settings and their generalisability to the theory of board strategic balance.

The following chapters will present the findings from each stage of data collection, collated to provide rich context on the Partnership and its programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group. Each chapter will focus on a particular type of influence from a range of perspectives in GM: macro-level influences (i.e. contextual dynamics) in Chapter 5, meso-level influences (i.e. inter-organisational dynamics) in Chapter 6, and micro-level influences (i.e. board dynamics) in Chapter 7; the findings will be documented verbatim, (with researcher interpretation). They will be discussed in relation to the wider literature in Chapter 8.

5.0 Findings on the Partnership Formation and Macro-level Influences

The following chapter will focus on the macro-level contextual dynamics that have influenced the formation of the Partnership and its programme board the GM Moving Executive Group. The strategic capability framework developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) will be used to critically explore the unique approach established in GM, which uses vertical integration between a quasi-autonomous national sport organisation – Sport England – and regional entities – the GMCA and the NHSGM – forming, through a sport and physical activity MoU (Rowley, 2016a), what we have termed 'the Partnership'. To represent the Partnership, a programme board (later named the GM Moving Executive Group) was formed, as documented in figures 5 and 6. The case study is focused on the Partnership; however, it is the programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group (which includes members from organisations outside of the partner organisations), that will be examined for strategic capability, i.e. 'the ability of the board to function and the development potential of the board to think and act in a strategic manner' (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a:490).

As a representative structure for the Partnership, the GM Moving Executive Group is a progression from the integrated working of the GM Moving Leadership Group, to include senior-level representation from the three partnership organisations (Rowley, 2016a). The membership of the GM Moving Executive Group includes the Chair of the GM Moving Leadership Group and the CEO of Greater Sport, who also held a position on the GM Moving Leadership Group. Greater Sport operates in a strategic role to 'broker and facilitate relationships to encourage genuine collaboration in GM' (Greater Sport, 2018). Greater Sport is an independent charity, but receives the majority of its funding from Sport England, with additional funding from the Association of GM Authorities, GMCA and other sources. The final member of the original GM Moving Executive Group is the Strategic Manager, technically not classified as a board member but interviewed as such due to their senior position in the Partnership and central role in the development of the GM Moving action plan. The Strategic Manager's role is funded by Sport England,

but they are employed by Greater Sport and effectively transition between board and management levels, in addition to being co-located and accountable to each organisation in the Partnership. This crucial role will be explored in more detail in the empirical findings. The research highlights that Greater Sport has played a fundamental role in the formation of the Partnership. They are not mentioned in the sport and physical activity MoU, due to the organisationally neutral approach of Sport England (mentioned in interview for this study by the CEO, Greater Sport); however, the CEO of Greater Sport maintained a position on the GM Moving Executive Group.

Research by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) clearly outlines that national sport organisations can develop their ability to function and develop by engaging with regional entities in a power-sharing relationship. The focus of this research is the GM Moving Executive Group created by the Partnership to make a strategic contribution to sport and physical activity in GM. The Partnership attempts to add value in several ways. First, it is a new approach by Sport England to engage with regional entities such as local government, health bodies and the CSP in a power-sharing relationship. Second, it is a progression from existing integrated working on sport and physical activity in GM through the GM Moving Leadership Group, with the introduction of senior-level executives from Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM, to add value and report directly to the GM Reform Board, details of which will be illustrated within this chapter.

The GM Moving Executive Group is the core focus of this research on board strategic capability, with regards to the formation of inter-organisational relationships between national and regional entities at the meso level, as well as the micro-level inputs and processes that influence the board's ability to function, develop and make a strategic contribution to sport and physical activity, and wider GM and national outcomes. A significant weakness of this focus is that the board does not deliver anything operationally and requires vertical and horizontal integration in the GM system. Essentially, the GM Moving Executive Group is reliant on GM governance architecture to deliver its strategic objectives (see Section 5.2.1); however, the board has been created to develop the ability of national and regional entities to deliver social outcomes in GM and nationally. Moreover, this research has examined the

influences that enable and constrain Sport England and the Partnership in functioning and developing and in making a strategic contribution, using the strategic capability framework as a sensitising device. Through empirical research (documented in Section 4.5.1), influencing factors have been identified by the researcher, including macro-level contextual factors, meso-level inter-organisational factors and micro-level board inputs and processes. Furthermore, the research has enabled critical discussion of whether the formation of the Partnership and subsequent GM Moving Executive Group has added value to traditional siloed working by Sport England, integrated working in GM (through the GM Moving Leadership Group) and bidding for national funds by regional entities.

The following chapter will focus on macro-level contextual issues identified through interviews and documentary analysis. In each findings chapter, factors influencing the Partnership that have been identified from the three areas of data collection (see Figure 5 and Section 4.4.1) have been combined, to avoid duplication and provide a holistic picture of the Partnership. To provide context to the empirical findings, the formation of the Partnership will be explored first through analysis of key documents, starting in GM with the development of the GM Moving blueprint (2015), before exploring the commissioned pilot work produced by Linden Rowley (2016a) and using interview extracts to emphasise these findings. Rowley explored the potential of an integrated approach to working in GM for Sport England with GMCA and NHSGM (the Partnership) (Pleasant, 2016). The outcome of Rowley's work was encapsulated in the sport and physical activity MoU.

After setting the scene, the chapter outlines the contextual dynamics influencing the Partnership that have been identified through thematic analysis of interview data (see the thematic table in Appendix 7). Documentary analysis is used to corroborate the sub-themes identified under the over-arching theme of context, including: political dynamics (Section 5.4), culture (Section 5.5), socio-economic dynamics (Section 5.6), technology (Section 5.7), ecological dynamics (Section 5.8) and legal considerations (Section 5.9). Government ideologies have been deemed outside of the remit of this research. Instead, the focus is on strategic governance and management factors that enable or constrain the functioning and development of the Partnership.

5.1 The Greater Manchester context

From the document analysis it is found that the vision and narrative for sport and physical activity in GM were set out in the GM Moving blueprint for the region (2015). This blueprint was pioneered by senior leaders from across the region, who formed the GM Moving Leadership Group. The leadership group was chaired by Steven Pleasant, the Chief Executive of Tameside Council, one of the ten localities of GM. Steven Pleasant is also the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing on GMCA and the Joint Chair of the Commisioning Board for GMHSCP. Senior representation from across the region included members of: GreaterSport, Public Health England, local authorities, TFGM, Sport England, New Economy and the Association of GM Leisure and Cultural Trusts, and the chairs of the Association of Combined Clinical Commisioning Groups and the Directors of Public Health (Pleasant, 2016). The blueprint released in June 2015 set out a vision for GM to become 'a test bed for the country, an opportunity to implement a multi-agency approach at scale to create systemic change' (GM Moving, 2015:14). It claimed that 'GM Moving provides a single entry point into GM for regional and national partners to engage with and to invest through' (GM Moving, 2015:14).

Essentially, it was a move away from small, bespoke time-limited interventions, to embedding change into the GM system, to enable scale. The frustration of the model that led to the new GM Moving blueprint is interpreted from an interview response:

> *That is just the way that central government operates; it's a waste of money, because everyone is writing discrete projects, it's time limited, it is never going to do the things you want to do, it's not woven into the actual systems that you want them woven into. So that's one model, and it's pants and doesn't work. But the government keeps doing it, and does it and does it, and actually it does it because you give the civil servant a pot of money and that's the way the civil servant spends the money.*

(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

It has been found from the document analysis that a new approach was required to support GM's 2020 vision, set out in the GM strategy (AGMA, 2009), which formed a strategy for GM (based on the findings of the MIER [2008] on how to achieve growth as a region) and, more recently, formed part of the sustainability plan to support health and social care devolution and the

Taking Charge strategy (GMHSCP, 2015). Central to this approach is the focus on partnership working to add value and scale to current delivery in GM through the horizontal integration of agencies and localities (GM Moving, 2015).

GM is viewed as a test bed for the integrated way of working proposed in to resolve ineffective siloed working (GM Moving, 2015). During an interview with the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA, it was suggested that traditional siloed working practices are evident in Westminster, with limited integration across departments creating a range of potential inefficiencies in policy delivery. The lack of integration is interpreted from the statement below:

> *There is no relationship between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Health […they…] have no relationship in terms of how they commission health services that support people into work, and people who are in work to stay in work, sick notes, all the rest of it.*
>
> (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

Further, it is interpreted that siloed working in national government results in disjointed and fractured delivery on the ground, for example:

> *If you ask your GP what his role is in supporting people into work, he will just look at you blankly, and that is because he has never been told that is his or her role. No, the health service is not commissioned to provide that relationship, and it is a fundamental thing, and the government will never be able to reconcile that point.*
>
> (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

The document analysis identifies that the use of GM as a test bed for integrated working in a place was investigated through a pilot project commissioned by Sport England and GMCA (Rowley, 2016a). Rowley was commissioned to explore how reform and devolution could be utilised to enable innovative commissioning and delivery of sport and physical activity across the city-region. An example of innovative working in GM is illustrated in the following interview extract:

> *We have got levels of worklessness in Greater Manchester way beyond the national average, and have been since the war; to some degree it is a legacy of the Industrial Revolution, but it's not budged, so today a quarter of a million people are not in work in Greater Manchester. And your work programme is a programme that is targeting long-term unemployed in that 250,000, and your success to date has been two years of intensive work that has delivered in Greater Manchester, in*

isolation of us by the Department for Work and Pensions and other contractors, is getting one in ten people into work, one in ten. With the same money on the table let us see what we can do, not changing eligibility criteria fundamentally, we are getting now four in ten of that cohort into work, so it's not perfect, because on average they have been unemployed six years – some have never worked – but four in ten we are getting into work, against the national outcome of one in ten, and how are we doing that? We are plugging the providers of that work programme into local authorities, into the voluntary sector, into health partners and we are tweaking the range of interventions.

(Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted by the researcher that long term unemployment in GM is partly due to failing national siloed working practices by departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions. Further, that development of a more holistic approach, working across sectors, has seen evident improvement, as documented by working well (SQW, 2016). It is interpreted by the researcher that the new focus is to ensure sport and physical activity is included in the range of holistic services available as a preventative measure against unemployment.

A new approach for sport and physical activity in GM was developed by the GM Moving Leadership Group in 2014 and documented in the GM Moving blueprint (2015). The blueprint proposed GM as a test bed for integrated working in a place, to resolve Westminster's siloed approach to working, which has resulted in fragmented delivery in GM. Following the GM Moving blueprint (2015), Sport England and GMCA commisioned Linden Rowley to explore the potential of a new approach, and found that for sport and physical activity to be progressed through devolution and reform, it must be embedded into core strategies and structures as part of the GM governance system. Document analysis indicates that the commissioned pilot included exploration of commissioners' and senior decision makers' perspectives on current practice, potential opportunities and priority areas in GM (Pleasant, 2016).

5.1.1 Greater Manchester governance architecture

It is identified from the document analysis that the opportunity presented to Sport England of entering into a partnership with regional entities was not solely based on the inter-organisational relationship between the organisations documented in the partnership MoU (Rowley, 2016a). The Partnership also enabled Sport England to be plugged directly into the governance architecture

in GM, providing one single entry point into the whole system, as opposed to multiple partnerships across the system. The Partnership strategically positions sport and physical activity into core GM systems and structures, connected directly to the Reform Board at the centre of the reform agenda in GM. The strategic positioning of the Partnership is documented in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a:8):

> The Programme Board (GM Moving Executive Group) will be fully integrated into the GM Combined Authority and the GM National Health Service governance structures, reporting into the GM Reform Board. Through this, it will support the Health and Social Care Partnership Board and the Joint Commisioning Board with relevant decisions that relate to population health improvement through physical activity and sport.

The GM Reform Board is responsible for (Lloyd, 2016):

- Providing strategic leadership for the continued development of approaches to reforming public services. The board will have a particular emphasis on prevention and early intervention and the transformation of local service delivery. It will support the place-based approaches to reform.

- Ensuring strategies and implementation plans across the reform agenda are co-ordinated and identifying opportunities for collaboration and efficiencies across GM.

- Signing off implementation plans associated with reform of public services.

- Holding localities to account for the implementation of GM reform and monitoring progress in improving outcomes for GM residents and communities.

The GM governance architecture as illustrated in Figure 8 has been taken from analysis of presentation documents provided by the Partnership's Strategic Manager. In the original presentation, the arrow indicated that the programme's board would filter into GMHSCP; however, at the time of writing this thesis, the governance arrangements have not been confirmed on the GM Moving website. A request for confirmation made by the researcher has not yet been granted. As a result, the diagram has been edited by the researcher to reflect the document analysis of the MoU and the empirical data collected in interviews, i.e. that the Partnership reports into the GM Reform Board. Furthermore, the Partnership (or programme board) documented in the MoU

has evolved; Figure 8 reflects this, referring to the GM Moving Executive Group.

Figure 8: Sport and physical activity governance architecture in GM (Source: Lever, 2017:5: presentation)
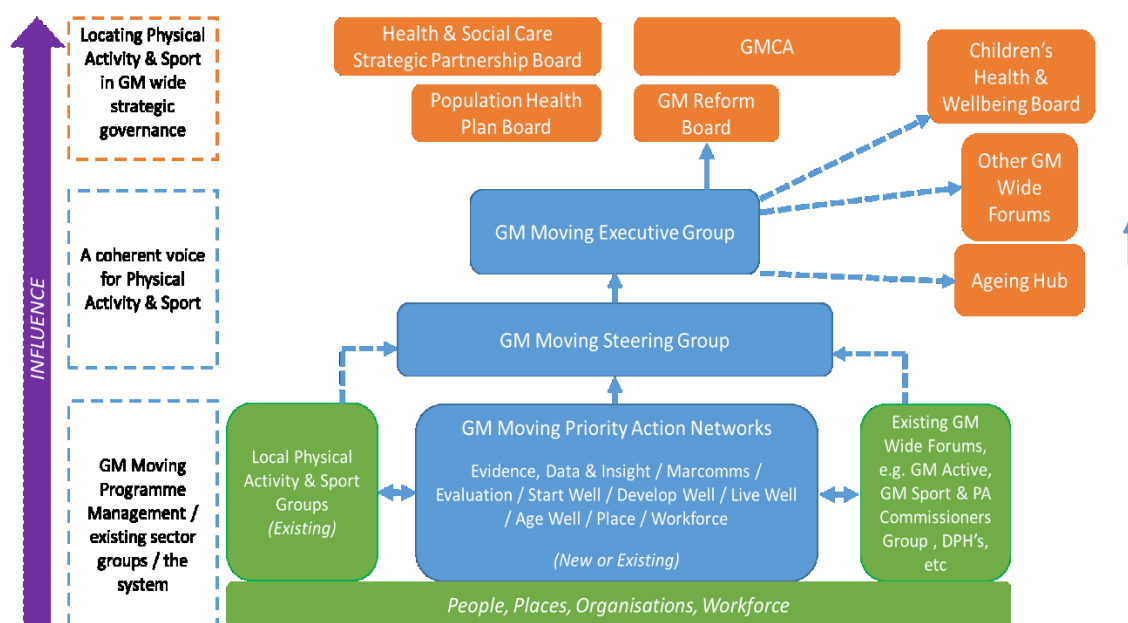
It is interpreted by the researcher that the governance architecture positions the Partnership securely in the GM governance systems and structures, reporting directly into the Reform Board. The programme board, as represented by the GM Moving Executive Group, is tasked with making strategic decisions on sport and physical activity in GM and has developed the revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017). It is interpreted from the governance diagram that the GM Moving Executive Group is also connected to the Ageing Hub, the Children's Health and Wellbeing Group and other GM-wide forums.

Below the GM Moving Executive Group is the GM Moving Steering Group, which is tasked with providing insight and evidence from across the system to the GM Moving Executive Group and was responsible for developing the original GM Moving blueprint (2015), before the GM Moving Executive Group was formed.

It is interpreted that the GM Moving Steering Group is connected with organisations/groups from across GM, such as the Combined Leisure Trusts

in GM (GM Active), the CSP (Greater Sport), the Physical Activity Commissioners Group and the Directors of Public Health Group, in addition to wider priority action networks that provide evidence, data, insight, marketing communications and evaluation, and local physical activity and sport groups. These networks provide insight for the GM Moving Executive Group to enable strategic decision making. Further, it is interpreted that these organisations also form the strategic management and operational delivery mechanism for sport and physical activity in GM. Importantly for public service reform, they incorporate insight from people, places, organisations and the current workforce in GM, outside of organisational boundaries. Figure 8, also includes an arrow indicating influence, and it is interpreted that the level of influence increases hierarchically, from people, places, organisations and the workforce, up to board members on GMHSCP and GMCA.

It was interpreted from the below interview statement (from the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA), that the decision to direct the Partnership into the Reform Board was based on the holistic and wide-ranging senior representation present on the board, which provided the opportunity to shape investment and delivery in GM. Document analysis identifies that the Reform Board's focus is on designing public services around people and communities rather than organisational boundaries (Lloyd, 2016). At its formation, the Reform Board included representatives from GMCA and health and social care. Also included were representatives from: police and crime, housing, clinical commisioning groups, local councils, children's services, fire and rescue, employment and skills, Population Health, Public Health England, New Economy, local medical committees, mental health committees, NHS acute trusts, NHS community and mental health providers and the voluntary and community sector, providing a holistic view of GM. The Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA acknowledges the opportunity provided by linking the GM Moving Executive Group to the Reform Board:

> *We put the sport and physical activity work into the Reform Board and not here [GMHSCP Board], critically…So if you locate a piece of work in an awfully deterministic way, say, this is all about health, i.e. we are some sort of devolved health and social care structure, everybody in that room will be looking at it purely from that perspective, so the field of view becomes too narrow.*

<div align="right">(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)</div>

It is interpreted by the researcher that the requirement for the focus of the Partnership not to become too narrow relates to the notion that physical activity and sport is a cross-cutting solution that can be utilised across the reform agenda. The alternative to this would be to invite senior leaders from other agencies into the GMHSCP Board, creating inefficiencies and potential duplication of board meetings. Furthermore, the Reform Board is an area where decisions are being shaped, enabling the opportunity for shared leadership, as opposed to decisions being pre-made and waiting to be rubber-stamped.

5.1.2 Place-based working in Greater Manchester

From the document analysis it is found that the approach to working at a GM level for Sport England is termed 'place-based working', 'which means public services working together in a place free from restriction and fragmentation of organisational boundaries' (Rowley, 2016b: 22). One of the central reasons put forward for placed-based working is that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to tackling social issues at a national level. Variations are evident across the country regarding governance and requirements that are specific to regional and local populations. Support for the document analysis and the requirement for place-based strategies such as GM Moving are evident in this interview response:

> *It is tailoring things to a local level…one of the things we have learnt from insight is you can't take a piece of insight from Leicestershire and plant it somewhere like Lancashire. For example, people are different; infrastructure is different. You can take some principles and scale them up, but I think there is a real difference.*

(Local Government Relationship Manager, Sport England)

It is interpreted that a bottom-up approach is outlined here, and this is explored further in Section 7.4, learning from insight at local and regional levels to identify barriers to sport and physical activity that are relevant to a specific place. However, the opportunity to take principles of working from localities and regions to support learning for other similar regions across the country has potential. The outcome of the commissioning work was the development of an integrated strategic partnership approach, encapsulated in the MoU between the three partner organisations Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM.

5.2 A Memorandum of understanding for the partnership

It is identitfied from the document analysis that to progress place-based working for Sport England, a strategic relationship integrating this national sport organisation with NHSGM and GMCA was encapsulated in an MoU (Rowley, 2016a), which set out how the organisations should work together through a collaborative working arrangement termed 'the Partnership' (Pleasant, 2016:1):

> The Partnership will create a framework to enable GMCA/NHSGM and Sport England to develop an insight-led, behaviour change approach to sport and physical activity, starting with the individual and their communities and designing and delivering sport and physical activity according to their specific needs and wishes. Working together we will develop a series of joint priorities based on our collective knowledge of the environment, culture and challenges, free from the restriction of organisational boundaries.

Specifically, doument analysis of the MoU outlines the requirement for the development of a framework to enable integrated working based on joint priorities and strong synergies between national and regional organisations. A specific emphasis is tackling inactivity through insight and behaviour change, developing a social movement through a new deal with citizens that is delivered by public, private and voluntary sectors in an organisation-neutral approach (Rowley, 2016a). In the MoU, Rowley proposes specific principles for partnership working (Rowley, 2016a:7):

- Adhering to decision-making processes and structures.
- Being open and transparent.
- Commitment to genuine collaboration and co-production.
- Commitment to mutual learning.
- Respect for organisational imperatives and competing demands.
- Creating joint work programmes and action planning.
- Adopting a high challenge and high support approach.

5.3 Inputs and processes required for partnership working

Analysis of key documents shows that, at the micro level, Rowley (2016a) suggests that it is crucial for board members to:

- Understand the principles and processes and participate in regular meetings and communications.
- Hold joint sessions to outline board practices, roles, management, planning, resourcing and leadership.
- Appoint a programme manager and support to provide capacity.
- Make decisions based on the insight that is currently held by Sport England and regional entities in GM.
- Collect insight into current practice in each locality to address the incoherent approach to sport and physical activity across the ten localities.
- Review what works locally, nationally and internationally to enable shared insight and scaling up of good practice and decommissioning what isn't working.

Furthermore, opportunities for how the Partnership could improve Sport England's implementation of policy are suggested, including:

- The alignment between Sport England's strategy Towards an Active Nation and the GM strategies.
- Embedding sport and physical activity into GM systems and structures.
- Joined-up conversations, enabled through the GM governance architecture, to support the delivery of Sport England's strategy.
- Shared metrics, performance measures and cost–benefit analysis of joint working, on participation levels and engagement of under-represented groups, demonstrating Sport England's impact towards the government's five outcomes for sport and physical activity: physical health, mental health, individual development, community development and economic development.

The Partnership was envisioned as supporting regional entities to use sport and physical activity as part of a combination of solutions to:

- Radically upgrade population-health improvement across GM and support the transformation of public services.
- Develop a framework which provides fundamentally different propositions to enable healthier, more resilient and empowered residents to take charge of their own wellbeing and support inactive neighbourhoods and communities.

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Also from the document analysis, specific inputs and processes are identified by Rowley (2016a) through the roles of each organisation in the Partnership. Sport England's role is to provide strategic advice and act as a critical friend to the regional entities, in addition to sharing insight and evidence of what works to enable practical implementation, facilitating connections and identification of co-commissioning opportunities. With regards to strategic capability, GMCA and NHSGM enhance the ability of Sport England to deliver their strategy and impact government outcomes through integrated working. The regional entities are also commited to sharing evidence of what works, facilitating connections and supporting evaluations. In the MoU, the regional entities commit to acting as both a test bed and local champions for sport and physical activity, utilising devolution and public-service reform to identify innovative approaches to commisioning and delivery of sport and physical activity (Rowley, 2016a). Committing to the use of evidence and insight for decision making and investment is a prominent feature of the Partnership, as is sharing information on performance measures and outcomes to demonstrate innovation and change and the contribution to government outcomes. Finally, all partners commit to the finalisation of an action plan and to the agreement of performance measures to deliver scale and pace in GM (Rowley, 2016a). The above principles of working and organisational roles outline micro-level board inputs and processes required for meso-level inter-organisational relationships, and will be explored through empirical research in chapters 6 and 7. The remainder of this chapter outlines the macro-level contextual dynamics surrounding the Partnership that have been identified from the thematic table in Appendix 7. Overall, it was interpreted that 23 participants identified contextual influences on partnership working, with 582 units of data contributing to this overarching theme. The overarching theme was made up of contextual dynamics (i.e. sub-themes) related to context, political dynamics, cultural dynamics, socio-economic dynamics, technological dynamics, ecological dynamics and legal dynamics.

5.4 Political dynamics

The thematic table in Appendix 7 indicates that political dynamics are identified by the researcher as a key sub-theme in relation to the broader context; this centres around two open codes: the influence of national policy and strategy

changes and the influence of the GM devolution agreement. Document analysis supports this interpretation and identifies that central to the formation of the Partnership was the development of national policy, steering Sport England to enter into a direct partnership with local government (DCMS, 2015). The national policy outlined a strategic focus that enabled the national sport organisation to align with regional strategy and integrate with a wider range of entities in a city-region. The following section indicates how, working alongside regional entities, the emphasis throughout the process is on collecting learning that can be shared nationally to provide value to any perceived failure. It will be outlined how the integration of agencies and co-commissioning at a regional level has been enabled through the devolution of powers and budget to GM, and that the introduction of the Mayor of GM has provided additional political leadership of the narrative created by senior officers in the GM Moving blueprint (2015), allowing investment to be shaped accordingly.

5.4.1 National community sport policy/strategy changes

In December 2015, the DCMS released its Sporting Future policy. Document analysis of the policy shows that it required and enabled Sport England to act in new ways and engage in direct partnership with regional entities. Key aspects of the Sporting Future policy that have enabled partnership working include:

- A sole focus on outcomes, including physical health, mental health, individual development, community development and economic development (DCMS, 2015), all of which are key outcomes for regional entities, producing shared outcomes and enabling strategy alignment.
- The shift in focus to people who are least active, in lower socio-economic groups (DCMS, 2015), which effectively moved funding away from the sporty and active. It is suggested that the sporty and active are less likely to be a drain on local government services, and, as they are already participating in sport and physical activity, they contribute to participation levels without the requirement for financial support.
- The shift from siloed sport and physical activity working to cross-sector integration.

This last point is supported by the following interview response:

Traditionally Sport England would have worked with Greater Sport, who are the local County Sport Partnership and we would have also worked with the leisure departments of the ten boroughs, but actually, we need to work just as much with the care department. We need to work just as much with the education department, the transport department, and we certainly need to pull in Clinical Commissioning Groups and people like that, maybe the Local Enterprise Partnership, so the board seeks to replicate that whole approach; that's why we have created it.

<div align="center">(Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)</div>

The document analysis also indicates that the new approach was further emphasised by the organisational-neutral stance on delivery and implementation. The focus from the DCMS (2015) was not 'who you are' but 'what you can do', which opened the door to working with a wider range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

The change to direct partnerships with local government and away from national governing body (CSP) relationships for community sport, enabled CSPs to facilitate direct partnerships between Sport England and local agencies (DCMS, 2015). The benefits of this new approach are highlighted in this interview response:

It is now 'you [regional entities] tell us what you are interested in and we will partner with you to co-produce it'. Rather than it being a really transactional type of thing, to something that is much more about co-production, and that is the way we should be working. So, it is systems thinking and systems working, rather than creating artificial barriers, I think.

<div align="center">(Deputy Director, Population Health)</div>

There is a clear focus on new processes, such as co-production and systems working (which will be explored as micro-level influences in Chapter 7 and changing the funding model from a national bidding model to co-commissioning with regional entities, which has enabled partnership working. This interview repsonse outlines frustration with the old model:

A fundamental issue with the normal way that Sport England would operate in this space would be this. They would identify a national pot of money and just say 'we want to do something around older people and activity', and out of that the whole of the country would get people writing bids, and we would all be writing bids to get the most money out of this. That is just the way that central government operates. It is a waste of money because everyone is writing discrete projects; it is time-limited, it is never going to do the things you want to do. It is not woven into the actual systems that you want them woven into.

<div align="center">(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)</div>

An example of this changing stance was the £1 million allocated to GM to trial this new approach, outside of the £10 million allocated through the old national bidding model for Active Ageing, as indicated in the following interview extract:

> *An agreement [was reached] at the meeting to explore co-commissioning at a Greater Manchester level around older people, and that Sport England would identify up to £1 million pounds outside of that 10, so that 10 effectively becomes 11 and Greater Manchester would submit on that, so that was a really positive outcome.*
>
> (CEO, Greater Sport)

The opportunity to learn from experience is provided by the DCMS through their support for new pilot projects. The following interview response highlights the opportunity to learn:

> *We have been given a chance that you do not often get, and I am still not convinced the politicians will quite give us this, but to make, to learn what really does work and doesn't, to do something at scale.*
>
> (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

It is acknowledged in the interview data that historically this has been a particularly weak spot for Sport England, mainly due to their old funding model of national bidding and investment and evaluation after four years:

> *You definitely need the feedback, and this is something we have not been particularly good at in Sport England, is getting that feedback loop. We have been very good at doing 'here is what we would like, you go and do it, we will come and check in four years whether our money made a difference'; well, actually, that's a bit odd.*
>
> (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

It is interpreted that ongoing feedback cycles are required (rather than evaluating every four years) to take advantage of the opportunity provided by national government; this relates to board process, which will be explored further in Section 7.4.

5.4.2 Holistic working through the Greater Manchester devolution agreement

The emphasis on working holistically, or across the whole system, to take advantage of the devolution agreement is referred to by 23 sources and in 228 units of data, and is evidenced in the following interview extract:

> *So, devolution has created a really good opportunity to look at how we work across Greater Manchester. And that is not necessarily about what*

money might be subtracted from the system. That is just more about, how can we take advantage of all these different agencies coming together? From the health sector through to the public health sector, to the voluntary sector, through all those different partnerships – how can we take advantage of that?

(Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving

Executive Group)

It is interpreted from the above statement that devolution brings an opportunity to take advavantage of integrated working across organisations and agencies in GM. However, in another interview, the additional importance of political leadership is highlighted:

It is a much bigger agenda, and sport cannot do it on its own. So it has to embed within the systems locally, and it has to be systemised […] Transport for Greater Manchester are probably a really good example, whereby they are really supportive of active travel (walking, cycling and using public transport), and the travel choices team are great at Transport for Greater Manchester, but I think our spend per head on cycling infrastructure is something like £1.96 per head of our population. Whereas in London they spend £17 per head. So actually, there is a whole cultural shift in London on riding your bikes because it is becoming safer, it is more seen, therefore more people do it. Now that does not come from a little revenue programme that supports active travel. It has come because someone at the top has decided 'we are taking this chunk and we are going to do this with it', and it is across the system. So, that influence cannot happen with that department, it has to happen in a Greater Manchester context, with the head of that department, the Chief Executive of Greater Manchester and actually, more importantly, moving forward, the Mayor.

(CEO, Greater Sport)

It should be highlighted that although the Mayor will bring political leadership to GMCA, they will not have full control over decisions. In practice, the Mayor will require unanimous support from the majority of GMCA members, providing checks and balances throughout the constitutional settlement.

It is interpreted from the below interview extract (from the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA) that the introduction of the new Mayor and political leadership is seen as critical with regards to driving the sport and physical activity agenda forward. However, the importance of wider narratives must also be acknowledged, such as the narrative created by senior officers in GM around GM Moving, enabling the Mayor to shape investment:

So, the narrative sort of comes out of lots of places, but actually political leadership is quite fundamental. Which takes me back to that point

about locating this with the Reform Board, led by the interim Mayor [Tony Lloyd], because actually political leadership will be critical regarding driving this work forward, and the narrative is key. Going forward, if Andy Burnham says 'I need some more cycle lanes', I am pretty sure it would not land well. If Andy Burnham says 'actually 2,000 people a year die of poor air quality in GM', that is quite shocking, and when we look at where they are dying, they are dying on major routes. And therefore, actually we need to do something about that. If he says 'actually average speeds are only ten miles an hour now and it is only going to get a lot worse in terms of congestion', we need to look at alternative transport measures.

<div align="center">(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)</div>

The narrative created by senior officers in GM is around personal wellbeing, and this has enabled the Mayor to introduce a new Cycling and Walking Commissioner in GM. Document analysis identifies that a plan to ring-fence a £1.5 billion fund for walking and cycling infrastructure across the conurbation over a ten-year period has been developed with an initial contribution of £160 million from the Transforming Cities Fund (GMCA, 2018b; Rhodes, 2018).

The empirical evidence suggests that a shift in national policy has been a critical influence in enabling the Partnership, by focusing on the least active in lower socio-economic groups and shifting the focus from 'sport for sport's sake' to social outcomes that are relevant to GMCA and GMHSCP. The shift has enabled a new way of working, as, instead of the old bidding model, direct partnerships between national sport organisations and regional entities have been emphasised. The new approach requires a shift from a traditional siloed way of working to a collaborative and holistic cross-sector approach, working with associated co-commissioning. This change has been guided by political leadership from the Mayor, using progressive narrative developed by senior officers in GM. It is suggested that the DCMS have provided Sport England with the space to learn from the Partnership about collaborative working. The focus on learning requires viewing failure as valuable; this knowledge can be used by the Partnership in the future and shared with other partnership pilots across the country if the correct processes are in place to collect and distribute the insights.

5.5 Culture

The thematic table in Appendix 7 also identifies that the partnership is influenced by the history of collaborative working in GM, which has created a

culture of collaborative working. This culture of collaborative working is emphasised in the following interview extract:

And there is obviously quite a long history of collaboration, especially amongst the councils, going back to I think the mid-eighties. I think Sport England would be coming in to quite a well-established partnership structure. Whether that kind of relationship between a national and regional entity would work as well somewhere where those relationships are less mature would probably be more of a challenge.

(Deputy Director, Strategy and System Development, GMHSCP)

It is interpreted from the thematic table in Appendix 7 that, due to that, integrated working in GM is at advantage, because there is a mature history of partnership working where organisations, agencies and localities have developed working together collectively for over 30 years. It is further interpreted that without this culture of collaborative working, national policy proposing a collaborative approach may be less influential, and that a devolution agreement in other councils may result in increased siloed working and the breaking up of public services, which is evident in other regions with different approaches (Chakrabortty, 2018).

5.6 Socio-economic dynamics

It is evident from the table in Appendix 7 that socio-economic factors have influenced the formation of the Partnership. The socio-economic influences include:

- Focusing on the least active and lower socio-economic groups, who use a more extensive range of government services.
- The requirement for all public funding to have a return for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- The financial opportunity presented by shifting from treatment to prevention for the fiscal sustainability of the NHS.
- The direct and indirect cost reductions from GM residents becoming physically active.

5.6.1 Improving health and economic outcomes

Despite the clear goal of the new approach being to improve health and wellbeing in GM at scale and pace, it is evident from the document analysis that a significant driver to this work is the £2 billion deficit that must be

addressed through the transformation fund of £450 million and the devolution of the £6 billion health and social care budget (Butcher, 2016). It is interpreted from the below interview extract (from the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England) that the deficit in public funding is also of particular importance to Sport England, who have been steered by the DCMS, during a period of austerity and budget cuts, to focus on spending public funding on the people that need it the most, due to the wider benefits this can have to the economy. It is interpreted that the focus is now on the section of the population that use public services the most:

> *When you look at Greater Manchester, across its 2.8 million population, actually, it is about 300,000 people who draw on the health service, draw on unemployment services. Yet, some are a drain because of drug abuse or crimes, but actually doing something for that 300,000 people will lift the whole city […] and will free up money that can actually be recycled back to do better things rather than just put things right.*

<div align="right">(Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)</div>

By focusing on this section of the population, it is suggested that the joint priorities of each organisation are met by improving levels of physical inactivity, reducing demand on health and wider services and increasing productivity, potentially leading to economic growth in the region.

It is interpeted from the thematic table in Appendix 7 that a consequence of voluntary austerity and budget cuts has resulted in clinically trained Directors of Public Health focusing the majority of their investment into treatment-based services. This focus on treatment over prevention is highlighted in this interview response:

> *So actually 80% of the money was being spent on treatment as well, treatment-based services. And if you look at any public health system that has a medically qualified Director of Public Health, you will see it is medicalised.*

<div align="right">(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)</div>

It is interpreted that changes here provide opportunities to improve people's health through physical activity before they require treatment services, reducing public service spending. However, it must be acknowledged that budget constraints make this transition challenging, as people are already in need of treatment and the funding must be reallocated. As identifed in the document analysis, a £450 million transformation fund supports the transition;

however, inefficiency in this transformation process could lead to critical issues in health and social care before the benefits of prevention are realised. Furthermore, it may result in wasted resources and duplication of funding for the 'old world' of treatment and the 'new world' of prevention; detailed exploration of duplication of funding in health care is outside of the remit of this research. Document analysis also identifies that the GMHSCP has also entered into a pharmaceutical MoU in addition to many other MoUs across the region. It could be argued that competing interests may occur here, with the pharmaceutical industry being driven by treatment-based services. The role that the pharmaceutical industry plays in prevention and wellbeing and the conflicting or supportive nature of these MoUs is also outside of the remit of this research.

Another socio-economic factor is the cost of inactivity. It is found from document analysis that inactivity in GM is 3.9% higher than the UK average and results in significantly higher direct costs incurred to address the consequences of inactivity. The cost of inactivity to NHSGM is estimated at up to £26.7m (at 2013–2014 prices) per year on preventable diseases (such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes) and conditions that can be managed and held off for longer (such as depression, anxiety and dementia) (Rowley, 2016a). However, in addition to reducing the direct cost for the health service through health improvements, reductions in indirect costs are also acknowledged. These indirect costs include the potential for 27% fewer sick days and wider contributions to the economy through people becoming physically active (Rowley, 2016a). Despite optimism and clear evidence to support the relationship between sport and physical activity and direct/indirect cost reductions, the key challenge is producing evaluation that can evidence a causal link to justify the investment.

5.6.2 Funding for health and wellbeing

The evident socio-economic benefits of reducing inactivity and moving from treatment to prevention are realised by funding that Sport England controls being directed towards health and wellbeing as opposed to elite performance. This is emphasised in the following interview extract:

> *Clearly Sport England, with the funds they have and the strategic direction of those funds, around, not just the kind of high end, kind of*

Olympic excellence, but also the social dimension, the issues of equity and deprived communities having access, where we have got the greatest concentrations of ill health – their strategic sort of agenda played into the Taking Charge strategy.

(Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted from this sub-theme that the funds available to Sport England are an influence on the partnership – critically the focus of those funds on social outcomes, as directed by the Sporting Future policy (DCMS, 2018). The focus of funding for social outcomes, such as health and wellbeing, through the reduction of inactivity, as opposed to focusing on elite development for Olympic performance, is found to be a key influence on the Partnership.

It has been identified in this section that a range of socio-economic factors are present as drivers of the Partnership: the specific focus on the least active to maximise returns on public funding, as well as a selective focus, which has become imperative due to the budget cuts imposed on all organisations within the Partnership through the shared dilemma of voluntary austerity. Furthermore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer requires evidence of the contribution of public funding to reducing the deficit between the cost of public services and the amount of taxes raised to justify public spending. It has been found that clinically trained Directors of Public Health have directed up to 80% of their reduced investment budgets into treatment, as opposed to prevention. Why clinically trained professionals focus on treatment rather than prevention requires further empirical research.

The opportunity presented by aligning national and regional funds to concentrate on shared outcomes, and the opportunity presented by shifting from treatment to prevention, enable co-commissioning and reduced demand on services to support the fiscal sustainability of the NHS, with reductions in direct and indirect costs enabled through increased physical activity. However, there are challenges in demonstrating a direct causal relationship and cost–benefit analysis for senior leaders and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, necessitating integrated processes that will be explored under micro-level influences in Chapter 7.

5.7 Technology

It is evident in the thematic table in Appendix 7 that technology is required to enable information sharing within the Partnership. Although this is only acknolwedged by four sources and seven units of data, is is interpreted by the researcher that the technology to share information is a key infleunce on the board. The requirement for technology is evident through the range of digital platforms required to distribute insight and enable decision making within the Partnership, both regionally and nationally. In addition, insight-sharing platforms are required to inform residents and support social prescribing by health professionals, potentially leading to reduced GP and/or Accident and Emergency visits (if self-diagnosis is possible or proactive behaviours are adopted by residents). Cost savings of this approach have not been determined as part of this research. It is found in the thematic table in Appendix 7 and in the interview extracts below that digital platforms providing social forums for participants and facilitating connections between diverse networks with similar interests across GM are required in the short term, before personal connections are formed.

5.7.1 Technology to share insight

Central to the working of the partnership is the focus on using insight for decision making. Document analysis confirms this and it is emphasised by Rowley (2016a), who suggests that insight on practice in each locality needs to be collected to address the incoherent approach across the ten localities. It is interpreted from the document anlaysis that a review of what works locally, nationally and internationally is required, to enable shared insight, scaling up of good practice and decommissioning of what is not working. This will be discussed further in Section 6.4. Critically, sharing insight requires technology platforms that enable all stakeholders in the Partnership to access and use information freely.

5.7.2 Technology to share insight with residents

In addition to sharing insight internally within the Partnership, the requirement to share insight with the target population, to enable participation, is identified. Informing residents is seen as a key issue within the Partnership, to connect residents with what is going on and provide real-time information that is

accessible to everyone. An example of this is open data, provided by organisations such as the Open Data Institute. This is highlighted, with an example of how this type of technology can be utilised, in the following interview extracts:

> *We have had open data. So, we were the first sort of leisure trust, definitely within GM, to open up our data, and we are fine-tuning the conversation about how we can better open up our data to get more people active.*

> *[…] There is something called 'My City' [https://mycityhealth.co.uk/], which I think Salford are about to launch. Very much around, if you go on, put your postcode in, it tells you everything that is going on around your postcode. It gets a little bit more sophisticated when it knows you have got a gym membership, you have paid your council tax online, you like going to the cinema etc., and it starts firing stuff back at you. So, quite sophisticated going forward, so it fits in quite nicely with opening up our data for that sort of platform as well.*

> (Head of Strategy and Performance, local leisure trust)

This is supported by document analysis, which indicates that this type of technological platform enables healthy activity to be scaled up and can be utilised by health professionals to connect patients with community services to help them improve their health and wellbeing (NHS England, 2018).

5.7.3 Technology to create social forums

It is recognised within the Partnership that social forums provide a platform to enable activity and support government-led interventions that may be targeted negatively by the public and media. An example of the use of forums includes national campaigns such as This Girl Can (http://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk), seen as one of the shining lights of Jennie Price's tenure at Sport England due to increasing female participation by 250,000 people (Sport England, 2016b). The following interview response specifically outlines the use of social forums:

> *I think if you look at the This Girl Can campaign, yes, it's an advertising campaign, but actually it's the social forum around it, which actually I think has made the biggest change, so women talking to women about 'Did you see this? What have you done?'. It is really interesting, whenever the campaign has been condemned by somebody, we have not had to say anything, as 200 women have come online and actually said, 'You're talking ██,' […] and that shows, just shows.*

> (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

Social media evidently enable diverse networks of participants to communicate and share information about activity and achievements and to defend national sport organisations that are being challenged.

Three core technological developments that facilitate the functioning and development of the Partnership have been identified from the empirical data documented in the thematic table in Appendix 7, technolgy to share insight within the partnership and GM system, technolgy to share information with residents and technology to enable communication between residents via social forums. Internally, these include knowledge and insight sharing, to enable collaboration within a regional system: collaboration requires a willingness to share data and not control data within individual organisations, which can become inefficient and impact negatively on the collaboration process due to wasted time and resources. Effectively, this brings into question the role of organisations in the system that provide strategic advice, once all their tacit knowledge has been shared. Externally, digital platforms can enable information to be provided to residents, to support social prescribing and build community forums for diverse networks across GM to engage with and become active.

5.8 Ecological dynamics

The thematic table in Appendix 7 indicates that ecolgical issues influence the Partnership; this is referred to by 8 sources and in 15 units of data. The two key influences are found to be natural capital and air quality. The importance of natural capital is emphasised in this interview extract:

> *So, for example, next week I am talking at the Natural Capital Group, which is outdoors, open space and all of that, where they look at issues like low carbon quality, connections with nature, all sorts of stuff on their agenda, which they are recognising have a connection with physical activity. The relationship of physical activity and natural capital is really important. Now that has not happened before.*

(Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

Air pollution is acknowledged in another interview response:

> *…if there is a narrative around a person's wellbeing, which I think there is, which is fundamentally about air quality around health and traffic congestion, then I think that is where the political narrative needs to be and we need to follow it through.*

(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

In contrast, from the document analysis it is evident that national sport policy (DCMS, 2015) does not focus on ecological issues as an outcome relevant to sport and physical activity; however, from analysis of regional documents, links are made between ecological issues and health, for example, the MoU highlights the links between air pollution and congestion and increased health risks (Rowley, 2016a). Also, working in an integrated way acknowledges the wider benefits that physical activity has on improved air quality and environment (GM Moving, 2015), as well as the commitment to active and sutainable environments and place (GM Moving, 2017). Furthermore, the revised GM Strategy (GMCA, 2017a), includes as Priority 7 'a green city-region and a high-quality sport and leisure offer for all'. This wider-level integration, beyond health, is central to the Partnership reporting into the Reform Board, with evidence of TFGM's commitment to increasing activity levels present in their strategy (2017:19):

> Our ambition is to support people in leading active and healthy lives; transport can have a major impact on people's health. It provides access to health care and other services, enables people to visit friends and family, and links them to green spaces. On the negative side, motorised transport can make people less active, leading to obesity, increases the severity of collisions, and produces damaging emissions which either affect health directly or through climate change. The huge potential of walking and cycling to reduce car mileage, improve access to key facilities, and improve public health is now widely understood. While recognising the role of personal choice in travel decisions, we will encourage people who are able to do so, to travel actively in order to improve their health.

Clearly, at a regional level, GM has a balanced approach to development, taking into account social, economic and ecological factors through sport and physical activity. However, it appears that, despite an acknowledgement of the role of active travel, a commitment to ecological outcomes is absent from national community sport policy in England, which focuses on social and economic outcomes. Critically, this could result in other regions adopting unbalanced development approaches that reflect that focus and the neglect of ecological issues/outcomes; this will be explored in more detail in the concluding chapters. It is identified from document analysis of other countries in the UK that England lags behind on this front, despite earlier DCMS (2008) policy for sustainable development. For example, sport and physical activity policy and strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government feed directly into their

one-planet vision of a sustainable Wales, ensuring a balanced approach to ecological, social and economic outcomes (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). Further as acknowledged in the back ground and context to the literature review this is enforced by welsh legislation.

5.9 Legal considerations

No legal influences have been identified during the research – the MoU specifically highlights that the Partnership is not legally binding (Rowley 2016a) – however, it is acknowledged that active travel has grown in London after the introduction of legal limitations on driving within the congestion zone. Given the wide-ranging social, economic and ecological benefits of legal limitations on vehicle use, it could be argued that new legislation should be back on the GM agenda. Furthermore, the income generated from a congestion-charging system and increased spending by TFGM, from £1.96 towards the £17 per head of London, could make a significant financial contribution. Finances generated through legislation, taxation and charging schemes could contribute to increasing activity levels of residents from lower socio-economic groups across GM, who are more likely to rely on active travel as their main mode of transport, as well as those of the wider population, while directly contributing to population health and ecological issues such as air pollution. Further, document analysis of UK countries leading on sustainable development (such as Wales) indicates that legislation has been created to bind organisations to the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the country, in accordance with sustainable development principles, ensuring that all public bodies work towards sustainable development (Welsh Act, 2015).

5.10 Conclusion

There is evidence of the development of integrated working in GM through the GM Moving Leadership Group and GM Moving blueprint (2015). The initial integrated working has been developed through the commissioned pilot work by Rowley (2016a), which led to the development of the Partnership and its programme board, evolving into the GM Moving Executive Group (with senior representation from the three partner organsisations, Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM) as a decision-making stucture above the GM Moving Leadership

Group and feeding into the GM Reform Board. The GM Moving Executive Group aims to add value to the traditional Sport England process and senior-management-level integration in GM. Critically, it is identified that the GM Moving Executive Group relies on the GM governance architecture and structures above and below it in the GM hierarchy to make a strategic contribution.

In this chapter, contextual dynamics that have driven a new approach to partnership working for Sport England and regional entities have been explored, ranging from changes to national community sport policy that have enabled the strategic alignment and power-sharing relationship between the national sport organisation and regional entities, to socio-economic influences that link increased activity to improvements in physical and mental health, and indirect factors such as education and employment. Importantly for all parties, voluntary austerity measures have resulted in budget cuts and have forced organisations to focus public funds on the areas that can evidence the greatest return on investment for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A shift from treatment to prevention, through physical activity for the least active in lower socio-economic groups, is suggested, to reduce demand on public services and support growth in the region. The focus on deficit reduction provides a dilemma for each organisation, which requires synergy between joint priorities and shared outcomes through co-production and co-commissioning. Wider opportunities for co-commissioning are also acknowledged; for example, ecological links around active travel, health and air pollution, bringing opportunities for co-production and investment with wider agencies such as transport, with the potential for legal requirements to be introduced on vehicles (learning from the success of such schemes in London); alternatively, more broadly, following the lead of the Welsh Government and requiring all publicly funded organisations to adhere to sustainable development principles.

Technological factors are explored that both enable collaborative working by partners and stakeholders within the system and provide opportunities (such as social prescribing) to be scaled up for residents using digital platforms (e.g. MyCity). Additionally, the importance of social forums in providing a connection between diverse networks across the GM system is evident, learning from leading national campaigns, such as This Girl Can. Critically, the sharing of

insight and data requires a commitment from all organisations involved in the Partnership and those who contribute to the GM system. Challenges may arise if the sharing of insights results in strategic organisations becoming obsolete once all their strategic insight and tacit knowledge are shared. The following chapter will now explore the meso-level (i.e. inter-organisational) influences on the Partnership and its programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group.

6.0 Findings on Meso-level Influences

This chapter details empirical evidence from across the three stages of data collection on meso-level (i.e. inter-organisational) influences. The focus on inter-organisational influences is a central factor in the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a), building on the importance of context, inputs and process identified by Dulewicz et al. (1995) and Edwards and Cornforth (2003). Ferkins and Shilbury (2010) find that boards can develop their ability to function and develop by integrating with regional entities and forming inter-organisational relationships. It has been acknowledged that, due to the emerging nature of the theory of board strategic balance, critical exploration (using empirical evidence) is required of the notion of integration with regional entities contributing to the capability of a national sport organisation. The researcher's interpretation of interviews and documents will be presented in narrative form in the findings chapters; reference to theory will be follow in the Discussion (Chapter 8).

How integration with regional entities attempts to resolve what is suggested as inefficient siloed working in national government by departments and agencies in Westminster has already been documented in Chapter 4, as has the idea that siloed working produces fragmented delivery of services in areas such as GM. The opportunity for integrated working presented to Sport England by GM was in line with the direction they were heading in, i.e. to engage at a regional level in strategic relationships with regional entities. As identified in the document analysis, Sport England has been steered by the DCMS through the Sporting Future strategy (2015). As outlined earlier, macro influences, such as changes in national policy, aligned with the GM Taking Charge strategy (GMHSCP, 2015) and its particular focus on social outcomes, lower socio-economic groups and deficit reduction. At the meso level of organisational working, the Sporting Future strategy created opportunities for strategic practice by steering Sport England to work directly with two regional entities, GMCA and NHSGM, as opposed to the ten individual GM authorities. This strategic way of working, focused on social outcomes, is acknowledged by the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA in Section 5.6.2, based on the new strategic direction of Sport England's funds.

The opportunity provided to Sport England by GM has been developed over a long history of local authorities working together (through the Association of GM Authorities), developing a mature level of integrated working across the conurbation, as documented in Section 5.5. This culture and history of integrated working provides access to ten integrated localities, giving scale and scope for Sport England to reach approximately 2.8 million people. This is emphasised by the below extract from an interview:

> *The advantage of the city-region is scale and scope: the ability to share best practice across local areas, the ability to do things at scale.*
>
> (Strategic Lead, GMCA)

It is interpreted from this interview that working together as one city-region enables the collection by regional entities of best practice from across localities and develops an understanding of what is working well at the local level. Furthermore, that it enables best practice to be scaled up and shared across each locality, providing consistency in delivery for residents in each locality for the benefit of GM as a whole, as opposed to individual localities competing against each other, creating winners and losers, with a detrimental effect on GM as a whole. Furthermore, it is postulated by the researcher that developing consistency in delivery across the region, by scaling up best practice, progresses towards the aim of reducing the inequalities currently present in GM.

The acknowledgement of Sport England as the national leader of sport and physical activity, bringing national knowledge to the GM Moving Executive Group and also providing strength and legitimacy to the sport and physical activity agenda in GM will be discussed; it provides a strong message of commitment to sport and physical activity being high on the agenda for organisations and residents. Also discussed will be how Sport England's years of experience of national leadership provide a depth of knowledge and expertise on the development and implementation of sport and physical activity programmes. However, the contribution of Sport England towards participation for social outcomes still requires evidence, especially as it is funded by the DCMS and has responsibility to distribute national lottery funding. Crucially, Sport England bring financial resources (e.g. an additional £1 million of investment into Active Ageing and £10 million pilot funding) to a resource-constrained environment; however, Sport England lack a local understanding

of place and the population in GM, and the capacity to target the population at scale; this will also be discussed. It is found that ultimately this is where the GM Moving Executive Group, involving regional entities GMCA and NHSGM, as well as the GM governance architecture, can enhance Sport England's ability to function and develop. The regional entities have the required understanding of place and the wide range of agencies that make up those entities are well situated to collate and develop this understanding.

6.1 The organisations in the inter-organisational relationship

Strategy development by the three organisations in the Partnership provides insight into the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group. However, the thematic table in Appendix 8 illustrates how, in addition to the organisations documented in the MoU, extra-organisational relationships are critical to the Partnership. How Greater Sport has played a fundamental role in the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group and the willingness of the GM system to engage with sport and physical activity (referred to by 14 sources and in 65 units of data) will be discussed.

6.1.1 Sport England

Document analysis indicates that Sport England was established by Royal Charter in 1996, with its first priority (Royal Charter, 1996:Section 2[a]):

> …to develop and improve the knowledge and practice of, and education and training in, sport and physical recreation in the interests of social welfare and the enjoyment of leisure among public at large in England.

The DCMS funds Sport England to operate on its behalf in the delivery of national sport and physical activity strategy. Furthermore, they have responsibility to distribute national lottery funding for sport and physical activity. It is the focus on the use of sport and physical activity for the interests of social welfare that now guide funding through the DCMS and Sport England, with the requirement to look beyond participation levels to the benefits of participation for individuals, the community and the economy, based on the outcomes documented in Section 1.0. Document analysis of the Towards an Active Nation strategy identifies a particular focus on the least active, including

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women, disabled people and older people from lower socio-economic groups (DCMS, 2015; Sport England, 2016a,2017). It is interpreted from the below interview extract that in order to deliver the new strategy, Sport England have entered into a restructure:

> *We are talking in our restructure about 20% structure and 80% culture, and I think the difference is, that we have worked in what I (and I think probably as an organisation, we) see, in silos.*

> (Local Government Relationship Manager, Sport England)

It is interpreted that the new restructure for Sport England is a move towards breaking down internal organisational silos as well as the development of a much broader knowledge for employees who engage in cross-sector working. The focus on wider knowledge is emphasisied in this interview response:

> *Individuals having a wider knowledge and greater knowledge and people working a lot more collaboratively.... So not even just in directorates, actually looking right and left across the whole organisation; to take disability for example, that may sit in a particular part of the organisation, but will affect the whole organisation.*

> (Local Govenrment Relationship Manager, Sport England)

Analysis of policy documents reveals that Sport England has been steered by the DCMS to focus on social outcomes for the least active, and particularly those from lower socio-economic groups, as documented in Chapter 5 and Appendix 7. It is interpreted by the researcher that, to deliver its strategy, Sport England has engaged in an organisational restructure, to enable cross-department working internally and also to facilitate cross-sector working through new partnerships with regional entities such as GMCA and NHSGM.

6.1.2 Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Document analysis identifies that GMCA was established following the MIER in 2008 and the 2011 Localism Act, and that, in a place-based approach, GMCA became responsible for a range of functions across GM, including transport, economic development, regeneration and housing, strategic and spatial planning, skills and training, police and crime and fire and rescue (GMCA, 2017b). The document analysis further highlights that the development of GMCA enables integrated working at the place level to resolve financial issues post the 2008 financial crisis, with two focus areas being growth and reform of public services (GMCA, 2013).

The document analysis also uncovers that the GM Agreement (GMCA, 2014) devolved a range of powers and responsibilities to further support the decentralisation of power to the regional government, including: transport, skills, business support, housing, planning, complex dependency, work programmes, early years and health and social care. The agreement included new governance arrangements following the introduction of the elected Metro Mayor in 2017. It is interpreted that a key requirement for delivering the ambitions of the devolution agreement is integrated working across organisational boundaries. Document analysis indicates that it is critical to develop a shared understanding of where the greatest demand is and to move towards early intervention and prevention and reduce demand through place-based working (Lightfoot, 2015). It is interpreted that the need to identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention in areas such as healthcare require exploration of the social factors that lead to health issues, with the development of a partnership between health and social care to provide joined-up services.

6.1.3 The NHS in Greater Manchester (Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership)

Analysis of GMHSCP documents identifies that NHSGM has been rebranded GMHSCP after the development of an MoU between NHS England, the Association of GM Authorities and all GM Clinical Commissioning Groups. The integrated approach aims to deliver the 'greatest and fastest possible improvement to the health and wellbeing of 2.8 million citizens of Greater Manchester' (GMHSCP, 2016:2). To deliver improvements, it is suggested that integrated health and social care should be supported by wider partnerships with universities, as well as science and knowledge industries. A key focus is to provide care that is closer to home, and focused on wellbeing and prevention, but also connected to indirect benefits such as early years development, education and employment (GMHSCP, 2016). The approach to working together set out in the Taking Charge strategy (GMHSCP, 2015) requires holistic working across departments and institutions in GM and acknowledges the requirement for workforce development to deliver the new way of working. In addition to a new deal with the public, for example, public services will take charge of their localities and 'ensure there is a wide range of

facilities within local communities, such as parks, open spaces, leisure, cycling routes and good quality housing'. As part of the deal, it is envisaged that the residents of GM must take charge of their responsibility to 'keep active and moving at whatever stage of life' (GMHSCP, 2015:8).

To finance the new way of working and enable a place-based approach, the joint commissioning strategy was developed to create a 'single commissioning strategy that encompasses all public services to deliver their ambitions for reform' (GMHSCP, 2016: 2). Joint commissioning enables a more holistic approach to place-based working across the whole of GM. Joint commissioning enables co-design and co-production through: integrated planning; long-term planning; commissioning at the right level, i.e. region, locality, neighbourhood; economies of scale and evidence-based decommissioning. Furthermore, the focus is to move away from 'business as usual' towards outcome-based commissioning using the £450 million transformation fund (GMHSCP, 2016). A key development for GMHSCP has been the development of the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017), which is a commitment to a life-course approach to achieve change at scale across GM. The plan identifies the role of innovative partnerships with Sport England 'to develop insight-led radical new propositions to address our high levels of physical inactivity' (GMHSCP, 2017:43).

6.1.4 The County Sport Partnership Greater Sport

It is found in the governance framework in Section 5.1.1 that the formation of the Partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM is holistic and engaging with a wide range of local and national partners. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.5. From the thematic table in Appendix 8 it is also interpreted that a vital organisation in the development of the Partnership is the CSP in GM, Greater Sport. It is suggested that at one stage Greater Sport was going to be included in the MoU. The following interview extract highlights the role of Greater Sport, not just in the development of the Partnership, but in mainstreaming sport and physical activity in GM:

> *So, had we not done the work that we have done, physical activity would not be as strong in the plans as it is now, and the system would not be as willing to work together.*

(CEO, Greater Sport)

An example of Greater Sport mainstreaming physical activity into system-wide strategies is evidenced by the contribution of Greater Sport to the integration of physical activity into the Population Health Plan. This is supported by document analysis, which highlights the ground-breaking nature of the partnership and the role of sport and physical activity towards health as a key contribution of the CSP (Pilkington, 2017). However, despite the clear involvement of Greater Sport in the development of GM Moving and the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group, it was seen as critical to remove Greater Sport from the Partnership MoU (Rowley, 2016a). One of the reasons cited for this is the organisational-neutral approach documented in the Sport England strategy (Sport England, 2016a). However, it is interpreted by the researcher that this brings into question the level of trust Sport England has in CSPs to act on its behalf, which is the role Greater Sport has played in GM for the past 15 years. This is interpreted from the following interview extract:

> *So, in some areas Sport England don't want the County Sport Partnership to be the strategic lead – it will be a partner at the table; whereas, here I am, going, it is why they accepted that we are credible, we have been invested in for 15 years, we are doing a great job, its widely accepted, don't fight against what has got you to this point, embrace it, use it, add to it and complement it and all of that sort of stuff.*

(CEO, Greater Sport)

It is important to recognise that moving forward, Greater Sport intends to play a strategic role and not a delivery role, as outlined in its new strategy Changing Lives (Greater Sport, 2017:3):

> The role of Greater Sport is to help create the conditions for success, participating and encouraging collaboration and co-production, brokering relationships and sharing insight of people and places.

Despite the exclusion of Greater Sport from the Partnership MoU (Rowley 2016a), it is clear that it plays a crucial role in leadership, with the CEO being present on the GM Moving Executive Group, and the capacity Greater Sport provides being co-funded by Sport England, the Association of GM Authorities and GMCA. Examples of this include the Strategic Manager being funded by Sport England, but employed by Greater Sport, placing the organisation at the centre of the Partnership, with first-hand knowledge of all regional activity. Furthermore, the initial £1 million of investment by Sport England into the Partnership is controlled by the Place Development Manager for Sport and

Physical Activity at Greater Sport, effectively enhancing Greater Sport's strategic role in sport and physical commissioning in GM.

6.2 Inter-organisational relationships

The theme of inter-organisational relationships has been identified in the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8. In the following sections, sub-themes of inter-organisational relationships will be discussed as factors that enable and constrain integrated working at the meso level. Table 4 outlines influences that enable and constrain partnership working for the GM Moving Executive Group, collated from empirical data across the three stages of data collection. These influences will be explored in relation to the wider literature in Chapter 8.

Table 4: Meso-level enablers and constraints to strategic capability

Meso-level influences (more detail provided in thematic table, Appendix 8)	
Enablers	**Constraints**
Memorandum of Understanding	Organisational strategy misalignment
Organisational strategy alignment	Organisational variations in culture
Co-commissioning, co-design, co-production	Organisational variations in pace
Senior level commitment from each organisation	Organisational variations in language
GM governance architecture	Organisational variations in structure
Extra-orgnisational relationships	Organisational variations in working practice
Horizontal integration at regional, local and neighbourhood levels	Partnership capacity
Vertical integration from regional to local and neighbourhood levels	Partnership planning
Integrated locality plans	Incomplete auditing
Shared outcomes frameworks	Conflict between regional and local entities

The enablers and constraints highlighted in Table 4 have been identified from thematic analysis of interview transcripts (as evidenced in the thematic table in Appendix 8) and will now be explored in more depth.

6.3 Enablers of inter-organisational working

The following section explores the sub-themes that have been interpreted as enabling inter-organisational working, identified from the empirical data and thematic table in Appendix 8:

- The formation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- Strategic alignment of regional strategy.
- Co-commissioning, co-design and co-production.

In addition, how these factors improve efficiency, the potential return and the evidence for the contribution of Sport England to social outcomes have been identified from the thematic analysis. The thematic table examines inter-organisational relationships between the Partnership organisations, as well as extra-organisational relationships through the GM governance architecture illustrated in Figure 8 and revised in Figure 9. It also emerges from the thematic table that integrated governance, which incorporates hierarchical, network and market governance through horizontal and vertical integration, is evident in the GM system, as documented in the thematic table in Appendix 8.

6.3.1 Memorandum of Understanding

From the document analysis it was found that the development of integrated working in GM was encapsulated in an MoU (Rowley, 2016a). As detailed in Section 5.3, the MoU outlines Linden Rowley's recommendations for partnership-working principles and practices, based on the commissioned pilot work in GM. Further analysis of this key document identifies the strategic and evidence-based direction documented within. The MoU (Rowley, 2016a:7) states:

> The GM Moving Executive Group will create a framework to enable GMCA/NHSGM and Sport England to develop an insight-led, behaviour change approach to sport and physical activity, starting with the individual and their communities and designing and delivering Sport and Physical Activity according to their specific needs and wishes. Working together we will develop a series of joint priorities based on our collective knowledge of the environment, culture and challenges, free from the restriction of organisational boundaries.

Creating an MoU of shared principles and practices between national and regional entities commits the parties to a more strategic approach to national strategy implementation. Adhering to these principles creates an opportunity

that enables each organisation within the GM Moving Executive Group to be greater than the sum of its parts by sharing and building on knowledge and insight.

It is interpreted by the researcher that the MoU document also signifies something deeper than integrated working practices, as it outlines the requirement for a change in working practice for organisations in GM, from traditional siloed working to working across organisational boundaries. This was commented on in interview:

> There has been a move to break down that silo working and work more holistically, and I think MoUs are a good step in formalising the breaking down of those silos.
>
> (Policy Officer, GMCA)

Further analysis of GM strategy identifies that the use of an MoU is a common approach in GM. For example, MoUs have been used to form relationships for health and social care, ageing, the voluntary sector and the pharmaceutical industry, providing a way of working that the whole system can engage with, as formal, but not legally binding, documentation to outline the principles of partnership working. It must be acknowledged that GMHSCP has to form MoUs with prevention and treatment as competing interests. The relationship between the pharmaceutical sector, prevention and sport and physical activity is outside of the remit of this research.

It has been found that integrated working on sport and physical activity with the GM Moving Leadership Group predates the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group (as documented in Chapter 5). Further insight into what the new Executive Group adds to existing integrated working in GM is highlighted in this board member's interview response:

> What we could offer to Sport England was an opportunity to trial a more sophisticated strategic approach and that is what the MoU kind of aspires to. So, I suppose the potential of the MoU is that we have got strategic intent and support from the tops of a big quango, a big combined authority with significant reach and the National Health Service in Greater Manchester.
>
> (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted from the above interview extract that the MoU provides Sport England with a more strategic and integrated approach to working. However, it also brings together strategic commitment from senior representatives at

Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM. The GM Moving Executive Group advances beyond the capability of the GM Moving Leadership Group and this is explored in more depth in Chapter 7. It is interpreted from the thematic table in Appendix 8 that to gain strategic commitment from senior-level representatives from each organisation in the Partnership required strategic alignment of regional and national strategy.

6.3.2 Strategic alignment of regional strategy

It has been identified from the document analysis in Chapter 5 that the Partnership MoU would not be possible without the new Sporting Future policy (DCMS, 2015). The new policy steered a new Towards an Active Nation strategy for Sport England (2016) to focus on social outcomes for lower socio-economic groups through partnership with local government agencies. It is interpreted that strategic alignment enables a shared focus on reducing demand on services and supports growth by focusing on shared outcomes. However, it is suggested that having a shared vision across the region is a key enabler to integration to enable partnership working at a regional level, as highlighted in this interview extract:

> *I am not trying to say there are not differences between organisations, but I think there is a common strategy and vision. That makes it just easier for a national body to come and have a conversation.*

(Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, GMHSCP)

It has been interpreted from the thematic table in Appendix 8 that a shared vision for GM that cuts across sectors and levels – regional, local and neighbourhood – has enabled Sport England to engage at a regional level. Furthermore, it is identified from document analysis in Chapter 5 that in order to deliver the GM Moving Executive Group objectives, sport and physical activity must be integrated into the strategies and structures of GM, to become embedded into the shared vision, rather than sitting outside of the system in a silo.

Document analysis supports the notion that a suite of strategies in GM support a shared vision for the region, progressing from the GM Strategy (GMCA, 2013) to the Taking Charge strategy (GMHSCP, 2015) and Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017) (see Appendix 5). This interviewee outlines how sport and physical activity begins to integrate into the suite of strategies:

So, the way we are looking at how all of this fits together, we have kind of got the overarching Taking Charge […], you have got GM Moving as the framework, the blueprint for sport and physical activity in Greater Manchester. You have got the MoU, that will deliver a significant element of GM Moving […] and you have got the Population Health Plan that will help us drive all of that agenda.

(CEO, Greater Sport)

Document analysis provides evidence of integrating sport and physical activity into core strategies in GM, as documented in the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017), which acknowledges the ground-breaking partnership with Sport England and GM Moving as 'the foundation to drive forward work across the system to increase physical activity' (Pilkington, 2017:43). Similarly, in the refresh of the GM Strategy (GMCA, 2017a), sport and leisure feature in:

- Priority 7 – A green city-region and high-quality culture and leisure offer for all.

Moreover, sport and physical activity is also embedded throughout the revised strategy including:

- Priority 1 – Early years.
- Priority 2 – Young people.
- Priority 9 – Healthy lives.

The implementation section of the GM Strategy also acknowledges the revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017), revised by the Strategic Manager for the Partnership from the original GM Moving blueprint (2015). It is interpreted by the researcher from the thematic table in Appendix 8 and analysis of the above documents that the integration of sport and physical activity into core strategy in GM is a key factor in enabling partnership working. It is interpreted that this ensures sport and physical activity is prioritised as part of the wider reform conversations as opposed to sitting in isolation. Further, it is interpreted that integrating national sport and physical activity strategy into a regional strategy would have been more challenging for Sport England under the previous strategy, with the emphasis on participation and elite development (as acknowledged by the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA in Appendix 7 and Chapter 5). This reinforces the view that the change in strategy and alignment of priorities have enabled Sport England to try new ways of working. At the same time GMCA and GMHSCP were reforming public services and

developing integrated working through the original GM Moving blueprint (2015) and GM Moving Leadership Group, producing a marriage of convenience based on shared outcomes and a single vision to get the population more active and improve social outcomes.

In contrast to the findings on strategic alignment, it has been interpreted from the thematic table in Appendix 8 that, despite a focus on social outcomes, strategic alignment does not extend across all objectives for Sport England and GM regional entities. For example, misalignment is highlighted in this interview extract:

> *Some of the priorities Sport England have, and some of the priorities that we have do differ. So, there is a Venn diagram, Sport England does not deal with kids under five, Sport England are not allowed to go into schools to promote sport and physical activity, that sort of stuff. Greater Manchester does prioritise sport and physical activity for kids under five [and] for kids in and around schools, but these are the organisational constraints of Sport England.*

> (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

It is interpreted that the constraint created by misalignment is that Sport England does not cover all of the physical activity areas relevant to GM that have previously been overseen by the GM Moving Leadership group. The researcher postulates that areas that are not a priority for Sport England, such as sport and physical activity for under-fives, may also not be on the priority list for the GM Moving Executive Group. Further, that if (e.g.) under-fives are not a priority, it may result in a lack of investment in that area, especially if opportunities for co-commissioning are key to unlocking resources.

Thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 suggests strategic misalignment does not necessarily create an issue for the national sport organisation; however, it may be challenging for organisations in GM to progress early years work, which is outside of the remit of the GM Moving Executive Group. The thematic analysis suggests misalignment creates challenges for organisations trying to access funding for this age group. This is emphasised during an interview as follows:

> *So, we have at least two members of staff who are not featured in Sport England's money, you know, […] under-fives, younger years. So, where do they fit in with the Greater Manchester investment or sport investment?*

> (Place Development Manager, Greater Sport)

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Document analysis supports the need to focus on early years and ensure children are school-ready (Marmot et al., 2010). It is interpreted that challenges are created by strategy misalignment on funding decisions and access to funding, where the direction of the GM Moving Group focuses on areas of joint interest for co-commissioning such as the first focus on ageing. In contrast, however, document analysis suggests cross-cutting interventions, such as the 'daily mile' promoted by the GM Moving Executive Group, provide the opportunity for a full-life-course approach that can be incorporated from nursery level to embed physical activity habits from early years. Furthermore, document analysis reveals that the targets included in the revised GM Moving plan start from two to four years (GM Moving, 2017).

6.3.3 Legitimacy

The thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 indicates that a key factor in embedding sport and physical activity into GM strategies and forming partnership with local government and health and social care bodies is the profile and legitimacy this brings brings to sport and physical activity in GM. It was suggested in interview:

> *So, having that national interest has probably pricked people's ears as well. That this is not just about some local authority officer banging a drum about needing to be more physically active.*

(Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving

Executive Group)

The legitimacy provided by having a national partner alongside partners from across the health and social care system on board is further emphasised here:

> *It is dead exciting that, I think, for me this is one of the first [examples] of a health and social care system formally coming together with an organisation like Sport England. I think it demonstrates a real commitment to saying 'actually, we can't keep on delivering health services the way they have always been delivered. Actually, we need to be looking at someone's health and wellbeing as determined not purely by the GP and hospital services they would use, but actually how do they live their life in the day to day'. So, if we can have someone with the experience and national weight of Sport England working with the partnership, I think it gives a really good signal that being active, being involved in sport, accessing leisure, is a really important path to physical and mental wellbeing.*

(Deputy Director, Strategy and System Development, GMHSCP)

It interpreted by the researcher that the relationship between regional entities and Sport England has provided legitimacy to integrated working on sport and physical activity in GM. It is interpreted from document analysis that this legitimacy is emphasised by the specific reference to a ground-breaking partnership with Sport England by the GMHSCP in the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017). However, it should be acknolwedged that the original GM Moving blueprint (2015) developed by the GM Moving Leadership Group was central to the start of this journey, creating the narrative and profile to gain interest from all parties and bring legitimacy to the agenda.

6.3.4 Co-commisioning, design and production

Integrated working and strategic alignment between national and regional entities enables progression from the old bidding model evident in siloed working (as acknowledged in document analysis in Chapter 5). It is interpreted by the researcher that in the old model, regional entities are required to bid for national funding that is allocated based on prescriptive funding pots directed by the national sport organisation. Analysis of key documents indicates that the new approach enabled by integrated working between Sport England and regional entities is co-design, co-commissioning and co-production (Rowley, 2016a). Analysis of wider documents (listed in Appendix 5) indicates that these approaches have developed from the Commissioning for Reform agenda (GMHSCP, 2016) to allow integrated planning, long-term planning, commissioning at the right level (i.e. region, locality, neighbourhood), economies of scale and evidence-based decommissioning. Progress towards a new approach is outlined in this observation made in interview:

> *What we need to do is bring our respective resources to the table, and we need to co-design and co-commission it. That is the difference, and actually what we are doing is weaving it into the existing public services and the reform of public services. What we are not doing is running a stupid competition and wasting a lot of time and effort, and actually we will land over here while the work is over there.*

<div align="right">(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)</div>

It is interpreted from the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 that the old bidding model is inefficient for regional entities and also ineffective, producing programmes that do not fit well in the intended places (i.e. localities and neighbourhoods). Document analysis supports the potential to improve

the effectiveness of the programmes through co-commissioned and co-produced programmes (Rowley, 2016a) based on shared resources, evidence and insight. The document analysis and thematic anlalysis of interviews suggests that co-working in this way ensures programmes are embedded into the reform of public services, developing approaches as part of the system, as opposed to dropping in interventions that may or may not land well in a particular place.

A key benefit, and what could be argued as the main purpose of the GM Moving Executive Group, is the opportunity for co-commissioning. Increasing levels of investment from what would have usually been spent on prevention of health issues through sport and physical activity will be seen to be a determining factor of the success of the GM Moving Executive Group, as acknowledged in this interview response:

> *Looking for those tangible things – what is different because of this partnership? Have we really pulled resources, has a bigger amount of money come into what we are trying to do here, than would anyway have flown?*

> (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

However, it is interpreted that the focus is not about controlling resources, but rather on aligning resources, as highlighted in this interview extract:

> *We don't want to control the money – you know, it's raised from the general public, it shouldn't be used to substitute for public funds – but it should align, and if it aligned more effectively then we could probably improve the challenges facing communities more quickly than we are doing […] not just the Sport England resource, but how that can be layered with the resource that we have control of to deliver more […] you know, the most effective physical activity programme that this country has ever seen.*

> (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

Optimism around co-commissioning of resources is high in GM, as this new approach to working has the potential to improve the effectiveness of each organisation in delivering outcomes; however, the researcher postulates that the notion of co-commissioning between national and regional entities to align funds and not control them is a debatable concept, as the ability to control funds in a resource-constrained environment has obvious benefits for those involved. A key beneficiary of this could be Greater Sport: it has been identified in Section 6.1.4 that it was central to the formation of the GM Moving Executive

Group; it is present on the board (as documented in Chapter 5) and it employs the strategic management capacity (which will be discussed in Chapter 7). Critically, it is dependent on funds from the other members of the GM Moving Executive Group, potentially creating a conflict of interest when making funding decisions that may benefit Greater Sport in comparison to other organisations in the GM system. Similarly, conflict may occur when making decisions on whether to focus investment on strategic activity or implementation. It is outside of the remit of this research to assess which organisations are the main financial beneficiaries of the work of the GM Moving Executive Group.

It is interpreted by the researcher that it will only be possible to assess the use of co-commissioning to align and not control funds as the GM Moving Executive Group progresses, and that this will be a key determining factor in the true ability of the board to put social outcomes ahead of competing organisational priorities. It is interpreted that progressing away from the old national bidding model, towards integrated working using co-commissioning, co-design and co-production between national and regional entities, creates a more efficient process (as it saves regional entities time and resources used in writing discrete bidding projects). Further, it increases effectiveness, as it ensures sport and physical activity is woven into public services and the wider reform agenda in GM.

6.3.5 Improved efficiency

The new approach to working – in direct partnership with regional entities, as opposed to working with individual localities – has been interpreted as an enabler for Sport England in the thematic table in Appendix 8. The point on efficiency, that the decision-making process is improved by having one line of communication into GM as opposed to working with ten local authorities individually, is emphasised in the below extract from an interview:

> *So, rather than Sport England having ten conversations with ten local authorities, each of which might have a slightly different interpretation or plan, […] there is a route in through a regional entity, through the GM Moving Executive Group, the Combined Authority, […] then Sport England can kind of work on that regional level to get things implemented locally.*

(Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

It is interpreted that the opportunity provided by direct communication at the regional level is evident in terms of time and capacity required for multiple conversations. Furthermore, the thematic analysis suggests individual localities may have had different interpretations of how to deliver strategy in the older model, with the new model providing the opportunity for standardised delivery across the ten localities after decisions have been agreed at the regional level. However, the researcher postulates that standardisation of outcomes could lead to forcing decisions down on to local authorities; input is therefore required from all localities through the GM governance architecture to ensure collaborative working vertically and horizontally. Standardised outcomes and bottom-up learning are documented in more depth in Chapter 7.

Although the benefits of engaging in partnership have been found to improve efficiency for Sport England and the regional entities, contrasting perspectives found though thematic analysis suggest that regional partnerships reduce efficiency. It is interpreted that the new way of working creates a middle layer of bureaucracy that requires additional work and time, rather than a more direct approach between national organisations and local entities. This point is made in the following interview response:

> *I have a real fear about the current system, that all we are doing in devolution is great, but all you are doing is developing another tier by what is happening in Greater Manchester. And to some extent you are replicating, which is almost more worrying, with a tier that actually does not know what is happening on the ground and doesn't have the expertise or insight.*

(CEO of a leisure trust)

Document analysis of the governace architecture in Chapter 4 supports the notion that partnership working at a regional level does create an additional tier that relies on the governance architecture for insight and expertise. However, the thematic analysis indicates that, from a national sport organisation perspective, engaging with one regional entity provides a single entry point into the system, despite creating an additional tier; from a regional perspective, it reduces time and resources spent by organisations across GM on writing discrete projects. Furthermore, by operating at a regional level, it ensures sport and physical activity is embedded into the reform of public services and enables interventions to land in a place more effectively, which

has the potential to provide a better return for Sport England and regional entities. The question that arises with the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group and the direct partnership between national and regional entities, is – is there still a requirement for a CSP to represent Sport England in GM or can this resource be decommissioned and reallocated into public services? However, assessment of this is outside the remit of this research.

6.3.6 Improved return

It is also interpreted from the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 that working in partnership with regional entities provides the opportunity for a better return on investment for Sport England; this is underlined in the following interview extract:

> *You will get a bigger bang for your buck, Sport England, in terms of your strategic objectives, because we have marshalled a system here of 10 local authorities, police and fire service, 27 health bodies and clinical commissioning groups and foundation trusts and mental health trusts. We have got governance that we can plug you straight into and nowhere else in the country can do that presently.*

(Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted here that the opportunity of partnering with GMCA and GMHSCP advances past the inter-organisational relationship, due to the governance that has been developed over the past 32 years through integrated working between the Association of GM Authorities, and enhanced by the work of GMCA since 2011. The opportunity presented by the governance architecture is covered in document analysis in Chapter 5 and will be explored in more depth in Section 6.5; it is interpreted that this is the opportunity for a better return for Sport England, who are under increased pressure to justify their use of public funding and evidence their contribution to wider social outcomes for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

6.3.7 Evidencing contribution

The thematic analysis in Appendix 8 also indicates that engaging with regional entities enables Sport England to evidence their contribution to wider direct and indirect benefits of sport and physical activity, as required by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to justify their funding. This is emphasised by the following interview extract:

It is ultimately for them to be able to evidence what the role of sport, leisure, physical activity, etc. is going to be making for health and wellbeing. How does that filter into National Health Service outcomes? How does that filter into GM Combined Authority expectations around understanding and stating a case for physical activity? You know, is it helping us to get people more well? More people in work? More people skilled up? […] and having that broader understanding.

(Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving

Executive Group)

The document analysis suggests that the central remit of the Sporting Future policy is to focus on how sport and physical activity can transform people's lives, as this will have wider benefits for the economy and justify the funding invested in Sport England beyond sport for sport's sake (DCMS, 2015). It is interpreted by the researcher that engaging with regional entities, whose sole focus is to deliver similar outcomes for citizens, strategically enhances the national sport organisation's ability to fulfil and evidence that remit.

6.4 Organisational constraints

The following section outline the factors identified from the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 that the researcher interprets have constrained the relationship, including:

- Organisation culture
- Organisational pace.
- Organisational language.
- Organisational working practice.
- Partnership planning.

6.4.1 Organisational culture

It is found in the thematic analysis in Appendix 8 that as interaction is required between the Partnership members on the GM Moving Executive Group and members within each organisation, organisational variations create challenges for integrated working, as highlighted in this interview extract:

That is what's so interesting about it – it is different, the culture of those organisations is different, and the language of them is different. The way they operate and the way things get done are different and they are coming together under devolution.

(Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

The researcher interprets that the opportunity provided by devolution (which is supported by document analysis in Chapter 5) also brings with it a range of challenges, as organisations operate in different ways using different language across different sectors and competing cultures. Specific variations will now be explored in more detail.

6.4.2 Organisational pace

A consistent theme that emerges in the thematic analysis in Appendix 8 is that Sport England is not able to match the pace of working in GM. It is suggested that regional entities are working at a much faster pace than the national sport organisation and that this creates a challenge for the GM Moving Executive Group. The researcher interprets, from both thematic analysis of interview data and document analysis, that the central reason behind the faster pace at the regional level is the time frames attached to the devolution agreement. The pace of development is highlighted in this interview statement:

> *I think Sport England have agreed to the principles of the MoU because they believe in them. So, those principles have to drive how they all work and that is a challenge because it is a different way and you know, for Greater Manchester everything is very much at pace. It is so fast, and the national system currently can't respond to that.*

(CEO, Greater Sport)

The slower pace of Sport England has led to the GM Moving Executive Group not developing at the intended pace, with little progress being achieved between the signing of the MoU and the end of board interviews in March 2017. The thematic analysis also indicates that local perspectives acknowledge the slower pace of the national sport organisation, as suggested in interview here:

> *The progress of the work with Sport England has been fairly slow. From our perspective, it has been very slow. We are very supportive of the vision and the objectives around the MoU and the work going forward but likewise there are a number of priorities we have wanted to pursue more immediately.*

(Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active)

It is interpeted by the researcher that the pace of development creates a challenge to progression as a system, with individual organisations wanting to move faster and so opting to work independently, creating a potential conflict between agencies in the system and a lack of synergy. An example of this has been working towards the pilot projects being launched by Sport England:

…something about timing and aligning of pace […] So, the GM pace is phenomenal! The rate at which things get done is phenomenal. I guess over the period I have been here and prior you probably can sense that. For example, Greater Manchester is wanting to crack on and accelerate the pace, but there are certain things that need to happen. So, for example, the local delivery pilot conversations with Sport England have taken a year to go around that, apply, stage 1, stage 2 etc. […] the decision will have been a year, near enough. So, there is a little bit of impatience to crack on with stuff.

(Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active)

It is interpreted that the requirement to move at pace is created by the time frames of the devolution agreement and the need for GM to demonstrate progress in the new way of working, with the 'carrot' of increasing the devolution budget to £22 billion. Unfortunately, national hierarchical systems put in place by Sport England delay the pace at which the GM Moving Executive Group can progress forward and constrain the opportunity to deliver within the required time frames.

A range of competing perspectives also emerge from the thematic analysis on why the pace of development is slow. It is interpreted that, despite the time frames attached to devolution, the focus of the GM Moving Executive Group work is to achieve transformation of sport and physcial activity delivery, which requires a balance between getting decisions right based on evidence/insight and achieving the correct pace of development (this was mentioned in interview by the Strategic Manager for the GM Moving Executive Group). Another competing perspective is that the hierarchical structures in GM also delay the pace of working, as although the GM Moving Executive Group is formed at a senior level in GM, it also has to report into hierarchical structures for authorisation; these hierarchical structures present a constraint to organisational working, as highlighted by this interviewee:

I think that is the other challenge, it is for all of us sitting around the board, to be quite nimble. I think we can, because although we have got, you know, a billion to spend and things like that and we are a national organisation, we are not that hierarchical, we actually have quite a lot of power. I have also found that the NHS can move quite nimbly, which actually was a big surprise to me. The thing that has often held us up is the local government side of it. That 'yes, we all want to do this, but we will have to take it to our ten councils', or 'we will at least have to take it to our leaders' group'.

(Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

The hierarchy in GM is here identified as a challenge to the pace of partnership working, with Sport England having the power to make decisions, whereas GMCA require consensus between local councils and leaders. Evidence to support this statement from Sport England is that the Executive Director of Sport England was able to allocate an additional £1 million of investment to the GM Moving Executive Group during the first meeting (as documented in Chapter 5 and to be explored further in Chapter 7). However, as acknowledged by the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA (Chapter 5), even the Mayor has to gain agreement from the rest of the authorities in GM, providing checks and balances all the way through the constitutional settlement. It is evident here that both GM and Sport England have historical structures and processes in place that constrain the pace of inter-organisational working. However, they are also in place to reduce the chances of error and misuse of public funds and have to be respected, as identified in the document analysis of the MoU (Rowley, 2016a).

6.4.3 Organisational language

A further constraint identified from the thematic analysis is that when engaging in a cross-sector partnership there are variations in language between different organisations. It is interpreted that this refers to terms and acronyms used in health, local government and sport and physical activity varying, creating a challenge to partnership working. It is interpreted from the below interview extract (from the CEO of Action Together and voluntary sector representative on the GM Moving Executive Group) that this may result in some lack of understanding in meetings; however, it could also lead to incorrect decision making if partners do not question and check the understanding of what is being said. The interviewee said:

> *You know, you sit around a table and people use system language, and I genuinely think sometimes people have not got a clue what they are talking about and people do not say it. There is not enough honesty, in that people talk and talk and not very often do people go, 'What does that actually mean?' And not in a rude way!*

(CEO, Action Together and voluntary sector representative on the GM

Moving Executive Group)

The researcher interprets that the willingness to check understanding is essential to this way of working, as is an awareness from individuals talking in

specific organisational language that they need to break down what they are saying into a common and shared language. Critically, an in-depth understanding of what is being discussed is required to make accurate decisions. Language also needs to be considered in the production of shared documents, to ensure that terms used are inclusive of the whole system and reduce the potential for inaccurate judgements or a feeling of exclusion from the narrative due to a lack of understanding. Document analysis of board minutes was not permitted, restricting the researcher from corroborating this issue of language as a constraint in the relationship.

6.4.4 Organisational working practice

From the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 it is interpreted that for regional partners, experience working in partnership in the GM system through a range of MoUs brings with it suggestions about the most appropriate ways of working. It interpreted that leaders and managers need to be able to operate across organisational boundaries. It is found in the thematic analysis that operating across organisational boundaries is a new approach for staff of the national sport organisation, as it results in multiple lines of accountability (to Sport England, GMCA, NHSGM and Greater Sport). Using the Public Health MoU as an example, the Head of Public Health reports to the National Director, Sir Duncan Selby, as well as to Jon Rouse, the Head of the Health and Social Care in GM, weaving (i.e. integrating external staff into GM structures and systems as GM members of staff) into the GMHSCP structures. Having multiple lines of accountability is in contrast to the clear hierarchical structure in which Sport England staff have worked before, with one line of accountability to Sport England. However, it is the approach of weaving national staff into regional structures that is suggested for national sport organisation employees in this interview response:

> *So, my ask of Sport England would be, like the Centre for Ageing Better have done, like Public Health England have done, national organisations have signed MoUs with GM, and they have taken their staff and they have woven them into the GM structures.*
>
> (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

It is interpreted that the approach of weaving Sport England staff into GM structures brings with it the potential to break down organisational boundaries to support the development of the GM Moving Executive Group. A contrasting

perspective identified in the thematic analysis is the option for Sport England staff to 'tap in and tap out', which means for staff to drop in to support regional entities in GM, as and when required, as in this example given in interview:

> What I would like to see is, so, Active Ageing is all about tackling inactivity, so some of the people that sit in my inactivity team will also be spending time up in Manchester, helping them write the bid, the collective objectives, the simple measurement, so people will kind of tap in and out as needed supporting that local team.
>
> (Executive Director for Community Sport, Sport England)

It is interpreted by the researcher that there are two competing approaches: one is weaving employees into the GM system, the other is for Sport England to drop employees in to provide support and insight as and when required. It is interpreted that one of the challenges highlighted by this is the resource and capacity required by a national sport organisation for partnership working. Thus, it is interpreted by the researcher that it would be difficult for an organisation such as Sport England to resource this type of partnership working with all local authorities, placing greater emphasis on the role of regional partnerships. Quantitative assessment on the resource spent on strategic management capacity is out of the remit of this research, but its requirement for board effectiveness is documented in more depth in Chapter 7.

6.4.5 Partnership planning

Document analysis indicates that the principles and practices for partnership working are made clear in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a), through extensive work by Linden Rowley with stakeholders across GM and the GM Moving blueprint (2015). However, it is perceived that this needs to be reinforced through a revised GM Moving plan (2017) with common agendas and timelines in an agreed action plan, otherwise the integrated way of working may be effective in principle but poor in practice. It is interpreted by the researcher that a lack of planning in the early stages of the GM Moving Executive Group has been seen as a constraint to partnership working. Furthermore, the thematic analysis in Appendix 8 indicates that the Partnership lacked clear direction through a solid action plan or roadmap to move the MoU forward (this was mentioned in interview by the Deputy Director of Population Health). The large number of potential opportunities only adds to this issue for the GM Moving

Executive Group and further emphasises the requirement for agreement on a set of priorities to move the work forward and monitor progress. A lack of planning and agreement is clear from this interview statement:

> *We have not got a programme plan that sits behind the MoU, there is a draft action plan, but it has not been agreed as such*.

<div align="right">(CEO, Greater Sport)</div>

It is interpreted that this lack of planning has made it difficult for the board to pursue the opportunities. Due to the size of the GM Moving agenda, the requirement for detailed planning, and for effectively communicating those plans, becomes critical to the success of partnership working. The below interview extract (from the Population Health Project Manager) indicates that the consequence of a lack of planning has left some management employees unclear about the focus and opportunity provided by the MoU:

> *I would look at not necessarily the purpose, but more, 'What does this allow us to do that we could not do before?' So, clarity on, 'OK, we have got this MoU – what does that mean? What can we do that we could not do before? What opportunities does this represent? What barriers does this remove?'*

<div align="right">(Project Manager, Population Health)</div>

It is interpreted from the above interview extract that the lack of planning that frustrates senior board members has also frustrated management employees. The MoU sets the purpose; however, a clear plan is required to communicate its benefits and provide clarity for management employees. It is found from the thematic analysis that there has been a lack of progress since the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group with regards to planning and communication of plans to management-level employees.

One of the main reasons for this is the lack of strategic management capacity for the GM Moving Executive Group. It is acknowledged that, with the introduction of the Strategic Manager, progress has been made, with the revision of the GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017) as a document to direct the GM Moving Executive Group vision. The requirement for strategic management capacity is documented in more depth in Chapter 7; however, document analysis identifies that the priorities in the revised GM Moving plan (2017) are still vast and that the only performance measure included is an output of participation levels for the whole GM population. Furthermore, the

thematic analysis indicates that improvements could have been made to the planning process by completing a thorough audit of current sport and physical activity practice, as indicated in this interview extract:

> *So, Sport England have led on the implementation plan for GM Moving and they have conducted a consultancy exercise around that plan, which we have been involved with. I do not think the plan has been produced on a thorough enough audit; so, I think the plan has significant weaknesses as a result of that.*

(CEO of a leisure trust)

It is interpreted from the thematic analysis that a lack of thorough audit of current sport and physical activity practice in GM has resulted in a lack of understanding and also reduced the opportunity to add value to current practice. It is postulated by the researcher that the risk here is that services that are currently being provided may be duplicated by the GM Moving Executive Group, introducing increased competition into the market and wasting resources. That being said, attempts have been made to engage all providers with implementation planning through the Strategic Manager, stakeholder workshops and the governance architecture (which will be explored in more depth in Section 6.6). In addition to inter-organisational relationships, another theme that emerges from the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 is extra-organisational relationships; this theme will now be explored in more depth.

6.5 Extra-organisational relationships

As documented in Section 6.1.4, a key extra-organisational relationship (i.e. outside of the Partnership) is with the CSP Greater Sport. However, the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 indicates that the GM governance architecture creates extra-organisational relationships across the whole system. It is interpreted that the governance architecture illustrated in Chapter 5 provides the structure to connect the GM system with the GM Moving Executive Group. Through these extra-organisational relationships, the GM Moving Executive Group is fed information from the GM Moving Leadership Group, the board that was originally established to develop the GM Moving blueprint (2015). An interviewee described the role of the GM Moving Executive Group in the GM architecture:

So, the proposal is to have the steering group, which is broad and representative of all those 12 areas of the plan, feeding into an executive group, which is almost like the filter through to the key decision making.

(Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

The governance architecture illustrated in Figure 8 clearly shows the flow of information from a range of boards across the system into the GM Moving Leadership Group and then up to the GM Moving Executive Group, which then reports into GMHSCP and the Reform Board for wider decisions in GM. It is interpreted that a further benefit provided by the governance architecture is that it goes beyond the flow of information for decision making based on best practice. It is interpreted from the thematic analysis that the utilisation of the governance architecture is also outlined as a potential delivery mechanism. An example of the governance structure as a delivery mechanism is highlighted in this interview extract:

You have got the GM Leadership Group that exists and the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing in GM chairs. So, that could be a route to task that group with doing that, and we will task the provider network to do that.

(CEO, Greater Sport)

It is important to acknowledge that the governance architecture may also create conflict within the system, as its hierarchical structure outlines different levels of influence (as documented in the governance illustration in Section 5.1.1). It is interpreted by the researcher that if providers are only present on the GM Moving Leadership Group, they will be removed from the decision making of the GM Moving Executive Group. This restricts providers from having any power in decision making and critically elevates the CSP to a level of influence over the combined leisure trusts, as opposed to the supporting role that they play in counties across England.

It is also interpreted that the governance architecture provides the opportunity to embed sport and physical activity into local delivery systems, as stated in interview:

For any success of delivery, it needs to be embedded in local delivery structures so it is not a completely separate project or programme, where you are bringing in an army of people to deliver something that stands alone, has a start and finish, goes great but then you never hear of it again. Whereas, if it is embedded into the work of our local care

organisations in GM, into schools, our housing associations […] any of those partners where they are not going to go away.

(Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active)

It is interpreted by the researcher that through extra-organisational relationships, the GM Moving Executive Group can integrate into the system. Thus, the work produced by the GM Moving Executive Group moves away from a programme-based activity that starts and ends; instead, the opportunity is created for interventions to be maintained by the system, creating more sustainable delivery that continues to deliver outcomes and provide a long-term return on investment. What is evident from the thematic analysis in Appendix 8, and document analysis in Section 5.1.1, is that the governance architecture extends beyond the organisations included in the governance illustration, with the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA acknowledging the role of GMCA and GMHSCP in marshalling a system of clinical commissioning groups and mental health trusts. Furthermore, the potential role of housing associations and schools is highlighted in the interview given by the Strategic Partnership and Development Manager for GM Active. These additions to the governance architecture require a revised illustration, as documented in Section 8.2.1.

6.6 Integrated governance

It is interpreted by the researcher that a picture starts to develop here, that within community sport governance in GM there are multiple governance mechanisms being utilised and integrated together, through inter-organisational relationships between the organisations in the Partnership and extra-organisational relationships through the governance architecture. It has been identified in earlier sections that although collective working is evident, hierarchical mechanisms are still in place, both between national and regional entities and within the regional system (as discussed in Section 6.4.2); further, that the governance architecture involves both horizontal integration across sectors and agencies in the GM system and vertical integration between strategic and operational levels that deliver services, with various levels of influence indicated from the document analysis. The sub-themes of horizontal integration and vertical integration that make up the theme of integrated governance (as documented in Appendix 8) will now be explored further.

6.6.1 Horizontal integration

It is interpreted by the researcher that horizontal integration extends beyond sectors, departments and agencies in GM. It is found from the thematic analysis in Appendix 8 that there is a requirement to develop integration across the ten localities, co-producing initiatives that have evidence of working across each of the ten localities to provide more consistency to delivery across the conurbation. The requirement for horizontal integration across localities is underlined in this interview extract:

> *We are looking at ten authorities and putting these initiatives in ten authorities and actually [...] it is horizontal to the demands. So, this initiative linked to this other initiative. So, the place-based organisation where we are involved and do all this co-production stuff is really important.*

(Strategic Lead, GMCA)

Horizontal integration with organisations outside the GM Moving Executive Group provides the opportunity to collect best practice between sectors, organisations and localities. An example of horizontal integration across localities in practice is all the leisure trusts in GM coming together to form GM Active in 2015. A GM Active representative suggested:

> *The second theme was about service development. So that was about how we could look at how we could deliver services perhaps collectively across GM, but also (probably more importantly) about sharing best practice and where we know things are working really well [...] we could look at scaling that up or certainly sharing it in a peer to peer way across the city-region.*

(Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active)

It is interpreted by the researcher that integration of services across the GM localities enables each organisation to learn what is working well and provides the opportunity to scale up best practice across each locality. The formation of GM Active provides a good example of horizontal integration and the opportunity for insight into current pracitce in sport and physical activity to be shared with the GM Moving Executive Group.

In addition to horizontal integration regionally, horizontal integration in localities is also identified from the thematic analysis in Appendix 8. The opportunity to integrate services focusing on shared outcomes is found to be in place in some

localities, but not all. It is interpreted that the opportunity to work horizontally across services within localities and replicate the GM system presents a clear opportunity to achieve outcomes and enhance the ability of the GM Moving Executive Group to collect insight and deliver services. This is emphasised in the following interview response:

> *Even though you have got your integrated ways of working across Greater Manchester, […] as part of the strategic framework across Greater Manchester […], you have not got that whole system at localities […], but where it is starting to work, it is starting to achieve good outcomes. I think that place-based integration is working, and the models of that systems thinking and all of that, that does seem to be having an effect and makes sense in my view around achieving some of those outcomes.*

> (CEO, Action Together and a voluntary sector representative on the GM Moving Executive Group)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the opportunity to replicate the whole-system approach that is being developed at a GM level in localities, using a systems approach, provides a route for information to be shared and fed up to the GM Moving Executive Group through the governance architecture. Integration in localities requires the development of shared strategy across localities, with national and regional sport and physical activity embedded. An example of an integrated strategy is Heart of Wigan, as stated in interview:

> *So, everything we intend to do, to improve life expectancy, healthy life expectancy all of those measures, physical activity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, etc., […] all of our performance measures are all collated for health and wellbeing in that one place, which is Heart of Wigan.*

> (Health commissioner, Local Authority)

By embedding sport and physical activity into overall health and wellbeing strategy at a locality level, a golden thread is created from national, to regional, to local and neighbourhood levels, which also enables information on progress to be fed back up to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The thematic analysis also indicates that horizontal integration extends down to the neighbour level in GM. An example is provided in this interview extract:

> *Place-based integration is neighbourhood working, but the idea is that you bring together services to work at a place level. So, there are a couple of examples of it, one in Platt Bridge in Wigan and one in Hyde in Tameside. They have someone from housing, someone from*

troubled families, someone from employment services, adult services, police, maybe fire, and they all sit together as one organisation working for the betterment of that place.

<div align="right">(Strategic Lead, GMCA)</div>

It is interpreted by the researcher that bringing organisations together provides a range of perspectives on the same issue and an opportunity to share insight collected from each service, to provide a more holistic view on tackling issues through the co-location of services.

6.6.2 Vertical integration

The importance of engaging not just at a regional level but at a local level is also emphasised by the requirement for vertical integration, from national to regional to local authorities and neighbourhoods. However, different perspectives are evident on how this should happen between regional and local entities. One view suggests this could be through partners already on the GM Moving Executive Group, with their networks and their positions on other boards in the GM system. Other views suggest a wider representation is required on the board. The requirement for vertical integration is interpreted from the thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8. The requirement to integrate GM work with local authorities is emphasised by this interviewee's suggestion:

> *There was a notion around this whole making sure that whatever we do at a GM level connects in with the localities. So, I think from a capability point of view, there is a real need to understand the GM landscape, but also understand how that lands in the ten [localities…] Now in many ways they connect anyway because they are being driven by central plans. However, they all land slightly differently and they have all got their own demographics and priorities locally.*

<div align="right">(CEO, Greater Sport)</div>

It is interpreted that engaging local organisations is of critical importance to the ability of the board to function, as it requires all organisations within the system to be empowered and not feel the work is being forced upon them in a top-down mechanism. It is also important if the efficiency benefits of the new GM system identified in Section 6.3.5 are to be realised. The thematic analysis suggests that it is crucial that the system acts as one entity, to provide a single line of communication for the national sport organisation. The alternative to this would be to have one connection between GM and Sport England in

addition to bilateral agreements between individual local authorities, creating duplication of effort and diminished opportunity to address issues at scale.

To engage with local entities, the GM Moving Executive Group held stakeholder workshops, to present information and gain insight from across the localities. Thematic analysis idientifies that it was perceived that this was another way of regional entities taking credit for local work, using staff funded by local organisations, and that alternative approaches could produce better results. It was suggested:

> *…it could be improved by the board determining strategic level leadership in each locality and charging each of those with providing the insight coming from that locality. Because then you are not just getting good ideas on post-it notes at workshops, you are tapping into local strategies and the insight at a strategic level […]. [There is] something we have in Tameside called the Active Alliance; so, as a leisure provider, we have 13 key stakeholders, including housing associations, Age UK, local health care and foundation trusts. We have a strategic plan with those organisations locally.*
>
> (CEO of a leisure trust)

It is interpreted that integrated working at the local level provides the opportunity to feed information up to the GM Moving Executive Group in a more direct manner, either through the governance architecture or through direct representation on the GM Moving Executive Group.

As highlighted earlier, the governance architecture plays a crucial role in connecting the system both horizontally and vertically. However, further engagement outside of the governance architecture is highlighted in this interview comment:

> *Next week, I need to go to Bolton, spend a whole day in Bolton, meeting all sorts of different people who live in Bolton to understand that place better. What is going on? How does all of this GM stuff interact with what they are trying to do locally? How can we support them rather than make demands of them? And I just think if you are not careful, I could spend my whole working life going between Churchgate House, Piccadilly Place and the Greater Sport offices, meeting lots of different people, but not get out of Manchester that much.*
>
> (Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is identified from the thematic analysis that there is a focus to engage with local entities in the different boroughs of GM, to attempt to bring the regional and local work together, but importantly to work in a supporting rather than a

demanding role. This focus suggests that although Greater Sport has been elevated onto the GM Moving Executive Group and the Strategic Manager of the Partnership is employed by Greater Sport, it sees itself in a supporting, rather than controlling role.

The thematic analysis indicates that despite evident efforts to engage with local authorities and develop a systems approach through the governance architecture, there is still some tension between regional entities and local organisations, partly due to the severe cuts facing local authorities and the growth of regional structures and capacity. It is also clear from local perspectives that there is a tension between providers and regional level organisations such as Greater Sport. It is interpreted that the direction of investment into regional entities during a period of severe cuts for local services is a concern, as is the suspicion that the regional organisations are taking credit for the provider's work. This is emphasised by the following extract from an interview:

> *I think that is a dilemma for Greater Sport and the GM Moving Executive Group […]; in order to achieve their outcomes they have to get everyone together. So, if Greater Sport and the GM Moving Executive Group report on what they have achieved, but they have not done it, it's other partners that have done it […] And also, you have got to work, and it is a difficult balance between how you can influence what has been delivered without taking ownership, and the other side of that is not pissing off the deliverers […] that you are taking all the credit for what they have delivered […]. I suppose, in a nutshell, to summarise, that connection with local, and between regional and local, is making it relevant. It is about taking everyone with you. And that is about relationships and partnerships. And I suppose it is about maybe being clever, cleverer around how we use information, how we share information, how we learn from each other. We do bits of it, but we don't do anything at scale.*

(CEO of a leisure trust)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the view that organisations working on strategy in GM are not contributing to delivery creates a real challenge for the system and integration, essentially creating conflict, rather than making the system more effective. The thematic analysis documented in Appendix 8 suggests that clarity is required on the role that each organisation plays and the contribution that role brings to the system, to reduce conflict created through systems working and ensure credit is shared equally; further, that

progress needs to be made in terms of acting at scale across GM through integrated working.

6.6.3 Multiple governance mechanisms in integrated governance

The thematic analysis indicates that integrated governance, through multiple governance mechanisms that enable vertical and horizontal integration, is evident in the GM system. For example, it is interpreted by the researcher that hierarchical mechanisms have been maintained in GM despite a long history of collaboration. This is emphasised in the following extract from an interview:

> *Something just came into my mind, which was about hierarchies and systems. Also, the balance between – so there is a sense here I think of anyone can talk to anyone. There isn't an 'oh, you can't talk to them because they are at the top of the tree and you are not'. There is a real commitment to creating leaders throughout the system. And an acknowledgement that it is a sort of messy, complex system, while at the same time we've got a very hierarchical structure still. Which we have got to have. From a decision-making perspective you have got to have that hierarchy in place. One of the things, the other challenge of this work, is getting the best out of this very complex system and growing that and making it stronger and engaging people with the work. And then interfacing that with taking things through a decision-making process and the hierarchical world that we live in.*

(Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is interpreted from the thematic analysis that although there is a focus on horizontal collaboration between organisations within the GM system, that vertical hierarchy in GM is maintained in the same way that national sport organisations' hierarchy is maintained: through a competitive bidding process for funds (as documented in Section 6.4.2). This hierarchical structure in GM is supported by document analysis of the governance architecture (as documented in Section 5.1.1). However, despite the hierarchy there is a requirement to develop leaders across the system, which relates to board processes and is explored in more depth in Chapter 7.

In addition to the use of hierarchy to support decision making in collaborative work, it is also found from the thematic analysis that delivery of sport and physical activity is managed by contracts. This interview extract emphasises the interviewee's role in the management of contracts:

So, I am Head of Service for public health, youth services, leisure and sport […] There is a number of services within that, as it would suggest. But one is mainly around public health, which is around commissioning support, business development and business planning and financial planning around business and public health. Then that is quite in brief. But what I also do is I manage the leisure contracts. So, I look after all the leisure facilities as if I am a client, from a management commissioner's perspective. And so, that included the building of leisure centres and what was in them, but also commissioning the leisure contracts to actually run them and then the day to day management of that contract.

(Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving

Executive Group)

It is interpreted from the thematic analysis that although the governance architecture uses collaboration and horizontal integration to collect data and insight, delivery is managed by leisure contracts using market-based governance mechanisms. The scenario this creates for leisure providers is indicated by this interview response:

…the risk here for organisations like myself is, if we don't deliver the outcomes which our commissioner wants, which is improving healthy life expectancy, we lose a contract. So, this is no, the stakes are not low here. We have to perform. And, unlike Sport England, we have not got the luxury of time. We are measured quarterly and annually. So how long has the GM Moving strategy been on the shelf, three or four years? What is the impact and who is holding the custodians of that strategy to account about the impact?

(CEO of a leisure trust)

A request for a copy of a contract from a leisure provider was not followed through. However, the use of contracts is also identified from another interview:

There is a contract for, in different areas for different things. In Tameside it is called a core contract. So essentially it is around, they give us some core resource through which it allows us to build, to attract other funding in. It has some outcomes attached to it, but it isn't procured with a contract, it is more of an ongoing grant arrangement. Which is very positive. In Oldham it is a contract, it has been wavered a number of years, so it is not open tender because essentially, […] we are a community anchor organisation really.

(CEO of Action Together and voluntary sector representative on the GM

Moving Executive Group)

It is interpreted by the researcher that although contracts are also used with voluntary organisations, with required outcomes attached to the funding, the

relationship revolves much less around market mechanisms, which is found to be positive for voluntary sector leaders. However, it is interpreted by the researcher that in a mature system like GM that has used collaborative working over the past 30 years, vertical integration is still found that respects hierarchical mechanisms to benefit decision making and market mechanisms for delivery of services. The thematic analysis indicates that longer-term agreements based on outcomes are viewed more favourably than quarterly based performance management. These findings will be interpreted in relation to the wider academic literature in Chapter 8.

6.7 Conclusion

Integrated working at a regional level provides the opportunity for Sport England to test a strategic and integrated approach to working and progress past the traditional siloed approach. The use of an MoU is found to be a way of formalising the move away from a siloed approach. Moreover, it progresses historical integrated working on sport and physical activity in GM by bringing on board senior representatives from Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM, who have increased ability to make and influence decisions regionally and nationally. The coming together of senior representatives is enabled through strategic alignment of regional strategy focused on outcomes. This regional alignment has enabled Sport England to engage with regional entities after the introduction of the new Sporting Future strategy, focused on five social outcomes. Furthermore, the strategic alignment has enabled the embedding of sport and physical activity into core strategy in GM as part of the system, as opposed to operating in isolation. The integration of strategy has enabled the organisations of the Partnership to explore opportunities for co-commissioning, co-design and co-production as part of wider public service reform. The new approach progresses past the old bidding model, which was deemed time and resource intensive for regional entities and which produced programmes that were not aligned to regional objectives and funds.

It is suggested that the new approach improves efficiency for Sport England, and the opportunity to produce and evidence a better return. However, it is argued that the development of a regional-level partnership can also reduce efficiency by creating an additional tier. Additionally, it has been found that, despite the potential of the new approach, integrated working is constrained

by a range of factors, including contrasts in pace of working, language, structure and working practice and planning. It is acknowledged that due to the resource intensity of weaving into regional systems, other Sport England employees will drop into GM to provide additional capacity as and when required. The revised GM Moving strategy and implementation plan have progressed the strategic work into practice; however, it is argued that the implementation plan could be improved if it was based on a more thorough audit of current sport and physical activity practice in GM, to ensure it is adding value to current practice.

There is empirical evidence that, in the community sport context in GM, progress is made beyond inter-organisational relationships to extra-organisational relationships, to provide a more holistic way of working within a regional system. The development of extra-organisational relationships through the governance architecture provides insight to the GM Moving Executive Group. Furthermore, these relationships act as delivery routes that can be embedded into GM structures to enable long-term sustainable delivery of services, as opposed to time-phased interventions. Critically, it is vital that regional working is connected with localities and neighbourhoods, and the governance architecture provides the central mechanism for integration. Additional attempts to engage local entities have been made through the Strategic Manager of the Partnership visiting localities and stakeholder workshops, with regional entities keen to ensure they are supporting local organisations. Unfortunately, despite attempts to engage, conflict is present between regional and local entities, with a perception that, during a period of austerity, significant investment is being drawn into the centre of GM and that regional entities such as Greater Sport take credit for work done in localities. It can be argued that a higher-level strategic relationship is required between sport and physical activity providers and the GM Moving Executive Group, and that conflict of interest can be managed in the same way here as it is managed by Greater Sport.

The opportunity for integrated working across the conurbation is suggested through the horizontal integration of services to provide consistency in delivery and share best practice. This integrated working across services is also evident in localities through integrated plans (such as Heart of Wigan) and at

a neighbourhood level (in areas such as Hyde and Tameside), demonstrating place-based working at the neighbourhood level. It is found that in addition to integrated plans, shared outcomes are central to the process of integration in the same way that the new DCMS strategy has enabled integration between Sport England and regional entities. Although a mature level of collaborative working has been identified through horizontal integration, vertical integration is found to include hierarchical and market mechanisms in an integrated governance system. Central to this integrated governance, the programme board the GM Moving Executive Group has been formed within the governance architecture. It has been identified through thematic analysis (documented in Appendix 9) that, in addition to being dependent on context and on integration between national and regional entities, the ability of this board to function and develop is influenced by micro-level board member and strategic management inputs. The following chapter will provide empirical evidence on the micro-level (i.e. board) dynamics that influence the Partnership and its programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group.

7.0 Findings on Micro-level Influences

It was identified in the literature review that Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) build on the findings of Dulewicz et al. (1995), Edwards and Cornforth (2003), Ferkins et al. (2005) and Ferkins (2007), to highlight the influence of board member inputs and board processes on the ability to achieve optimal performance. The following chapter brings together the empirical evidence from the three stages of data collection on the micro-level board member inputs and processes of the GM Moving Executive Group. The empirical findings will be discussed in relation to the existing literature in Chapter 8.

At the micro level, document analysis indicates that it is crucial for board members to understand the principles and processes and participate in regular meetings and communication (Rowley, 2016a). In addition, there is a requirement for decisions to be based on insight currently held by both Sport England and regional entities in GM (Rowley, 2016a); that insight needs to be collected on practice in each locality, to address the incoherent approach across the ten boroughs (Rowley, 2016a). It is suggested that review of what works locally, nationally and internationally is required to enable shared insight, scaling up good practice and decommissioning what isn't working (Rowley, 2016a). Further evidence of micro-level processes is found through document analysis of the MoU (see Appendix 6). For example, it is identified that the whole-system approach requires joined-up conversations, a shared framework and shared metrics, to empower residents and demonstrate impact in radically upgrading population health and transformation of public services in GM to contribute to the five social outcomes outlined in the Sporting Future strategy (DCMS, 2015).

From the analysis of interview data documented in the thematic table in Appendix 9, under the wider themes of board inputs and board processes, sub-themes that both enable and constrain the GM Moving Executive Group are identified. These sub-themes include strategic skill of board members: board members must be able to think and act strategically based on experience. It will be highlighted how strategic skill within the Partnership is matched by passion and will within GM to resolve stubborn inequalities; further, that board member will is particularly important, due to the requirement to operate multiple workstreams and roles, to connect the system and integrate GM roles

into locality core business. The interview analysis indicates that a key constraint is board member capacity; however, it is identified that board members must see this work as part of their main roles and responsibilities to GM, as opposed to additional voluntary work. In addition to strategic skill and will of board members, board member power will also be discussed and how the position of board members in their existing organisations enables them to make financial decisions and influence other members in the system. Interview analysis and document analysis show that operational knowledge is provided by the governance architecture feeding insight into the GM Moving Executive Group from the wider system. Furthermore, the interview analysis indicates that the new chair of GM Active supports input through the governance architecture, as opposed to wider representation on the board, progressing through the potential conflict identified in Chapter 5. Strategic management capacity has been found from analysis of interview data to be a key input to progress the work of the Partnership. However, there is concern for the investment into regional capacity during periods of continued cuts in local authorities. It is interpreted by the researcher that this places increased pressure on the Partnership to evidence the contribution of the new way of working to social outcomes and justify the initial investment in regional capacity.

The interview analysis documented in the thematic table in Appendix 9 also identifies board processes that are present, such as shared leadership. However, it also emerges from the interview analysis that there is a requirement for systems leadership to enable individuals to connect with the governance architecture and integrate with the system both within and beyond the board. Monitoring and control processes, such as reviewing the board, identifying its visible and hidden value and its progress towards the development of common outcomes across the conurbation, are also identified through analysis of interview data. Furthermore, the focus on learning is consistent across perspectives in the interview anlaysis, with the opportunity to scale up learning from localities across GM. The interview analysis also indicates that early stages of shared commons, such online digital platforms, are being developed that could support the new approach and integration of public, private and voluntary sectors in an organisation-neutral approach. The enablers and constraints that have been identified at the micro level from

empirical data documented in Appendix 9 are summarised in Table 5 below and will be explained in more depth in sections 7.1 and 7.2.

Table 5: Micro-level enablers and constraints from empirical data

Micro-level enablers and constraints	
Enablers	**Constraints**
Board member strategic skill	Board member operational knowledge
Board member positions and power	Board member capacity
Board member will	Conflict between regional and local entities
Access to operational knowledge	Balancing learning and action
Shared and systems leadership	Lack of performance measures
Learning from insight and evidence	Using high-level data, not lived experience

7.1 Micro-level board inputs

It is interpreted by the researcher that the interview analysis documented in Appendix 9 indicates that the GM Moving Executive Group adds value to current integrated working in GM, above that of the GM Moving Leadership Group. The newly formed GM Moving Executive Group has two members of the original GM Moving Leadership Group – the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA (Chair of the Leadership Group) and the CEO of Greater Sport. It is identified from the interview analysis that the GM Moving Executive Group introduces senior-level representatives from the three Partner organisations – Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM – in addition to key stakeholders from GM (as illustrated in figures 6 and 7). The researcher interprets that the requirement for senior-level representatives is based on the GM Moving Executive Group being tasked with decision-making. The following interview extract emphasises the role of the GM Moving Executive Group in decision making:

> I would see that group as making the strategic decisions, right: yes, we are going to do this, no, we are not going to do that, this is how we unlock money from there, this is how we do it.

(CEO, Greater Sport)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the CEO of Greater Sport envisions the GM Moving Executive Group having the power and skill to make decisions on sport and physical activity on behalf of the GM system. The following sections

will indicate that interview analysis supports the notion that in order to make strategic decisions, board member strategic skill and board member position and power are key inputs, supported by board member will (as documented in the thematic table in Appendix 9). However, the analysis of interview data also indciates evident constraints, such as the capacity of members of the board, who are operating multiple roles at senior positions, and the operational knowledge necessitated by their strategic positions. Acknowledging these issues, the interview analysis indicates that the GM Moving Executive Group utilises its access to operational knowledge through the governance architecture, which is supported by document analysis in Chapter 5. How the interview analysis indicates that a strategic manager was required to resolve capacity issues will be discussed; this requirement is supported by document analysis of the MoU, which indicates the requirement for programme management. However, the analysis of interview data proposes that experienced system leaders do not see GM work or board responsibilities as voluntary or additional work. Instead, experienced system leaders have integrated their work on the GM Moving Executive Group into the core responsibilities of their day to day work within the GM system.

7.1.1 Board member strategic skill

It is interpreted by the researcher that, due to the strategic nature of the GM Moving Executive Group, experience, knowledge and skill are required to enable the board to make a strategic contribution. Further, that experience of strategy development is present within the Partnership from local government, health and social care and Sport England. This strategic experience is found to be present on the GM Moving Executive Group, with board members having experience in developing strategy for their organisations. The researcher interprets from the interview analysis in appendices 7, 8 and 9 that the board is made up of knowledgeable and competent individuals who have an understanding of national and regional strategy and can make effective decisions to enable the partnership to progress. It is interpreted by the researcher that the ability to make these decisions has been developed through years of experience in leadership positions within each organisation. It is found though interview anlaysis documented in Appendix 9 that the members' selection for the GM Moving Executive Group is based on their

experience and ability to think and act strategically, with board members having excellent reputations as system leaders, capable of working outside of their organisational boundaries to support the whole system. This capability is emphasised by the following extract from an interview:

> Ultimately.... they are the best minds, the best thinkers, the best connected and probably the most capable, from their knowledge and expertise.

(Health commissioner)

It is interpreted by the researcher that having strategic ability is seen as a central reason for being selected as a member of the GM Moving Executive Group. However, it is further interpreted by the researcher that it is how the ability is used that makes a difference to strategic contribution; members see beyond organisational or departmental boundaries and individual, organisational priorities and operational detail, to the bigger picture for the wider system and social outcomes. Seeing the bigger picture may require doing things differently and having a mind open to new directions and innovative concepts that call for brave and bold decisions.

The requirements for strategic ability and for seeing the bigger picture is supported by the analysis of interview data in Appendix 9, which indicates that it is necessary for board members to span across operations, strategy and policy. The researcher interprets that the ability to work across different areas requires a strategic attitude, not one fixated on operational delivery, which comes after years of experience of working at a strategic level and develops a more holistic understanding of each situation or barrier. This ability is highlighted here in interview:

> It comes down to having good individuals that can transcend those barriers, at an operational level, but also those people managing the relationship between the kind of policy and strategy side and its delivery.

(Strategic Lead, GMCA)

It is interpreted that to enable the board to function effectively, board members must be able to look beyond organisational boundaries and have a wider view of strategy and policy (as opposed to siloed working), which is supported by document analysis in Chapter 4. It is interpreted by the researcher that looking beyond organisational boundaries requires a more holistic understanding that

is developed through the experience of working at a strategic level. Furthermore, the interview analysis indicates that board members' senior positions bring with them the power to make decisions and influence members of the wider GM system.

7.1.2 Board member position

An emergent theme from the interview analysis documented in Appendix 9 is that members of the GM Moving Executive Group must hold senior positions in their respective organisations. It is interpreted by the researcher that the requirement for board members to maintain senior positions is based on several factors. Firstly, seniority provides credibility for the Partnership and legitimacy (as discussed in Section 6.3.3); also, the power to make decisions, bring resource into the GM Moving Executive Group and influence members of the wider system.

It is interpreted by the researcher from the list of board members interviewed (Appendix 2) that the GM Moving Executive Group is made up of people who hold senior positions in their respective organisations, and have the power to influence members of those organisations and the wider system. However, the interview analysis also indicates that board members require the authority to make decisions:

> I think the other thing is getting the level of person who […], and I am not a particularly hierarchical person […], but you need people sat around the board who do not have to refer everything back 25,000 times.
>
> (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

The requirement to be in a role that gives enough authority to make decisions is suggested as a key factor in board members being part of an exclusive group and in limiting wider representation on the board. It is interpreted by the researcher that decision-making power creates efficiency in partnership working, as decisions can be made quickly and within the GM Moving Executive Group. However, it must be acknowledged that within GM even the Mayor has to gain consensus from the local authorities. The need for hierarchical checks is emphasised in this interview extract:

> The mayor will require unanimous support of the combined authority […], so there is checks and balances all the way through the constitutional settlement that we have negotiated here.

However, the same interviewee goes on to note that he personally has power to shape resources in GM:

> I've got a responsibility around resources in the Combined Authority and bending them and we want to do all we can to support CEO for Greater Sport and the Strategic Manager of the Partnership in bringing forward these proposals for funding.

(Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted by the researcher that although members of the GM Moving Executive Group have the senior-level positions to make decisions on resource allocation within the board, some decisions will require sign off from more senior boards in both GMCA and GMHSCP, respecting a hierarchical structure that even the Mayor is controlled within.

It is interpreted by the researcher that the thematic table in Appendix 9 also indicates that the senior positions of board members provide influence over members of the wider GM system. The influence board members possess is highlighted in the following extract from an interview:

> So, they are key influential leaders, well, within Greater Manchester. They have a lot of presence […]. They are strong leaders; they have the ability to make change. They certainly have the access to the powers to do that and levers that exist to make the change.

(Project Manager, Population Health)

Further, the following interview extract reveals that the use of this influence to enhance the sport and physical activity agenda in GM is supported:

> So, what I mean by 'the influencers' is, sport and physical activity was on the agenda but actually it wasn't really on the agenda very highly. It […] was just being done; so, we ran leisure centres, we commissioned leisure centres and we commissioned a bit of physical activity and sport. Sport development and schools, we had all these things but actually it wasn't making a difference. So, the big output of that piece of work was about influencing the influencers, particularly the chief execs and making sure that not just sport and physical activity agenda but the wider agenda, i.e. adult social care, the whole of the housing, the police, making sure it was on their agenda.

(Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving

Executive Group)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the interview analysis indicates board members have the ability to influence the wider GM system and promote sport and physical activity as a preventative measure towards physical and mental

health, but also in wider areas such as homelessness and crime. Document analysis of regional strategy in Section 5.3.2 supports the notion that prominence of sport and physical activity has now been achieved in core strategies in GM.

7.1.3 Capacity

An evident constraint to the GM Moving Executive group identified through the interview analysis document in Appendix 9 is the capacity of board members, whose multiple roles create busy schedules. The problem of busy-ness is highlighted in this board member's interview statement:

> We cancelled the last board meeting […] I was double booked, and while this was important, I have a more important hub to go to, which is the bottom line.
>
> (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the lack of capacity to attend meetings due to competing commitments creates a challenge to the GM Moving Executive Group, as individual members prioritise other agendas. Further, that for progress to be made, discipline is required by each board member to attend meetings and value the GM Moving Executive Group when prioritising work commitments.

The Strategic Manager also highlights the lack of capacity of board members who hold senior positions:

> ...the people on the programme board and the key people closely involved in the work all have responsibilities outside of this work, and so it feels to me that they needed someone whose entire focus is this work. So, Yvonne, when she goes back, she has Greater Sport to run, Steven, when he goes back, has Tameside council. With all the best will in the world somebody has to say well, I will crack on with that, and this is my whole job, is perhaps where I will make the difference.
>
> (Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is interpreted by the researcher from the above interview extract that the lack of capacity of board members also creates a challenge for progressing work, and further, that the Strategic Manager is well aware of this issue and their role in providing the capacity and leadership underneath the board to move things forward, creating a key input for partnership working. This is related to the process of shared leadership and will be discussed in more detail in Section 7.2.1. The need for a strategic manager is also supported by document

analysis of the MoU, which indicates the key requirement for the board to introduce additional management capacity; this will be discussed in more depth in Section 7.1.6.

It is interpreted by the researcher that the regional entities are well resourced, and new roles (such as that of strategic manager) have been created to fill any void in board member capacity. However, the interview analysis in Appendix 9 indicates this is also an evident source of tension between organisations struggling under budget cuts, for example:

> So, I would find it difficult to imagine there was a people-resource issue that is affecting work at a programme level; I think it is well resourced. I think where the resources are more scarce are in the localities. That is not just as a provider, but also, I am fully aware that my client and the public health department in the local authority are really struggling [and have] lost a lot of people and a lot of capacity as a result.

> (CEO of a leisure trust)

It is interpreted by the researcher from the above interview extract that there is tension here with regional entities appearing to be well resourced, in comparison to local entities that are resource constrained due to austerity measures. What this further emphasises is the requirement for the GM Moving Executive Group to be able to recycle funds and evidence a positive impact on the deficit and the contribution of Sport England to national, regional and local outcomes.

It has also been identified though interview analysis that integrated working within the GM system requires the ability to manage multiple GM workstreams as part of the day to day roles of board members in localities. It is interpreted by the researcher that a key reason this is essential is that the alternative requires resource and capacity at the GM level, drawing resource into the centre, rather than out to the localities. It was suggested in interview:

> You know, we cannot create a huge industry at the centre to drive all this work. If we are thinking towards longer-term sustainability of making some of this happen and this change in culture and behaviours around system leadership, that to me is what it epitomises […], that we do it as part of our core business, instead of seeing it as an additional piece of work.

> (Director of Public Health)

What the Director of Public Health suggests here is based on their experience of operating and managing two workstreams at GM level while fulfilling their

locality commitment. Having people in multiple roles appears to demonstrate the path forward to achieve the GM ambition in spite of austerity measures from national government. It is interpreted by the researcher, however, that the requirement for multiple additional workstreams on top of day to day responsibilities may lead to excessive workload for senior leaders working in a resource-constrained environment. The interview anlaysis indicates that to manage these workloads, key requirements for board members working in this environment are commitment and the will to make a contribution.

7.1.4 Board member will

It is interpreted by the researcher that to enhance board contribution, the strategic ability of the board needs to be matched by will and commitment. The level of ambition, commitment and will to develop a sport and physical activity intervention that shifts towards the prevention of health issues and transforms people's lives is evident from the analysis of interview data documented in Appendix 9. The following key interview extract illustrates that the commitment to achieve population health improvement through prevention, using physical activity as part of the solution, is present in the GM system:

> You have got everybody around the table in terms of the system-reform side and to improve the health of the population as quickly as possible, and everybody understands the importance of physical activity in that. So, there is a system willingness around prevention that I have not seen in any other system […] It has been really interesting for me to come and see that all partners and all system leaders are bought into that […] You do not see that commitment and that sign of commitment elsewhere.

> (Deputy Director, Population Health)

It is interpreted by the researcher from the analysis of interview data that there is a real commitment to this agenda and a willingness to deliver the strategy, not just from individuals within the partnership, but for the system as a whole to achieve progress through the devolution agenda. Further, the interview data indicates that there is a high level of ambition and will within the GM Moving Executive Group and the wider GM system.

The commitment and desire and will to change inequalities is also acknowledged by national sport organisation employees, as emphasised by the following interview extract:

> One of the things that hit us and the consultants that did the first commissioning piece of work was the 'can-do' attitude, the 'we will'. From every strategic conversation, the 'we will' […], be it the Health and Social Care Partnership, be it the Combined Authority. There is a will to make it happen, and to really turn the juggernaut around in terms of all those stubborn inequalities.
>
> (Local Government Relationship Manager, Sport England)

It is interpreted by the researcher that not only is the will to achieve change a key requirement acknowledged through commissioning work, but it is also present in the GM Moving Executive Group, matching the strategic ability of the board members. The researcher interprets, however, that a critical factor will be ensuring that the GM Moving Executive Group is recognised as an important part of wider devolution for board members and that attendance is maintained. As board members occupy multiple roles in their positions as systems leaders, it is vital that the Board does not become sidelined by competing priorities perceived as more important, as acknowledged in the interview analysis in Appendix 9 and Section 7.1.3. Furthermore, it is interpreted by the researcher that the senior level of board members could bring into question how in touch they are with what is happening on the ground and their level of operational knowledge for decision making.

7.1.5 Operational knowledge

It is identified from the interview analysis documented in Appendix 9 that in addition to strategic skill, operational knowledge is present on the GM Moving Executive Group, with national and regional sport and physical activity advocates supported by GM local authority advocates. It is interpreted by the researcher that board additions of a health commissioner and voluntary sector representative add to this operational knowledge and suggest the board effectively straddles the commissioning, delivery and implementation roles. It is identified that operational knowledge is enhanced by steering groups such as the GM Moving Leadership Group, and the commissioner's leadership group (with a regular meeting held at Greater Sport each month), as well as GM Active. The new chair of GM Active has suggested that the lack of GM Active representation on the board was down to timing and that now is the right time to engage and the steering group is the right mechanism, feeding into the GM Moving Executive Group, as documented in Section 5.1.1. It was proposed in interview:

> We will regroup, and we will sit on the steering group that will bring the locality pilot work forward. In many ways, that is the right time for us to get fully engaged. What does this opportunity fully represent? What can we come to the table with? [Sharing], leading examples of what we do now. How can we help co-design the solutions that need to be taken forward?

(CEO of a leisure trust)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the governance architecture (as opposed to wider representation) as a route to support the GM Moving Executive Group is supported by the new chair of GM Active. This support is in contrast to other perspectives in localities that a wider representation is required on the GM Moving Executive Group, as highlighted in the following interview extract:

> I guess I should make the point that we have made on a couple of occasions, the point that we feel we should, as a network, the prime provider network of physical activity in Greater Manchester (we have made the point to Hayley [the Strategic Manager of the Partnership] and [...] others) that we should be represented on the programme board as well. Thinking about a true co-production approach, where you work, where you bring kind of commissioners and providers together, rather than keeping them separate. So, we have raised that point on a number of occasions but for whatever reasons that is not been forthcoming.

(Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active)

It is interpreted by the researcher that, alternatively, it may be a case of GM Active accepting the demands of Sport England that leisure providers should not be present on the GM Moving Executive Group. This interpretation is made based on the co-chair of the GM Moving Executive Group (from GMCA) originally indicating that leisure providers should be present on the board:

> So, we will get senior representation across the system, we will want senior representation for transport, senior representation for public health, senior representation from the health commissioners, senior representation from leisure providers and health providers.

(Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

It is interpreted by the researcher that, despite the intention of the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA and requests by GM Active, a decision was made by Sport England for GM Active not to be included on the GM Moving Executive Group and instead present on the GM Moving Steering Group, and that this decision was accepted by the newly appointed chair of

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GM Active. This interpretation cannot be supported by board minutes as access was declined.

Despite these contrasting perspectives on representation on the board, it is found through the interview analysis that the board now has multiple channels of operational knowledge in addition to the experience of board members. It is interpreted by the researcher that access to operational knowledge is found to be a benefit for the board to enable realistic decision making. The evidence of operational knowledge of what is happening in localities is highlighted in the follwing interview extract:

> Because of the way wider Greater Manchester work is happening and all of the locality planning and all of the locality-based work and the way that all feeds through to the Combined Authority and Health and Social Care […], even when I was sitting in those high-level meetings like I was last week, you get a sense that the people who are in there do know what is happening in their communities and their localities. Even if they are a chief executive or portfolio holder for an authority, they are very well informed about what is going on locally.
>
> (Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the planning and governance structures provide access to insight and local practice for senior-level decision makers, which enables the board to make decisions on behalf of local stakeholders. However, the researcher interprets that using the governance route to feed insight up requires diligence from each board member working across multiple boards. It is perceived by the researcher to be vital that insight is not lost in the absence of stakeholders who hold the insight first hand from their day to day work. Furthermore, the researcher interprets that checks need to be in place to ensure the new work is adding value, not duplicating or competing against existing practice. Whether a full audit of existing sport and physical activity practice would enhance planning is something that requires consideration by the GM Moving Executive Group. It may be that inviting Greater Sport representatives to GM Active leadership meetings (in the same way that Greater Sport hold commissioner meetings) could further connect the system and potentially resolve the conflict between local and regional entities.

7.1.6 Strategic management capacity

It is interpreted by the researcher that the introduction of the Strategic Manager has been identified as a key input for the GM Moving Executive Group, driving

work forward in terms of revised plan, insight, evaluation and engagement with local entities.

It is interpreted that this input identified by the GM Moving Executive Group helped to resolve the organisational variations identified in Chapter 5 and provided vital capacity for board members (as acknowledged in Section 6.1.3). The need for programme management capacity is emphasised in the following extract from an interview:

> We will need to put into place some programme management, with an overarching programme manager, and some capacity that sits around that individual with some capacity for administration.
>
> (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA)

This is supported by document analysis of the MoU, which identifies the need for programme management; however, despite this acknowledgement in the original MoU, the Strategic Manager was not in place until nine months into the Partnership. It is interpreted by the researcher (e.g. from the following quote) that this has put a constraint on partnership progress and pace of development (as documented in Chapter 5):

> We have missed Hayley [the Strategic Manager]; I think that kind of more permanent capacity will be really, really helpful.
>
> (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted by the researcher that in addition to personal inputs from the board members, the introduction of a strategic manager is key to optimal performance of the board. The Strategic Manager is funded by Sport England and employed by Greater Sport, but accountable to and co-located between each organisation in the Partnership. This link between the board members and Strategic Manager and the process followed in the new role is discussed further under the next theme, board processes, and the sub-theme of shared leadership in Section 7.2.1.

7.2 Board processes

In addition to micro-level inputs, micro-level processes have been identified from the interview analysis documented in the thematic table in Appendix 9, and will now be explored. These include: shared leadership, systems leadership, monitoring and control, learning, action and scaling up.

7.2.1 Shared leadership

It is interpreted by the researcher from the analysis of interview data that shared leadership is followed on the GM Moving Executive Group, both between the board members in agenda setting and decision making and between the board and the Strategic Manager. The focus on shared leadership is supported by document analysis of the MoU, with Sport England being invited to co-chair the GM Moving Executive Group (Rowley, 2016a). Also, shared leadership between the board and the Strategic Manager is found through analysis of interview data and exemplified by the requirement to give power to the Strategic Manager to develop the implementation plan and performance measures. However, it is acknowledged from document analysis that the function of the GM Moving Executive Group is dependent on the board acting out the principles in the MoU highlighted in Section 5.3.

The analysis of interview data indicates that shared leadership within the boardroom is based on experience of what is required for effective governance. This is exemplified by the following interview extract:

> I mean the key to this is effective governance; we have got a good track record of working in partnership and understand the challenges, the limitations, the frustrations, there is no point in the Lead Chief Exec for Health and Wellbeing in GM and I turning up to that board and banging the table, and saying you know this is what we want and if you don't like it you can 'eff off', because they can. Whereas in other areas it is kind of naïve, that we are the CA, we have got a mayor and you do what we tell you; well, actually that's not the way it works, it's collaborative […] and that doesn't mean that we don't have robust exchanges, but it should never get personal, and out of that sort of constructive tension you get really good outcomes; a mutual respect is at the heart of it.

> (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

It is interpreted by the researcher here that through experience of working in the boardrooms for the head of a combined authority, senior figures have learned that controlling direction based on individual interest is a less effective option than working together with board members. This notion is supported by the following quote from another interview:

> I would like to think through a consensus […] We have had some humdingers of rows over things, and that has been really helpful […] When you have a policy debate, and it is about putting citizens first and doing something for them […], you get really passionate about it […]. We often get everything really sugar-coated, people telling us the things

they want to tell you, an actually the things they want. Where again, the judgement with this will be people being really honest with each other.

(Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the conflict identified within the GM Moving Executive Group through honesty in communication is a clear indicator of shared leadership among the board members, as it indciates that decisions are not just being rubber stamped or being pursued based on financial interest, but instead discussed and debated by the board memebers with a 'citizens first' perspective.

Interview analysis also indicates that, in contrast to the perspective on shared leadership, individual leadership may also be used. For example, it has been found that Sport England may be using their power to control the Partnership's direction, despite committing to the principles of the MoU. This is exemplified by the following interview extract:

'I think Sport England has come in with the best intentions but have kind of grabbed the reins and see themselves as 'leading' […] and I think the way they see themselves as leading has very much brought in a top-down sort of structure […]. I think our value-added and what we are offering as a network is […] localities taking more of a lead, but leading in such a way that it is collaborative leadership.

(CEO of a leisure trust)

This notion of Sport England leading the partnership is supported from within the organisation itself here:

Sport England are driving the MOU in lots of ways, with both the Health and Social Care Partnership and the GMCA being ready, willing and able; so, while we are driving it, there is always that check and challenge all the time, and I guess that's fair, because sport and physical activity is our business on a day to day basis.

(Local Government Relationship Manager, Sport England)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the notion of Sport England leading the GM Moving Executive Group is not without merit, based on their initial investment of £1 million for Active Ageing, the fact that they pay the Strategic Manager's wages and their national sport and physical activity expertise.

There is no indication that they have grabbed the reins in the boardroom, with decisions being made through debate and consensus; however, as acknowledged in Section 5.4.2, their competitive bidding process was in place

for the £10 million pilot funding, and it is interpreted by the researcher that this indicates an underlying level of power based on financial resources. This use of a financial resource to control direction is highlighted in this interview response:

> It feels to me like Sport England have been prime. I think there is a recognition by the Health and Social Care Partnership that although they have an influence, they feel comfortable dissolving that leadership, because Sport England are the experts and they have a level of investment. They are dangling that carrot of investment, so my feeling is that it has brought with it an amount of compliance by other leaders in the GM system, to say, 'That is fine. We will allow you to come in and execute your prime authority on this because, A, we know you are experts, and B, you are bringing some investment to the table. And we feel secure because you have this national strategy that is saying the right things.'

> (CEO of a leisure trust)

It is interpreted by the researcher that although there is evident commitment to shared decision making based on co-commissioning, co-design and co-production using insight and evidence provided by the regional entities (as documented in the MoU, and through analysis of interview data documented in Appendix 9), as levels of investment increase it will be important to ensure that all board members uphold the principles outlined in the MoU.

It has also been identified though analysis of interview data that the GM Moving Executive Group is engaged in shared leadership with the Strategic Manager. The sharing of power with the Strategic Manager is emphasised by this interviewee:

> What is really important, and I think we are seeing this now, is that the board really does give power to the Strategic Manager.

> (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England)

One of the key requirements of the board has been to revise the GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017), and in this, power has been given to the Strategic Manager; however, the Strategic Manager suggests this highlights the high level of administrative work required for inter-organisational working:

> It is its strength and its weakness for GM Moving, because I may have to write eight or ten different reports about the GM Moving plan, so that it can go through the system in all of those places.

> (Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the level of administration required for partnership working within a system is high and requires shared leadership with strategic management, and that, despite the additional time required for writing multiple reports to multiple boards across the system, this is a key enabler as it ensures all parts of the regional system are up to date and involved in what is happening.

In order to lead the work on behalf of each partner, the Strategic Manager has been woven into the GM system (as suggested in Section 6.4.4 by the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA). However, it is interpreted by the researcher that the Strategic Manager also acts as an enabler of the desired way of working (acknowledged by the Executive Director of Community Sport for Sport England), by acting as a point of communication to ensure that other Sport England employees who drop in and drop out of GM are brought up to speed in order to reduce inefficient working. Evidence of the Strategic Manager weaving into the GM system has been found in the interview analysis in Appendix 9. For example:

> Hayley [the Strategic Manager of the partnerhsip] is based here in this building; she is also at PP3, Piccadilly Place, which are both my offices. I do see her as a member of the Population Health Team, so my team.
>
> (Project Manager, Population Health)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the process of weaving into the system has been taken on board by the Strategic Manager, who does not spend all her time working out of the Greater Sport offices, but rather co-locates across GM offices. The benefit of weaving into the system is highlighted by the Strategic Manager herself:

> One example is me […] floating between the system, if you like, in this role […] because the Combined Authority, the Health and Social Care Partnership, Sport England and Greater Sport all seem to see me as belonging to them. So, they ask of me and want me to come to their strategies and their plans, whereas elsewhere and in the past, you might be sitting outside the system trying to get in the door. […] this feels more like you are in the system.
>
> (Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is interpreted by the researcher that through weaving into the system, the Strategic Manager crosses organisational boundaries to the extent that each organisation sees the Strategic Manager as working for them, despite the role being funded by Sport England and the manager employed by Greater Sport.

It is interpreted by the researcher that the wider advantage of this approach is that sport and physical activity is integrated into the system through working practice in addition to plans and strategy, as opposed to sitting outside in isolation (as in previous siloed working, documented in Chapter 5).

7.2.2 Systems leadership

The analysis of interview data indicates that in the GM system, the use of shared leadership extends beyond the GM Moving Executive Group and its Strategic Manager to shared leadership across the whole system. The sub-theme of systems leadership emerges from the interview data as a requirement for the GM Moving Executive Group; this is also supported by document analysis of NHS leadership development literature. It is interpreted by the researcher that the need for systems leadership is based on the cross-sector nature of the Partnership and the requirement to engage the whole system in transformation of public services. Systems leadership is emphasised in this interview extract:

> …the notion of systems leadership (because that is the language that they use) […] – the NHS has done a number of things, and it seems to have emerged out of NHS transformation. […] actually, the kind of leaders that are needed for systems leadership are very different from your traditional leaders.

> (CEO, Greater Sport)

Document analysis of the NHS transformation literature reveals that systems leadership is defined as a process (Ghate et al. 2013:4):

> Leadership across organisational and geopolitical boundaries, beyond individual professional disciplines, within a range of organisational and stakeholder cultures, often without direct managerial control.

Ghate et al. (2013:6) take this further:

> Systems leadership builds on systems thinking but goes further, putting the theory into practice. In its simplest formulation, systems leadership is an attempt to effect change for the social good across multiple interacting and intersecting systems, resting on the assumption that better and more efficient public services can result from more joined-up working across multiple service sectors.

It is found in the interview analysis that the requirement for systems leadership is system-wide and requires individuals to have authority to work across organisational and sector boundaries, to support the GM system, as suggested in interview here:

> So, when I say systems leadership, I think historically we have always looked at leaders from organisations, but when I describe system leadership, I describe that as a leader for Greater Manchester, operating across organisations with the gravitas and the authority to be able to do that. So, you know, they are in a position, in that role to really influence across the different organisations that create that system.
>
> (Director of Public Health)

It is interpreted by the researcher from the empirical interview data that board members, the Strategic Manager and employees across GM operate across organisational boundaries for the benefit of the GM city-region using the process of systems leadership. Board members operate across multiple boards, and the Strategic Manager is co-located between and accountable to four organisations. Furthermore, regional managers and locality representatives operate on multiple boards and workstreams in GM and are empowered to connect and influence the system. It is interpreted by the researcher that systems leadership requires multiple roles across multiple boards and in some cases co-location, but ensures integration across sectors, organisations and localities in GM, making it a key process for the GM Moving Executive Group.

It is interpreted by the researcher from the interview analysis in the thematic table in Appendix 9 that systems leadership acts as a way of connecting the system and also enables information to be shared and decisions to be made without referring back to the board, and that, to be effective, systems leadership requires a vision for the system as a whole that enables leadership to be distributed throughout the whole system, not just at board level. An interviewee suggests:

> The system leadership is about having a vision and a map about how you can improve, that is my understanding of what it is! People that can get things done, so you do not have to go to five different people or ten different people.
>
> (Strategic Lead, GMCA)

The approach to systems leadership expands beyond shared leadership within the board and between the board and Strategic Manager to include leaders across the whole system who can make decisions based on an understanding of the shared vision across each organisation, department or theme. It is interpreted by the researcher that for systems leadership to be effective, communication of the vision, or map, of the system is key, as it enables all

members of the system to become leaders based on a shared understanding. It is interpreted by the researcher that this shared vision has been created by the suite of strategies developed across GM, with sport and physical activity embeded as a prominent preventative measure and coherent with local co-produced startegies such as the deal in Wigan (Wigan Council 2017, online).

It is also suggested that the co-design, co-production and co-commisioning of the GM Moving Executive Group advances on the work of other democratic boards, which may discuss issues democratically, but without working together to commission, design and produce work. Document analysis identifies that key processes outlined in the MoU are evident, supporting analysis of interview data that suggests the new approach is developing and delivering solutions involving the whole system, through co-commissioning, co-design and co-production (as documented in Section 6.3.4). This co-working is emphasised in the following interview extract:

> I guess it is probably about that co-production. It is about you know, over the years we have tried, some things have worked, some things have not, but they have never had a consistent approach. So, in this way of working, we are working together to find that solution.
>
> (Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving Executive Group)

This is further illustrated by supporting examples, e.g. from the locality of Wigan:

> … the deal is a great example of how something strategic transcends into something really operational. We recently had an example of that potentially, we have been talking about the deal and what it means to us locally around service delivery. Making sure how we deliver our front-line services are meaningful. That they are done in a co-produced way. […] You know, and ultimately what it is, it is about making sure that […] there are the mechanisms for communication for that vision, for that work delivered in a meaningful way. Otherwise it just gets lost. You get people saying just, 'Oh yeah, that was the MoU,' or whatever it is at the time, to get into the hearts and minds of the people who are operational. If you do not get that right, then nothing changes.
>
> (Health commissioner)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the focus appears to be on working together and bringing collective resource, insight expertise and experience from the whole system to make more informed decisions. It is further interpreted by the researcher that this way of working improves the chances of

achieving outcomes for citizens, by communicating with members across the system (including citizens) and making sure the work has value to them. However, the time and resources challenges of this way of working must be acknowledged, as highlighted in interview:

> When people talk about systems leadership and how you engage the whole system in making things happen and addressing physical activity, you hear people talk about 'feeding the beast', how much time do you spend feeding the beast and going through structures and hierarchies and all of that, when actually what you want is to be creative and to give people the scope to innovate and come up with creative solutions. Those two things are sometimes in conflict with each other.
>
> <div align="right">(Strategic Manager for the Partnership)</div>

It is interpreted by the researcher that despite the evident benefits of systems leadership as an enabler of partnership working in community sport governance, evident challenges and constraints are found in the interview analysis. These constraints are based on the high level of administrative work required within key roles (such as strategic management). Further, the challenge of reaping the benefits of collaborative working, while respecting the hierarchical structures in place (as documented in Section 5.6.3) is crucial to systems working.

7.2.3 Monitoring and control

It is evident from the analysis of interview data documented in the thematic table in Appendix 9 that there are three areas for monitoring and evaluation. First, in terms of whether the board is operating effectively and if the membership is adequate to achieve the objectives; second, is the new way of working delivering the required outputs, such as increased physical activity and, importantly, outcomes such as improvements to health, wellbeing and overall quality of life? Third, what is the value of the GM Moving Executive Group to the wider system?

7.2.3.1 Board review

It has been identified from the analysis of interview data that the GM Moving Executive Group is currently being reviewed:

> I know they are reviewing the board […] Maybe it is partly around there are some […] gaps, perhaps it is because, like me, there are not enough people there who are truly all in and active. Capacity might end up being the problem for them there. If they were to say they need to increase capacity, I would not be surprised.

The need to review the board is supported by document analysis of the MoU, which suggests that the GM Moving Executive Group will be reviewed annually (Rowley, 2016a). By reviewing the board in line with the MoU, the GM Moving Executive Group are following the guide document and working towards ensuring the board has the right capacity to support the GM Moving strategy. The review presents the opportunity to develop a wider representation on the GM Moving Executive Group and enhance its ability to function and develop.

7.2.3.2 Performance measures, 'the acid test'

It has been identified by the researcher through analysis of interview data that performance measures for the partnership will be developed through the revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017), as stated here:

> Not the measure necessarily, no, that is something that needs to come through the [revised GM Moving] plan and actually the timely thing will be that that the Population Health Plan does not have those measures in either. It did have them in an earlier draft, but they have come out because they have not necessarily been widely agreed by people.

(CEO, Greater Sport)

The need for performance measures is supported by document analysis identifying ambitious performance measures as the acid test for the GM Moving Executive Group (Rowley, 2016b). However, at the time of interviews, one year into the Partnership, performance measures had not been communicated. It is interpreted by the researcher that the lack of performance measures is a consequence of a lack of planning in the early stages of the Partnership when it did not have the right capacity; further, that the development of performance measures within the implementation plan was viewed as a key task for the Strategic Manager, to enable prioritisation of the workload against those measures and for achievements to be tracked so as to record the contribution of the new approach and justify investment in it. The revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017) includes targets: for 73% of the GM population to be fairly active by 2021 and for 75% of the population to be fairly active by 2025. Activity levels required to be classified as fairly active vary between age groups. For example, for two- to four-year-olds the level is 60–179 minutes of activity per day, for five- to fifteen-year-olds it is 30–59 minutes per day and for those sixteen and over it is 30–149 minutes per day.

However, it is evident from document analysis of the revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017) that the above focus is based on output measures of participation and does not include outcome measures that would evidence a contribution to the five social outcomes that match the DCMS Sporting Future policy (2015) and Sport England strategy (2016). Furthermore, despite acknowledgement of the relationships between sport, physical activity and ecological issues, an ecological outcome is also absent from the revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017).

7.2.3.3 Common standards framework based on outcomes

It has been found through analysis of interview data that progress towards common standards has been made, with the development of a common standards framework. For example:

> So, there is a number of different parts of the public health system through the GM Health and Social Care Partnership that are coming together to create common standards. I guess the delivery of the Greater Manchester Moving one is the main one […], which is trying to deliver that strategic framework across Greater Manchester.
>
> (Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving
>
> Executive Group)

It is interpreted by the researcher that progress is underway to develop a standardised framework across GM that will enable the collection of data and insight towards outcomes and enable integration of local entities commissioned to achieve shared outcomes (as opposed to individual output measures set within organisational boundaries). Further, that the use of standardised outcomes highlights the importance of including members from across the system, including citizens, in their development, to prevent the feeling of top-down mechanisms being forced on localities and disempowering the operational workforce.

It is found through the analysis of interview data that shared outcomes such as improving the health and wellbeing of residents is a key enabler to community sport governance. Focusing on outcomes and measuring organisations via outcomes, as opposed to key performance indicators, provides a much broader spectrum for organisations to work and collaborate within than a narrow focus on outputs. This is emphasised in the following extract from an interview:

> If you have got key performance indicators, they are so focused on getting that activity […] Whereas what we are saying is […] this is the outcome. If you need to flex in here about how you are delivering and achieving that, then that is what you do. I need you to tell me how you are achieving that outcome and what progress you are making.
>
> (Director of Public Health)

It is interpreted by the researcher that focusing on outcomes that are shared across sectors enables providers to have a shared vision of what they need to achieve, as well as the flexibility to work collaboratively to achieve that outcome, with more freedom to work across sectors and develop place-based integration.

The interview analysis indicates that a key challenge here for integration is that organisations are measured in different ways across localities and services. The inconsistency across localities and services constrains integrated working. Similarly, it reduces the opportunity for organisations to work together based on shared outcomes. It is suggested:

> Maybe the most strategic objective for the GM Moving Executive Group is to say, 'Well actually we want all commissioners to be commissioning their prime sports and physical activity providers on outcomes and these are the standard outcomes we want them to deliver. These are the standard measures we want […] And actually, we are going to use some of our resources to roll out some training and support for locality commissioners and providers to work towards this standardised measuring framework.'
>
> (CEO of a leisure trust)

Standardised frameworks for the delivery of sport and physical activity through the place-based integration of services with a focus on shared outcomes present a clear opportunity to move forward and embed sport and physical activity into localities. Furthermore, it is interpreted by the researcher that standardised frameworks would enable quarterly reporting of outcomes towards regional and national targets though local services, thus providing real-time updates on progress and return on investment, using capacity that is already in place. A request to access existing outcomes frameworks was not granted, preventing document analysis to support these findings.

7.2.3.4 Value

It is found though the analysis of interview data that the GM Moving Executive Group is also making progress in exploring the visible and hidden value of the Partnership, as evidenced here:

> We are all talking about the whole system and physical activity. It is about: what is the value, what is the added value, hidden value of working in the system?

> (Place Development Manager, Greater Sport)

Document analysis indicates that one approach to exploring visible and hidden value outlined at the GM Moving workshop is a process called revaluation, and that this is the direction in which the GM Moving Executive Group is progressing for evaluation. The revaluation method is suggested to advance on other methods of evaluation, as it provides the opportunity to collect data on visible and invisible value by exploring 'the three Cs' – calculate, calibrate and capacitate – to reveal the full value of a social movement, action or system under inquiry (Darnton, 2017). With its foundations in work with the NHS, it provides a transferable solution to measure, value and monitor the progress of the GM Moving Executive Group and support organisational learning, which is identified through interview analysis as a key focus requirement of the Partnership.

7.2.4 Organisational learning

It is important to acknowledge that in partnership working things will go wrong as well as right, but that this can lead to organisational learning. The requirement to learn is highlighted by the Strategic Manager in the following interview extract:

> The other thing is, things will go wrong, or people will get things wrong, but you need to be able to kind of move on from it, don't you, and learn from it. You know, if we are going on this learning journey together, people have genuinely got to be prepared for things to go wrong and not work, as much as we are looking to find things that do work.

> (Strategic Manager for the Partnership)

It is interpreted by the researcher that the requirement to continually reflect on what is working in the Partnership requires diligence from the Partnership Strategic Manager and board members and members of the wider system. It is interpeted by the researcher that in order to capture this learning and enable

the adjustment of the Partnership's direction, with reduction of conflict and wasted investment, processes need to be in place to feed information on what is working and what isn't working back to the board in real time.

It has emerged from the analysis of interview data that in addition to shared and systems leadership in decision making, the GM Moving Executive Group must learn from evidence and insight. This supported by document analysis of the MoU, which highlights that works should be insight-led to enable understanding of individuals and communities. The use of insight for decision making is underlined in this interview extract:

> What we always say is you start with an evidence base. If you have got an evidence base to support what you are suggesting, you are in a much stronger position. Now this can always be disputed and there might be contrary evidence and that is where it becomes interesting, but if you are certain that this is the right direction and this is the right way, then you need to be prepared to evidence that, and that has been critical to a lot of the devolution stuff.
>
> (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)

Another interviewee outlined progress in using insight for decision making:

> We have recently had the data and insight session, so this was through Press Red, who are a consultancy firm, who have been commissioned to gain insight and explore – this is like secondary research to find out the levels of physical activity across GM and the key trends based on existing data sets. I think the next step then is to commission some primary research, to speak to the people on the ground to get a more in-depth insight.
>
> (Project Manager, Population Health)

It is interpeted by the researcher that insight work is being commissioned and carried out, with plans to increase the depth of this research going forward to collect primary research. Methods of collecting insight can also be learned from other partnerships in GM such as GMHSCP and the Ageing Hub. For example, the Ageing Hub have used pilot work, with 24 pilots across 8 authorities, and then scaled up this learning. An alternative approach used by GMHSCP uses a local organisation network to collect information on local issues and solutions that can be shared across the ten localities. It should be acknowledged that both the Ageing Hub and GMHSCP have developed methods to learn, add value and scale up current practice.

7.2.4.1 Digital platforms as shared commons

Through the process of learning and testing, large amounts of data, insight and evidence will be collected that may be of benefit across sectors, organisations and localities. It is interpreted by the researcher that, based on a focus on shared outcomes, the commitment to share the information and make it easily accessible and digestible for organisations of all sizes and for residents is required, to support the system and avoid creating any unnecessary barriers or positions of power within it. Analysis of interview data identifies progress towards a shared commons for sport, physical activity and health is an ambition of the GM Moving Executive Group:

> …to I guess eventually hold in a data bank […]. All that insight and where is the commonality? […] And ultimately from a Greater Manchester Health and Social Care, the conversation we have not had yet […], but we will have […], is about actually, where is the gap in the insight?
>
> (Health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving Executive Group)

It is interpreted by the researcher that a shared data bank provides a tool for identifying gaps and commonalities across GM. Extending that further, it provides a central tool for self-organising collaboration across the whole system. Finally, by committing to freely share all data and insight collected, potential barriers and sectoral competition are removed and the opportunity to integrate the public, private and voluntary sectors based on shared outcomes is opened.

7.2.4.2 Balancing learning with action

Learning from evidence and insight has been identified from interview analysis documented in Appendix 9 as a key process within the GM Moving Executive Group, with regards to both partnership working and identification of practice that will deliver the required outcomes. However, it is also interpreted from the below interview extract that learning needs to be balanced with action:

> We need to use the data to direct us into where we should be working and which priority groups we should be engaging with locally and all of that. […] And then we need to be in those places and listen to what people are saying. […] but there has to be a point at which you do something. […] It is always this balance of using all that stuff to inform your approach, not analysing stuff to the nth degree and paralysing yourself with data.

It is interpreted by the researcher that the use of evidence and insight is being followed to make decisions within the GM Moving Executive Group. However, that data must be turned into action in a balanced approach if the Partnership is to progress towards its objectives and achieve the required outcomes. The researcher interprets that finding the balance between satisfying board members that work is progressing at the right pace, while ensuring decisions are evidence-based, creates a challenge within the Partnership. It is important to be aware that despite decisions being taken through shared leadership and based on evidence, failure in some areas is inevitable; however, it is interpreted by the researcher that when failure is viewed from a learning perspective, it becomes a valuable resource that justifies the investment. It is interpreted by the researcher that to utilise value from failure and success, feedback loops need to be developed (as documented in Section 5.4.1 by the Executive Director of Community Sport for Sport England); further, that this will enable the collection, processing, and sharing of organisational learning, thus creating a valuable resource for both the organisations in the system and the wider system, as opposed to having tacit knowledge held by board members.

7.2.4.3 Scaling up

The concept of 'test and learn' has been used by national organisations to explore new concepts in a population, learn, refine the process and then retest. The concept of scale suggests that, if something works for a particular demographic in one area, it could be scaled up to the same demographic across different areas, following the same principles in the process, but taking into account the variances of place. The requirement to scale up learning is emphasised in this interview extract:

> ...and that will be an example of, we tried something, we have refined it, and then that is big time scaled up […]. This Girl Can – you know, we did the insight; we have got the staff behind that campaign, we know the effect on the audience, we are getting our messages, we have developed some products and programmes behind it. We launch it. Sport England can do it. Public Health England can do it. Greater Sport have never done it. Maybe other parts of Greater Manchester have, but we need to. And the test and learn approach is embedded in Greater Manchester principles.

> (Place Development Manager, Greater Sport)

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It is interpeted by the researcher that the intention to test and learn from what works and then scale up across GM is evident from the analysis of interview data in Appendix 9. However, there is indication of the view that new interventions are required, following examples such as Active 10 by Public Health England or This Girl Can by Sport England (as highlighted above). It is postulated by the researcher that, although this is with the best of intentions, new initiatives are not necessary, and that identifying what is currently working in localities and then scaling that up, rather than 're-inventing the wheel', would add value to existing services. This is supported by document analysis of the GM Moving plan (2017:21-22) and which highlights the use of transformational change by adopting the population health plan commissioning cycle. Further, the researcher interprets that adding new initiatives is less important than bringing consistency to provision and integrated working, consistency that could be achieved through using common standards across each locality in the region based on shared outcomes and allowing cross-sector providers to collaborate and deliver based on their understanding of each place and using shared platforms.

It is evident from the interview analysis documented in Appendix 9 that from the board, management and local entities there is a real commitment to learn from evidence and insight into what works. The opportunity for each organisation to learn is enhanced with each organisation bringing its own experience and expertise. Furthermore, through the governance architecture, the GM Moving Executive Group can collect insight and evidence from across sectors, organisations and localities, using steering groups to provide a more holistic picture of barriers to physical activity in GM. In addition, the ability to learn from what is currently working in localities and neighbourhoods across GM can be scaled up to provide more consistency across the conurbation and to support the development of a common standards framework and shared outcomes. It is interpreted by the researcher that a thorough audit could provide a more in-depth understanding and ensure added value.

It is interpreted by the researcher that evidence and insight are being provided by organisations that have the resources and capacity. However, the researcher interprets that there are potential gaps in insight and evidence that could be provided by smaller organisations if additional resources were

available. Furthermore, it could be argued that the insight and evidence used provides top-level data from across GM, but that it lacks the depth required for understanding barriers to activity, requiring further primary research. A deeper understanding of people struggling due to inequalities as well as the workforce providing services, gained through video or ethnographic study, could potentially provide an opportunity to learn from lived experience. This is emphasised by the following interview extract:

> I think the people who are most important to learn from is the people working in communities and neighbourhoods. Unless you get your hands a bit dirty, spend a bit of time wherever it is, and you see, and you understand the lives.

> (Strategic Lead, GMCA)

Learning from lived experience may enable the GM Moving Executive Group to get a deeper understanding of the barriers to physical activity for lower socio-economic groups in GM. However, despite the requirement for further research, a real commitment to organisational learning is found from analysis of interview data documented in Appendix 9, supported by analysis of the key documents listed in appendices 5 and 6, and seen more recently in the use of the revaluation process.

7.3 Conclusion

At the micro level, board members are perceived to be legitimate representatives, being viewed as the best strategic thinkers to ensure effective reasoning when making decisions. Board member strategic skill is supported by the will and commitment to achieve outcomes, but capacity is a concern. To resolve capacity issues, the ability to manage multiple workstreams at a regional level, integrating regional work into their core commitment, is required for board members. However, operating multiple job roles due to a resource-constrained environment may create excessive workloads for people working on improving population health, despite effectively connecting the system. Operational knowledge is perceived to be present in original board members and enhanced by the addition of a local health commissioner and voluntary sector representative, with further input fed through the governance architecture bringing insight from across the system. Whether wider board representation or a more thorough audit would enhance the board's ability to function will need to be assessed through the annual board review. The

introduction of strategic management capacity has been found to drive the partnership forward regarding leadership, strategy development, planning, insight and evaluation. However, analysis of interview data documented in Appendix 9 leads to concerns about the growth of capacity at the regional level in the face of consistent locality cuts, emphasising the requirement for the new approach to have a positive contribution towards the budget deficit in GM.

In addition to inputs, board processes are found to be key to effective working. Shared leadership is identified both within the board and between the board and Strategic Manager, despite some contrasting perspectives that leadership is controlled by Sport England through resource dependence. However, it is the process of systems leadership that is required to connect the system, working across organisational boundaries through the governance architecture and leaders across the wider GM system, beyond the board, through co-design and production. Monitoring and control was found, with annual board reviews taking place to identify gaps in capacity and exploring the visible and hidden value of the GM Moving Executive Group through innovative methodology such as revaluation. Furthermore, there are early stages of development of a common standards framework, to enable integration and measurement across the GM conurbation towards regional and national outcomes. However, extending beyond monitoring and control, there is clear commitment to organisational learning on the GM Moving Executive Group and through the governance architecture to ensure a thorough understanding of place and progression of partnership working, with test and learn cycles required to integrate learning and action with the aim of scaling up what works across the conurbation. Importantly, there is early evidence of collecting and sharing of insight through shared commons to facilitate collaboration and enable cross-sector partnership working through an organisation-neutral approach based on shared outcomes and principles. The type of data, evidence and insight shared will determine the level of understanding of barriers faced by people in lower socio-economic groups; critically, whether they go deeper than high-level data to methods that capture lived experience from the workforce and residents. In order to analyse and explain the findings they will now be synthesised and explored, both in relation to the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) and the wider academic literature.

8.0 Discussion

The following chapter will synthesise the findings from the previous three chapters and distil the core messages regarding the six influences on strategic capability that have been identified through empirical evidence. The empirical evidence has been collected from a case study of the partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM, specifically its programme board the GM Moving Executive Group. The GM Moving Executive Group has been explored in relation to the influences outlined in the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance illustrated in figures 3a and 3b in Section 2.2 (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). The strategic capability framework explores sport governance influences from the macro level (i.e. contextual dynamics), meso level (i.e. inter-organisational dynamics) and micro level (i.e. organisational or board dynamics). The supporting theory of board strategic balance is suggested to explain influences on optimal board performance. The strategic capability framework incorporates multiple theories that shine light on the different dynamics involved in sport governance, as documented in the literature review in Chapter 3.

The following discussion adopts the lens of strategic capability, but draws on network governance, inter-organisational relationships, resource dependency theory, stakeholder theory, power and influence and shared leadership, in accordance with the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). In addition, decentred theory, collaborative governance theory and a socio-ecological model were drawn on to explain macro-level contextual dynamics in community sport. Further, a range of governance mechanisms have been identified in community sport governance in the UK, which cannot be explained by a single governance mechanism and instead require the development of an integrated sport governance theory. At the micro level, systems leadership and organisational learning theory were found to have explanatory value on board dynamics to optimise the use of integrated governance in GM.

This chapter will explore how contextual factors (such the 2008 economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures) have created a dilemma in the UK, which has heightened long-standing inequality in areas such as GM, leading to the requirement for regional entities and national sport organisations to improve

the effectiveness of services with reduced budgets. The focus is on reducing the deficit between the cost of public services and the amount of taxes raised, while stimulating economic growth in the region. This chapter will discuss how the devolution of power and budget have provided the opportunity to govern in a radically different way in GM, through the reform and integration of public services. It is the process of devolution that has enabled the integration of the national sport organisation Sport England with regional entities, which is further enabled by changes to regional and national policy, strategy and plans. The history, tradition and belief in collaborative working in GM that have guided the integrated approach to working there will also be discussed; this history, tradition and belief has developed through the Association of GM Authorities and has been enhanced through the formation of GMCA and GMHSCP.

This chapter also explores how, despite the use of network governance, hierarchical forms are still adhered to regionally and nationally, and market forms are also in place for the delivery of services, indicating a pragmatic approach to governance to optimise the GM system, while respecting historical structures. The benefits of integrated working are outlined, as well as challenges that occur due to organisational variations. Consequently, there is a requirement for a strategic manager to be incorporated into the governance function and lead on behalf of the GM Moving Executive Group.

How the enhanced skill and will of the members of the GM Moving Executive Group is a key input to board performance will be highlighted; however, the well-marshalled governance architecture (described by the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA in Section 6.3.6, illustrated in Section 5.1.1 and developed in Section 8.2.1) is utilised to incorporate operational knowledge into decision making and delivery of services. Also discussed is how board inputs are optimised through the process of shared leadership, extending to systems leadership that optimises the potential of the GM governance architecture and board member reflection, in the co-creation of future activities; and how, in order to avoid sub-optimal performance, the GM Moving Executive Group advance beyond monitoring and control to utilise organisational learning that engages board members and stakeholders with lived experience, to guide the direction of the board. The following sections will explore the areas identified above in more depth, through the lens of strategic capability and in relation to

the wider academic literature, highlighting practical and theoretical implications.

8.1 Contextual influences on community sport governance

Empirical evidence from the community sport context supports the findings of the literature review that contextual dynamics influence board governance (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015), and that there is a two-way interaction between the board being influenced by contextual dynamics and the board being able to influence contextual dynamics (Shilbury et al., 2016). Extending this, it is found that a holistic approach is required in community sport, taking into account contextual, social and individual factors, which will now be explored in more depth with regards to broader contextual factors affecting GM and specifically relating to sport and physical activity.

8.1.1 Broad context

It has been found in Chapter 5 that contextual factors are driving the new approach to governance in GM. For example, as documented in Section 5.1, the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA highlights that current inequalities in GM are entrenched, with unemployment in the city-region being consistently above 250,000 people since World War II. It is found (in Section 7.1.4) that there is the will to reduce these stubborn inequalities; this is acknowledged by the Local Government Relationship Manager for Sport England as a key factor that impressed the national sport organisation during the pilot consultation. Critcally, inequality acts as a barrier to growth for the GM city-region, as identified by MIER (2008), which has led to a suite of strategies to develop the city-region and identify underlying causes of growth challenges, such as unemployment due to physical and mental health. The unemployment issue in GM has not been helped by siloed national working practices, which, according to the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA, were only getting one in ten people into work (as documented in Section 5.1).

The background and context to the literature review in Chapter 2 indicates that to make matters worse in GM, the national government introduced austerity measures post the 2008 financial crisis, with cuts focused on local government and social services (Parnell et al., 2016). Essentially, this has required the

reform and improvement of public services with reduced budgets. However, national quasi-autonomous non-government organisations have also been influenced by austerity measures. The Executive Director of Community Sport for Sport England highlights that during austerity measures Sport England have been tasked with evidencing their contribution to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a focus on five social outcomes, physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. Specifically, it is the role that sport and physical activity can play in the prevention of health issues that will result in reduced demand on health and social services, as documented in Section 5.6 and the thematic table in Appendix 7.

During this period of austerity, devolution has provided the opportunity to do things in a radically different way in GM. The devolution of power and budget to regional entities has presented the opportunity for GM to have more control over how it addresses the deficit between the cost of public services and the amount of tax raised in the region. This process led to the formation of GMCA in 2011, following the Localism Act, building on the integrated working of the Association of GM Authorities and marshalling an integrated governance system in GM. As acknowledged by the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA, this governance architecture builds on the history of integrated working between the 10 localities in GM over the past 32 years, since the formation of the city-region in 1986. The governance system has been enhanced by the 2015 formation of the health and social care partnership between NHS England, the Association of GM Authorities and GM Clinical Commissioning Groups. An example of devolution is the devolved health and social care budget of £6 billion, with a £450 million transformation fund to enable reform.

It is found in sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 that the shared interest in reducing the cost of public services during a period of reduced funding coincided with the opportunity to do things radically differently through the devolution process (as documented in Section 4.4.2), which has driven the formation of the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group and the willingness of the national sport organisation Sport England to adopt a new power-sharing governance approach with regional entities. It is found through document

analysis that the new approach is termed 'place-based working', as defined in the background and context to the literature review in Section 2.5.

Contextual findings confirm the role of context, as discussed in the literature review in Section 2.2: outlined by Dulewicz (1995) and Edwards and Cornforth (2003), and incorporated as the central fulcrum in the theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a), as illustrated in Figure 3b in Section 3.2. The ability of the board to function and develop is dependent on contextual factors, in this case, inequality and failing national programmes, requiring a new approach. The new approach is enabled through the devolution of powers and budget to GM. Further, the focus of both national and regional entities is on the requirement to reduce the cost of public services through preventative measures and integration of services to manage austerity measures imposed by national government.

It is postulated by the researcher that, although GM regional entities are enthusiastic about the devolution of powers and budget, the whole process is undermined by the national government shifting accountability for budget cuts away from the centre. For example, national government are managing regions to get efficiency and maximum care for the available budget, aligning to the ideas of Bevir and Rhodes (2016), such as the devolved £6 billion for health and social care with £450 million transformation funding. If national government are serious about devolving power and budget to regional entities, it should be the full £23 billion and without such short time frames. It is interpreted by the researcher that the process of devolution demonstrates meta-governance (Bevir and Rhodes, 2016), where governing is decentralised amongst a plurality of networks, i.e. city-regions such as GM. It is also interpreted that the approach of integrated working in GM, in comparison to other regions that have broken up public services (Chakrabortty, 2018), demonstrates the concept of 'meaning in action' advanced by Bevir and Rhodes (2006, 2016). As established in the background and context to the literature review this concept suggests that practices can be understood by exploring dilemmas, traditions and beliefs, with beliefs, not structure, guiding action (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, 2016). In GM, theories in use (as opposed to espoused theories) (Argyris and Schon, 1978,1996) follow beliefs of collectivism, where the needs of the group, i.e. all local authorities in the GM

city-region, outweigh individual interests; this is based on a history and tradition of collaborative working in GM through the Association of GM Authorities, as documented in Section 5.5.

Findings in Chapter 5 imply that contextual dynamics have driven the formation of the Partnership and that the will to do things differently has been created by inequality, financial crisis, austerity measures and failing national programmes, which have required a new approach. Moreover, cultural factors (such as collaborative working in GM based on traditions and beliefs) have guided the approach to integrated working. It is interpreted by the researcher that these cultural factors, based on the regional context, further emphasise the potential for variations across the UK, with actors in other regions potentially having opposing perspectives. Findings also support the notion that strategic capability is dependent on context, including the role of wider political actions and, importantly, the beliefs of individuals involved in the integration process. An example is the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA, whose main role is as the Chief Executive of Tameside Council and Head of Paid Service for the Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group. He is also Lead Chief Executive of Health and Social Care for GMCA, Joint Commissioner for GMHSCP, Chair of the GM Moving Leadership Group and co-chair of the GM Moving Executive Group; however, it must be acknowledged that he is only one of many system leaders in GM pioneering integrated working and reform of public services.

8.1.2 Sport and physical activity ongoing context

Focusing on sport and physical activity, institutional influences driving the Partnership are centred around the development of regional GM Moving plans (GM Moving 2015, 2017), the national Sporting Future policy (DCMS, 2015) and the Sport England strategy Towards an Active Nation (Sport England, 2015). The development of a regional sport and physical activity blueprint, GM Moving, is focused on an integrated approach to add value and scale to current delivery in GM through the vertical and horizontal integration of agencies and services (GM Moving, 2015). It is interpreted by the researcher that the narrative created by the GM Moving blueprint (2015) has engaged Sport England with GM in a direct partnership based on the opportunity to embed sport and physical activity into GM's plans for reform. Moreover, that the

narrative created by the GM Moving blueprint has developed political leadership in GM. The political will is exemplified originally by Tony Lloyd and Lord Peter Smith and more recently by the inclusion of sport and physical activity in the winning mayoral manifesto of Andy Burnham, and highlighted as key by the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA and the CEO of Greater Sport in Section 5.4.2 and Appendix 7.

The plans for reform in GM focus on prevention, taking into account wider social determinants of health, as emphasised by the formation of GMHSCP. The focus of GMHSCP is to provide care that is closer to home and focused on wellbeing and prevention, but connected to indirect benefits such as early years development, education and employment (GMHSCP, 2015). The Taking Charge strategy (GMHSCP, 2015) proposes a deal with residents that reflects the original focus of the NHS, in that it provides services, but residents have the personal responsibility to maintain their health and wellbeing. With regards to physical activity, the deal outlined in the Taking Charge strategy (GMHSCP, 2015:9) suggests public services will take charge of their localities and 'ensure there is a wide range of facilities within local communities, such as parks, open spaces, leisure, cycling routes and good quality housing'; however, as part of the deal, the residents of GM must take personal responsibility to 'keep active and moving at whatever stage in life' (GMHSCP, 2015:8), which again emphasises the relationship between the state and its provision of health and social care and residents' individual responsibility to be active and to take charge of their own health and wellbeing.

The Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA highlights that regional strategy has been complemented by the direction of national government, and consequently Sport England, funding (as documented in Section 4.6, and supported by document analysis), with a shift in focus to social outcomes and people that are least active in lower socio-economic groups (DCMS, 2015). This focus effectively moved funding away from the higher socio-economic groups; as highlighted by the Executive Director of Community Sport, these groups are less dependent on government services. Also highlighted is a focus on the least active, rather than the sporty and active who are already participating in sport and physical activity and contributing to participation levels independently, based on core habit.

It is found that to address inactivity in this hard to reach area, a new approach requires a change in the national funding model, from competitive bidding to co-design, co-commissioning and co-production with regional entities. The Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA outlined the frustration with the inefficient bidding model of organisations across the GM system, with the requirement to write discrete projects that are time-limited, not integrated into public services, and have a history of not landing well in places. An example of the new funding model of co-commissioning is the £1 million allocated to Active Ageing in GM, to support integration with the Ageing Hub, outside of the £10 million allocated in pilot funding through the old national bidding model (as documented in Section 4.4.1).

The integrated approach has resulted in the contextual dynamics that affect participation being influenced by the board, including embedding sport and physical activity into GM strategies, such as the GM Transport Strategy (TFGM, 2016), through Active Transport. It is interpreted by the researcher that the inclusion of Active Transport in core strategy has lead to increased levels of funding and early developments to the physical infrastructure in GM, with the Beelines concept for walking and cycling the start of a proposed £1.5 billion investment (TFGM, 2018). Moreover, progress by the HSCP has led to the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017) (the first in GM), in which physical activity is embedded. Finally, physical activity is also embedded across the life course in the revised GM Strategy, raising the profile of sport and physical activity as an approach to prevention in the city-region (GMCA, 2017).

While contextual factors have been influenced by the GM Moving Executive Group board, it has also been found that the Board recognise the importance of social factors and suggest the use of technological platforms to alleviate issues of isolation. Technological platforms such as MyCity have been suggested (in interview, by the Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA and the Strategy and Performance Manager of a leisure trust) to connect networks of individuals with information on sport and physical activity and what is going on. Also, social forums (such as those used in the This Girl Can campaign) can connect people and resolve issues of isolation and loneliness that may be leading to participation issues. The Executive Director of Community Sport

Sport England, as specifically outlined in an interview for this study the use of social forums, using the example of the This Girl Can campaign. Also, there is evidence that individual factors are a focus for the GM Moving Executive Group, with a priority being the use of insight to explore personal barriers such as age. For example, integration is evident with the GM Ageing Hub, which has developed GM into a city internationally recognised as age-friendly by the WHO.

In relation to the wider literature, the concept of macro-level contextual dynamics influencing inter-organisational relationships and board dynamics is aligned to the ideas of Dulewicz et al. (1995), Edwards and Cornforth (2003) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015), in which strategic capability is delicately balanced and dependent on context: in this case, the direction of national and regional sport and physical activity policy, strategy and plans. The literature review also acknowledges the interplay between contextual, social and individual factors as barriers to participation. Findings confirm the links between contextual factors (e.g. policy, funding, infrastructure, transport and planning) and physical environment factors (e.g. number of paths, road linkages and distance between cyclists and cars), which all influence participation, and that integrated strategy has enabled additional funding through concepts such as Beelines (TFGM, 2018). This supports research by Rowe et al. (2013), who acknowledge that it is important to consider holistically the range of factors that are creating barriers to participation. Moreover, the focus on social forums to develop social networks by the Executive Director of Community Sport, and work with the Ageing Hub and early years as illustrated by the Partnership Strategic Manger in Figure 8, indicate that the GM Moving Executive Group is focusing on contextual, social and individual factors in line with the ideas of Rowe et al. (2013). Further developments in this area would include adressing social factors such as driver culture and driver behaviour and individual factors such as barriers to confidence, ability, knowledge and enjoyment.

The findings imply that when addressing sport and physical activity participation levels, sport boards are influenced by, but can also influence contextual factors. This two-way interaction between the board and contextual factors is also identified in collaborative governance theory (Shilbury et al.,

2013, 2016). It is interpreted that a holistic approach is required, addressing contextual, social and individual factors that create barriers to participation. For example, evidence suggests that the GM Moving Executive Group has developed based on regional and national sport and physical activity policy, strategy and plans. The development of regional plans has led to the integration of departments and agencies, and the embedding of sport and physical activity into core strategy in GM. Evidence also suggests that the board have started with a holistic focus, addressing contextual factors such as strategy and resource allocation. At the same time, the board has engaged with individual factors through integration with the Ageing Hub, and plans to address social factors through the development of social forums following the success of the This Girl Can campaign. Evidence of progress is outside of the time bounds of this research. Implications for theory are that, as shown by the findings in Chapter 5, the board is dependent on contextual factors supporting ideas of Ferkins and Shilbury (2015), but can also influence contextual factors that act as barriers to participation as recognised by (Shilbury et al., 2016). Extending this further, the board can also influence and engage with social and individual factors in a holistic approach as acknowledged by Rowe et al., (2013).

8.2 Integration with regional entities

The empirical findings support the academic literature, which suggests that in order to develop the strategic capability of national sport organisations, integration with regional entities is of paramount importance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010, 2015). However, in depth examination of the community sport context in GM identifies that multiple governance mechanisms are utilised in an integrated governance approach, in contrast to a single network governance mechanism (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015) or collaborative governance mechanism (Shilbury et al., 2016). In addition, implications of the Partnership working through inter-organisational relationships will be critically explored.

8.2.1 Integrated governance approach

The integrated approach to working by Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM documented in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a) has led to the formation of a

programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group, as illustrated by the Partnership Strategic Manager in Figure 8 (Section 5.1.1). The requirement to embed sport and physical activity into the structures of GM is outlined by Rowley (2016a). Figure 8 outlines the use of network governance, with the GM Moving Exectutive Group incorporated in a central position in the GM governance architecture and connected to a network of actors across the GM system; however, it also acknolwedges that hierarchy is still evident in GM, with GMCA and GMHSCP positioned above the GM Moving Executive Group in terms of influence and decision making. Moreover, it is interpreted by the researcher that control is still retained by national government through dependence on resource. In addition, the actors in sport and physical activty below the GM Moving Exectutive Group are managed by contracts, indicating market forms of governance.

Figure 9 below adapts the governance architecture designed by the Partnership Strategic Manager (Section 5.1.1), using findings from the analysis of interview data documented in thematic tables in appendices 7, 8 and 9. For example, the DCMS have been introduced in order to acknowledge the direction and control of Sport England through national government policy, and that the GM Moving Executive Group reports into the Reform Board. Further, engagement with the natural capital group is illustrated as highlighted by the strategic manager in Section 5.8. The revised architecture also includes the requirement to integrate with education, health and social care organisations, council services, private sector and voluntary sector organisations in the design and delivery of preventative interventions using sport and physical activity; critically, however, these organisations are not included in the final decision making of the GM Moving Executive Group.

Figure 9: Revised governance architecture
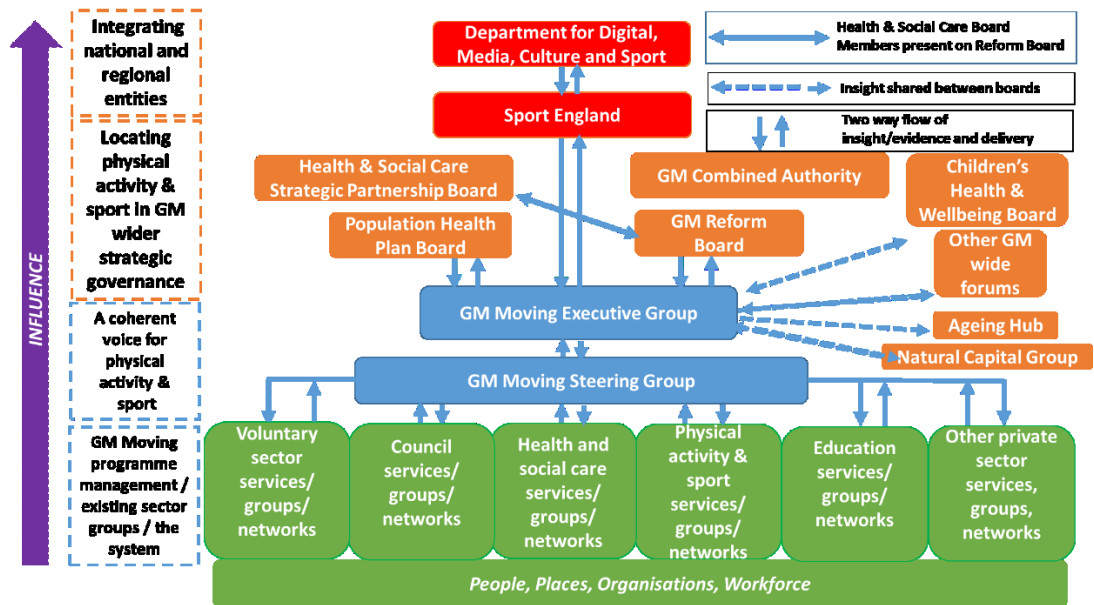
Adapted from Lever (2017: presentation), incorporating empirical evidence

The revised governance architecture evidences the incorporation of integrated working between Sport England and multiple actors that make up the GM system, through the GM Moving Executive Group and wider governance architecture. However, it is found that this integrated approach takes place within a hierarchical structure, with hierarchical mechanisms in place nationally and regionally (as documented in Section 6.6.4), which must be respected, as acknowledged in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a). Moreover, the actors below the GM Moving Executive Group (such as leisure providers) are managed by contracts using market forms of governance; interview analysis in Section 6.6.4 highlights that voluntary sector contracts are based less on strict market mechanisms to deliver outcomes than are leisure contracts. The combination of varying governance mechanisms suggests that although network governance is utilised, overall, integrated governance mechanisms are in place, taking advantage of hierarchical and market forms of governance in community sport in GM. It is interpreted by the researcher that this advanced approach to governance has developed over years of collaborative working, developing learning and knowledge in the region on how to optimise the ability of boards to function within an integrated network or system, while adhering to traditional hierarchical structures.

Findings do suggest, however, that the contracts between council and leisure providers are operated with very close (and, in some cases, long-term) relationships between commissioners and providers, as opposed to strict market mechanisms. Moreover, the focus of contractual agreements progressing from outputs to outcomes has been developed in several localities in GM (this was mentioned by a leisure trust provider interviewed for this study). Evidence also points to the early stages of development of standardised shared-outcomes-based measures across the region to enable vertical and horizontal integration of policy and practice (stated in interview by a health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving Executive Group). Also, the use of integrated locality plans are evident (in an interview for this study, a health commissioner cited Heart of Wigan as an example), advancing the integrated approach to working in GM from neighbourhood to local and regional levels. To support working across organisational boundaries in a network or system, information must be shared; the commitment to do this and make information easily accessible and digestible for organisations of all sizes, as well as residents, is a requirement for system collaboration. Progress towards digital platforms for sport, physical activity and health is an ambition of GM Moving Executive Group; in an interview for this study a health commissioner and locality representative on the board suggested the use of data banks.

It is evident from the thematic tables in appendices 7, 8 and 9 that Sport England has integrated with regional entities and facilitated power-sharing in GM, and that integration with regional entities advances the national sport organisation's ability to function and develop; this supports the theory of Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a). They emphasise the importance of moving away from the traditional hierarchical model of telling, controlling, requesting and consulting, proposing instead a network governance model embracing features such as collaboration, partnership, co-ownership, power-sharing and empowerment. As acknowledged in the literature review, authors have also explored the utility of collaborative governance theory (Shilbury et al., 2013, 2016). Research by O'Boyle and Shilbury (2016, 2018) suggests that what emerges is horizontal integration, as opposed to a combination of governance mechanisms through vertical and horizontal integration (as documented in Section 6.6). The empirical evidence

documented in appendix 8 indicates the emergence of integrated governance theory in the community sport context in GM, which is more aligned to the collaborative/market system ideas of Bullivant (2016). However, the empirical evidence confirms an advancement by Sport England from the traditional hierarchical forms of governance historically utilised for CSPs (Harris, 2013). In the literature review is it seen that Harris (2013) observes the centralisation of Sport England and control over community sport policy delivery through CSP and national governing body contracts. In contrast, the new approach in the Sporting Future strategy (DCMS, 2015) steers Sport England to engage in direct partnership with local government. It is found in this research that the new approach to working, with Sport England integrating with public sector or public-sector funded regional entities in a power-sharing regional programme board (the GM Moving Executive Group), is a clear attempt by the national sport organisation to utilise network governance during the devolution process. Network (or systemic) governance is concerned with co-operation and mutual adjustment between organisations (Henry and Lee, 2004), as opposed to performance managed contracts used with CSPs and national governing bodies. It is evident that on the GM Moving Executive Group, decisions are made by co-operation and mutual adjustment, which has led to heated discussions (as highlighted in interview by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England). This relates to the theme of shared-systems leadership and will be discussed in more depth in Section 8.4.1.

It is acknowledged that moving towards a network approach for Sport England has a number of implications for the national sport organisation. For example, Sport England has reduced its control over the direction of sport and physical activity in GM by engaging with GMCA and NHSGM, requiring negotiation and relationship management in place of the ability to dictate outcomes, one of the key implications highlighted by Henry and Lee (2004). Negotiation and relationship management and operating by mutual adjustment require a high level of skill from the Executive Director of Sport England and Sport England employees (Henry and Lee, 2004), especially in comparison to the ordering, planning and control through performance measures of traditional CSP and national governing body contracts. Sport England's control over the CSP remains, with Sport England the majority funders of the CSP; however,

progress is being made towards power-sharing, with the CEO of the CSP maintaining a position on the GM Moving Executive Group.

Although there is an evident move towards network governance in community sport in England, hierarchical control is still maintained by national government (through funding mechanisms for Sport England in the Sporting Future policy) and by national sport organisations (with mandatory codes of governance and CSP contracts). Furthermore, although shared leadership is evident on the GM Moving Executive Group, some perspectives do suggest this is undermined by the opportunity for investment in competitive bidding for the pilot projects (as documented in Section 7.2.1). This suggests that underneath the network of agencies and partnership working on the GM Moving Executive Group, national government retain control based on resource dependence; this supports the findings of Grix and Phillpots (2011), of sport being a deviant case in the governance narrative, despite the incorporation of network governance as a useful tool. One potential implication is that short-term strategy may result in a shift back towards an elite focus in sport development by national government having ramifications for the Partnership. Furthermore, development of sport and physical activity in GM is also controlled hierarchically, with all big decisions made by the GM Moving Executive Group requiring sign off from GMCA, a mechanism by which even the Mayor has to abide (this was mentioned in an interview for this study by the Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA). These findings emphasise that although board members are key decision makers, checks and balances are in place all the way through the constitutional settlement for devolution, ensuring hierarchy is maintained.

Findings indicate that market mechanisms are also used for delivery of services, utilising a hybrid form of governance, supporting research by McDonald (2005). Critically, the delivery organisations still contribute to network governance and problem solving through the GM governance architecture, but are not involved in decision making. Further, although outcomes-based agreements are developing, based on longer-term relationships, their remit is directly controlled by contractual agreements to ensure performance and reward or by decommissioning, which is more in line with market forms of governance (DeLeon, 2005; Phillpots, 2013).

The findings imply that network governance has been introduced into traditional hierarchical and market forms of governance; however, these still remain in place, in a pragmatic approach using integrated governance to optimise board performance in community sport, as illustrated in the original governance architecture by the Partnership Strategic Manager (Figure 8) and in the revised version based on additional empirical evidence (Figure 9). Integrated governance utilises the best parts of hierarchy, network and market governance to achieve optimal strategic function within a regional system. Evidence suggests that while the theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015) points to the utility of network governance, and more recent research proposes collaborative governance (Shilbury et al., 2016; O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2016, 2018) or hybrid governance mechanisms (Bullivant, 2016), in the context of community sport in GM, what has emerged is an integrated approach to sport governance incorporating hybrid governance mechanisms to optimise whole-system working. As such, a revised conceptualisation for community sport governance in GM is required, based on the emerging theory of integrated community sport governance.

8.2.2 Implications of inter-organisational relationships

The formation of the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group brings together key players that have access to resources required for strategy development and delivery of sport and physical activity for social outcomes in GM. The focus of the GM Moving Executive Group is on co-commissioning, co-design and co-production (Rowley, 2016a; and stated in interview for this study by the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA), which enables each organisation to gain increased control over the external environment. The opportunity to obtain resources and information is a specific focus of the Partnership, as highlighted in interview by the Deputy Director of Population Health and the Lead Chief Exectuive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA, and documented in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a).

The requirement to form inter-organisational relationships based on obtaining resources has resulted in the redcution of the organisational autonomy of Sport England; for example, in power-sharing with regional entities based on the requirement for shared resources to deliver strategic outcomes. The new approach moves away from the national sport organisation controlling the

power as the resource owner, to a network form of governance in which it shares power with regional entities. However, Sport England does hold much greater influence over the wider stakeholders in GM, through the positioning the GM Moving Executive Group above the GM Moving Leadership Group and other stakeholders in the governance architecture, as illustrated in figures 7 and 8. Furthermore, due to the requirement for financial resources in GM, the funds available to Sport England have enabled it to take a central role in the GM Moving Executive Group, for example, by funding the Strategic Manager and the revised GM Moving plan (GM Moving, 2017). Also, Sport England's resources have guided the first stages of the GM Moving Executive Group to a focus on ageing, based on the Active Ageing fund and the release of an additional £1 million of investment into GM; it must be acknowledged, however, that this was also a good strategic fit, based on GM's advanced infrastructure and insight into ageing through the GM Ageing Hub. The GM Ageing Hub is a partnership between the Centre for Ageing Better and GM that includes leading world experts on ageing, providing a wealth of insight into ageing in GM that can be utlised in strategic decision making.

The well-marshalled governance architecture of GMCA and GMHSCP enable Sport England to influence a wide range of stakeholders through one relationship. The Partnership also provides information and insight on understanding place. These benefits of the governance architecture and the increased power and control of budget through devolution have enabled the regional entities to gain power in the relationship with the national sport organisation and move away from a bidding model to direct partnership with co-design, co-commissioning and co-production. The governance architecture illustrated in Section 8.2.1 brings together all public service actors, providing accurate insight and influence for the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group in a more efficient process than multiple relationships across each locality (stated in interview by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England). Similarly, it reduces the requirement for multiple bids across the region that may not be aligned to the wider GM strategy (this was stated in interview by the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA). However, criticism of this approach suggests that multiple tiers are being created, resulting in duplication and less efficient practice than in direct relationships between localities and Sport England (stated in interview by a

leisure trust provider). The GM Moving Executive Group also provides the opportunity to learn from each organisation and member on the board, as well as the wide range of actors connected within the governance architecture; the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England stated in interview that learning is something that Sport England has been particularly weak at, due to their traditional bidding model and four-yearly evaluation cycles. At the same time, the Partnership provides the opportunity for a better return, due to more aligned funding and accurate understanding of the target audience, and provides the opportunity to evidence Sport England's contribution to social outcomes documented in the Sporting Future policy, as stated by a health commissioner and locality representative on the GM Moving Executive Group.

Further engagement with actors across GM has also been attempted through stakeholder workshops and relationships developed by the Partnership Strategic Manager. However, in an interview for this study, a leisure trust provider noted that concerns arise over the approach to stakeholder engagement workshops from regional entities, with some suggesting that they provide weak engagement and that strategic level leadership in sport and physical activity is required from each locality. It is interpreted by the researcher that if strategic level meetings had been held with the leisure trust providers at Greater Sport, or if senior colleagues from Greater Sport attended GM Active meetings, this would improve communication and build more trust in the relationship between regional entities and local providers. This approach could follow that of the meetings held by the Deputy Director of Greater Sport with health commissioners, which were highlighted by a health commissioner in interview as being key to communication. Further, it is evident that challenges arise in practice through the organisational variations documented in Section 6.4. In acknowledgement of the challenges involved in inter-organisational working, and the limited capacity of GM Moving Executive Group, nine months into the Partnership a Strategic Manager was introduced, whose role has been found to be critical in enabling effective partnership working.

The Strategic Manager's position is funded by Sport England, but they are employed by Greater Sport and, importantly, co-located between health and social care and GMCA offices and accountable to each organisation. This has

effectively integrated a Sport England employee into the system as a GM employee, as highlighted in interview by a Project Manager for GMHSCP, who views the Strategic Manager as one of her team, emphasising how well the Strategic Manager has embedded into the GM structures. The Strategic Manager effectively relieves the tensions created in partnership working by operating across organisational boundaries, making it possible to develop an understanding of the variations in language and existing structures and reporting lines, while at the same time adding pace to the work in light of the devolution time frames. The strategic manager role provides an effective way for Sport England to operate in inter-organisational relationships while maintaining staffing limits and at the same time providing an additional resource to a local government facing staffing cuts. However, the Strategic Manager demonstrated in interview that the role includes high levels of administration, due to multiple reporting lines. Also, as the role requires director-level appointment, there is a large cost attached (this was stated in interview by the CEO of a leisure trust), resulting in the funding of two CEO positions at a regional level in GM. This potentially creates duplication in a system that is facing severe budget cuts, and calls for cost–benefit analysis; however, if results are positive, the strategic manager role provides a scalable solution for Sport England to improve its effectiveness while reducing costs in other regions across the UK.

Through exploration of the empirical findings in relation to the wider literature, it is found that by entering into a partnership, both national and regional entities are attempting to gain influence, resources and information which they need to develop and manage their external environment; this is cited in the literature review as a key requirement of organisational performance (Cornforth, 2003; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2010), and emphasises the advanced strategic working in GM. The necessity of controlling the external environment highlights the requirement for individual organisations (at the meso level) and board inputs (at the micro level) to manage macro-level influences. The opportunity to obtain resources and information is a specific focus of the GM Moving Executive Group, with the requirement for co-commissioning and use of insight for co-design and co-production (Rowley, 2016a). This requirement for co-working using shared resources provides the core argument for inter-organisational relationships based on interdependencies with other

organisations, due to resource dependence, as highlighted by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) in the literature review; the review also acknowledges that board members bring access to resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003; Hillman et al., 2009). The original board members, from senior positions in each partner organisation, enhanced access to information and resource while developing the legitimacy of sport and physical actitivty in GM; however, additonal board members have been added, including a local health commissioner and voluntary sector representative, supporting findings by Hillman et al. (2009) that board compostion may change to meet board requirements.

The introduction of the Sporting Future policy has steered strategic alignment between Sport England and regional entities and enabled the creation of stakeholder value, which is evident in the Partnership through a range of areas that support the delivery of strategic outcomes. The opportunities are all centred around the use of the governance architecture in GM that provides Sport England with access to insight, improved efficiency and improved return. It is evident that engaging with other stakeholders in GM has created value for stakeholders, as it improves the effectiveness of policy delivery for regional entities and residents and the ability of the national sport organisation to evidence this increased contribution to social outcomes for residents in GM. These findings suggest that despite a reduction in power, a key benefit of engaging with wider stakeholders is the development of stakeholder value (Freeman, 1984:2010; Laasch and Conaway, 2014).

The findings support the literature on inter-organisational relationships: Babiak's (2007) highlighting of inter-organisational relationships as a central principle for strategic management, and the findings of Ferkins and Shilbury (2010), with regards to the importance of integration with regional entities to enhance the ability of Sport England to function and develop through the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group and utilisation of the GM governance architecture. The Partnership MoU outlines the principles of working (as documented in Section 4.3) and spans the bases of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Devine et al., 2011). For example, there is a focus on a range of shared resources, as documented in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a), including the knowledge and insight held by each organisation, with the focus on identifying co-commissioning and co-

production opportunities. Shared resources were further emphasised in interview by the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA, who highlighted the requirement for co-design, co-commissioning and co-production. The empirical evidence identified that, in addition to access to shared resources, the Partnership provides collaborative advantage through improved efficiency (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Efficiency is improved by effective use of the well-marshalled governance architecture and single point of entry for the national sport organisation. The opportunity for learning is also outlined in relation to the requirement for mutual learning, which is stated in the principles of working documented in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a) and in interview by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England, providing further support to the research of Huxham and Vangen (2005).

It is found that challenges within the Partnership stem from organisational variations, including organisational culture, pace, structure, language and working practice (as documented in Section 6.4). The challenges relate to what Huxham and Vangen (2005) highlight as collaborative inertia, which is often what happens in practice, despite the advantages of collaborative working. Adversial realtionships between leisure providers and the CSP have created further challenges for collaborative working, due to trust and communciation issues; this supports findings by Jones et al. (2018) and O'Boyle and Shilbury (2018). Acknowledging the potential for these challenges to hinder Partnership progress, the strategic manager role effectively integrates Sport England into the GM culture, through co-location of the Strategic Manager and her accountability to multiple organisations; furthermore, the additional capacity provides much-needed pace to partnership working, to support GM partners with devolution time frames. These findings on the input of a strategic manager overcome the challenges outlined by Frisby et al. (2004) and Babiak and Thibault (2009), and support their notion that management capacity is a key challenge that needs to be addressed. The practical implications of these findings are that integrated working between national and regional entities is dependent on the Strategic Manager, who supports both national and regional entities in a solution that could be incorporated into other regions, but requires cost–benefit analysis. The theoretical implications are that although integrated working benefits both national and regional entities, challenges due to organisational variations may lead to collaborative inertia in practice (i.e.

challenges created by collaborative working documented in Section 6.4 and Appendix 8). A unique approach to resolving these issues in GM is the introduction of strategic management capacity and specifically the role of a strategic manager alongside board members to optimise governance in community sport; this relates to board inputs and processes and will be discussed in more depth in sections 8.3 and 8.4.

8.3 Board inputs

The empirical evidence suggests that the development of the GM Moving Executive Group has enhanced earlier integrated working on the GM Moving Leadership Group through the introduction of senior-level position holders from Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM. The inputs of the GM Moving Executive Group members (due to their senior positions) include strategic skill, decision-making power and access to operational knowledge. Critically, board members' positions in their organisations are above and beyond those held by the GM Moving Leadership Group, adding value to current integrated working in GM. Perspectives across board, management and local entities (including the interview response of a health commissioner) suggest that board members bring strategic expertise.

The Strategic Manager of the Partnership noted in interview that, due to their positions in their respective organisations and on multiple boards in the governance architecture, members of the GM Moving Executive Group have access to operational knowledge and knowledge of what is happening locally. The Executive Director of Community Sport for Sport England said in interview that, crucially, their positions add value, as they can make decisions on the direction of resources without having to refer back multiple times to senior figures for decision-making. This abillity and will to access funding is exemplified by the allocation of an additional £1 million of investment into GM (outside of the £10 million of national Sport England funding) for Active Ageing. However, the GM Moving Executive Group acknowledge that despite their expertise, knowledge and access to resource, the board has benefited from introducing additional members who do not hold any power, such as a voluntary sector representative and a health commissioner as a locality representative.

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The passion and commitment to achieve social outcomes are evident in interviews (as documented in Section 7.1.4); moreover, the Local Government Relationship Manager, Sport England recalled that these have been a key factor in differentiating GM from other regions. However, the voluntary sector representative for the GM Moving Executive Group highlighted that the board is under review and may require people who are fully engaged and active, suggesting a lack of commitment based on capacity. It is also suggested that in order for the GM Moving Executive Group to be effective, the board member role must be seen as part of members' core responsibilities, rather than a voluntary position requiring additional capacity. It is found (and reinforced in interview with a Director of Public Health) that GM work requires effective processes and management of multiple roles and workstreams for the benefit of the GM system. However, as highlighted in Section 7.2.2, the introduction of the Strategic Manager has been instrumental in resolving capacity issues.

In relation to the wider literature, findings support the influence of will and skill on the board's ability to function and develop (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015). Further, similarly to the idea of the tripartite model of power and influence (Pettigrew and McNulty, 1995) identified in the literature review, the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group incorporates senior figures from each Partner organisation and has formed a base of power and a legitimate Board for sport and physical activity in GM, using structural and contextual factors such as access to resource and insight, supporting research. Specifically, the will and skill of board members on the GM Moving Executive Group to access and shape resources is above and beyond that of the original GM Moving Leadership Group, due to the presence of senior figures from each partner organisation. Moreover, the strategic experience and expertise of the board, developed through members' senior positions, enables the board to make effective decisions and has provided increased legitimacy to sport and physical activity in GM, supporting the ideas of Castanias and Helfat (2001), Nicholson and Kiel (2004) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) that the effectiveness of a board relies on board members who can fully comprehend the whole situation. Critically, within GM the role of board members is viewed to be part of core business (as opposed to voluntary), reducing the tensions between the roles of voluntary and paid staff found by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a).

It is found that the board members' strategic experience and ability is supported by operational knowledge gained through the governance architecture, and that this operational knowledge is used to make decisions, emphasising the use of operational knowledge in decision making as an asset (as opposed to a hinderance) and supporting findings by Edwards and Cornforth (2003) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015). Further, the GM Moving Executive Group extends to a wider range of stakeholders, who do not hold any equity but bring insight to the board. For example, although co-commissioning of resources will be made by the three leading organisations (Sport England, GMCA and GMHSCP), additional members include a representative for the voluntary sector and a health commissioner from a local authority in GM, supporting findings in the literature review of Phillips et al. (2003) and Bryson (2004), who suggest the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders in policy implementation, including stakeholders who do not hold any power.

The practical implications of the research findings are that senior-level decision makers, who have the ability to think and act strategically and access resources, while bringing legitimacy to the inclusion of sport and physical activity in core strategies and structures in GM, are required on the board; also required is the use of operational knowledge from actors from across the system through the governance architecture, as well as participation from a wider range of stakeholders who bring insight to the board, but do not hold any power. Moreover, it is found that Sport England shares power with senior-level decision makers from the regional entities, creating a power base on the GM Moving Executive Group, but gains influence over other stakeholders in GM not included in decision making (such as leisure trusts). It is also acknowledged that challenges occur due to capacity of senior level board members, emphasising the role of the Strategic Manager in enabling the board to function and develop. An implication for the theory of board strategic balance is that, in the GM context, board members see their roles on the board as integrated into core business and as part of their responsibility to the GM system and wider social outcomes for citizens, removing tension between paid and volunteer staff members.

8.4 Board processes

The empirical evidence documented in Appendix 9 supports the findings in Section 3.2 in the literature review that, in addition to board inputs, board processes are imperative to optimising board performance (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015). However, in contrast to the theory of board strategic balance, analysis of the community sport context in GM indicates that advanced processes are used, for example, developing from shared to systems leadership and from monitoring and control to organisational learning, supporting the development of integrated governance in communtiy sport and the wider GM system. This will now be disucssed in more depth in relation to the wider academic literature.

8.4.1 From shared to systems leadership

The findings suggest that for effective board governance, leadership processes are required on the GM Moving Executive Group. Initially, in the MoU it is acknowledged that the board is co-chaired (Rowley, 2016a), for example, between the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA and the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England. It has also been identified that the GM Moving Executive Group has engaged in shared leadership with the Strategic Manager for the Partnership. The sharing of power with the Strategic Manager is emphasised in interview by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England, who promotes giving power to get on with work agreed in board meetings. The leadership process between the board and the Strategic Manager is seen as key in progressing work of the GM Moving Executive Group, due to capacity issues for senior level board members. However, the Strategic Manager notes that it is important to set boundaries between what she can get on and do and those decisions that need to be referred back to the board to be made collectively.

Due to the cross-sector nature of the GM Moving Executive Group, operating within the wider GM system, the use of systems leadership emerges from interviews (e.g. with the CEO of Greater Sport) and NHS transformation literature, as the leadership process adopted by the GM Moving Executive Group members and leaders in the GM system. From the board, to management, to local entities, the requirement to move beyond traditional

leadership towards collective leadership is evident (as documented in sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 and Appendix 9), with board members and other representatives from across the system operating multiple roles, working across organisational boundaries with multiple workstreams to influence all organisations that create the wider system (as observed by a director of public health in interview). The focus is on co-commissioning and co-production (Rowley, 2016a). Further, the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England, highlights in interview the use of consensus in decision making, based on honest and constructive conflict, as opposed to sugar-coated conversations. The conflict identified within the GM Moving Executive Group through honesty in communication is a clear indicator of the process of shared and systems leadership between the board members. However, a voluntary sector representative on the GM Moving Executive Group emphasises the need to ensure that all board members understand the language being used, to ensure accurate decision making, also suggesting that more constructive criticism could be enhance the board's development potential. It is found that processes of co-commissioning, co-design and co-production advance the effectiveness of board governance in comparison with other boards that may discuss issues democratically without working together to commission, design and produce with stakeholders beyond the board.

The ability to incorporate multiple roles and multiple workstreams requires board members to take on additional workload for the benefit of the system, and, critically, requires the ability to manage multiple workstreams effectively as part of core responsibilities, as noted in interview by a director of public health. It is interpreted by the researcher from the findings documented in Section 7.2.2 and Appendix 9 that, during the reform process, system leaders in GM have created a tradition of operating in multiple roles working across organisational boundaries in the GM system. Further, this senior leadership inspires directors and managers of regional and local entities to operate as system leaders and maintain services in the face of continuing financial cuts, evidencing a belief in collectivism.

In relation to the wider literature, it is found that leadership is required as a process: for example in the literature review, its is identified that Grint (2005) recognises leadership as appearing in people, positions, results and as a

process. An initial process evident on the board relates to shared leadership, which is evident between the board members (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Further shared leadership is evident between the board and Partnership Strategic Manager, aligning to the ideas of Nadler (2004), Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015) that the process of shared leadership is of key importance to strategic capability. Evidence of systems leadership on the GM Moving Executive Group is also found, with the work of the board being co-designed and co-produced through constructive conflict, supporting findings by Senge et al. (2015) that systems leadership requires the co-creation of future activities. Further, the board members operate multiple roles on various boards in GM to connect the system, with the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA being a leading example. These findings support the ideas of Ghate et al. (2013), creating change by interacting across systems through joined-up working across multiple service sectors; they also confirm the notion that collective leadership is time, skill and resource intensive (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2018:9) for board members.

The practical implications are that shared leadership is required between the board members and between the board and Strategic Manager, which requires honest, constructive conversation and clarity of language to enable understanding; and, that systems leadership is also required for optimal strategic function, with board members working multiple roles connecting the system, using co-design, co-commissioning and co-production in the co-creation of future activities. However, it is postulated by the researcher that the workload required for systems leadership may put strain on board members and needs to be managed effectively, with manageable workloads to avoid burnout. Implications for the theory of board strategic balance are that in order to achieve optimal strategic function in community sport governance, board members must move beyond processes of shared leadership on the board towards systems leadership to connect the system in the co-creation of future activities.

8.4.2 From monitoring and control to organisational learning

It has been stated that at the time of data collection the GM Moving Executive Group had not identified outcome measures, with an output measure of participation being used in the refresh of the GM Moving plan (GM Moving,

2017). As a result, assessing the board's contribution to outcomes will be challenging for board members. However, it has been found (and identified in interview by the Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA) that critical to board effectiveness is making decisions based on valid data and insight. Furthermore, it has been identified by the Partnership Strategic Manager that the board has been challenged by the requirement to balance the collection of insight with action towards making a strategic contribution. However, an interview with a CEO leisure trust provider suggests that the board may be making decisions without a thorough audit of current practice as documented in Section 6.4.5, bringing into question whether the decisions made by the GM Moving Executive Group are adding value to current practice in GM.

It is found, however, that there is a focus on advancing beyond monitoring and control to organisational learning and identifying the visible and hidden value of the work (Place Development Manager for Greater Sport, in interview). In order to progress this area, the GM Moving Executive Group has introduced a process of revaluation, focusing on identifying visible and hidden value to capture organisational learning (as documented in sections 7.2 and 7.3 and Appendix 9), critically, identifying board member and stakeholder value from a range of perspectives to guide the direction of the work.

The revaluation model focuses on monitoring and evaluation, not as a separate process, but as an integral part of the development process in a learning system (Darnton and Harrison, 2015). Furthermore, it enables data to be captured from all levels of the GM system: from as high up as the Mayor to people living in deprived areas of GM. Their evaluation forms, documented in Appendix 10, provide the opportunity to capture lived experience from stakeholder perspectives and insight from across the system, to develop a shared understanding of current practice and the barriers to participation in GM. This enables the GM Moving Executive Group to use reflection and self-evaluation to identify areas that can add value to current practice and be scaled up to make an optimal strategic contribution to social outcomes in GM. Integrating the revaluation process supports the key requirement for learning highlighted by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England in Section 5.4.1.

In relation to the wider academic literature, the empirical findings build on the theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a) and Nicholson and Kiel's integrated model (2004). The revaluation process utilises work by Argyris and Schon (1978, 1996) on double-loop learning (identified in the literature review) and suggests that organisational learning requires processes that produce valid information for decision makers and receptivity to corrective feedback from the individual or organisation. As identified by the Deputy Chief Executive of GMCA in interview, learning is essential in a cross-sector partnership operating within a wider system. Critically, double-loop learning moves beyond theories of winning and control, evident in single-loop learning, to theories of using valid insight and evidence. It is found that evidence and insight is used by the GM Moving Executive Group during the co-design, co-commissioning and co-production of future activities, as documented in sections 6.3.4 and 7.2 and Appendix 9.

It is identified in the literature review that the three cycles in the revaluation process also build on research into triple-loop learning by Tosey et al. (2011). The revaluation process also suggests self-evaluation by board members; however, Tosey et al. (2011) promote caution with this approach, based on the findings of Bateson (1972) that it may lead to board members losing a sense of self, and/or unlearning. As a result, the use of a facilitator or action researcher is recommended, supporting Coghlan and Bambrick's (2001) ideas cited in Ferkins (2007) in the development of the theory of board strategic balance, which incorporates action research cycles and meta-learning or learning about learning.

Practical suggestions are that board inputs and processes should be extended from monitoring and control to organisational learning through multiple cycles of action, reflection and value, and that the revaluation tool used by the GM Moving Executive Group enables learning from board members and is required from the start in community sport governance for formative and summative evaluation. Critically, it is interpreted by the researcher that there is a requirement to take into account board and stakeholder perspectives based on lived experience to create stakeholder value, supporting Freeman (1984:2010). An implication for the theory of board strategic balance is that board member inputs and processes can be balanced and integrated through

cycles of action, reflection and value to enhance optimal strategic function through organisational learning, thus adding to the requirement for a revised conceptualisation of strategic capability based on the emerging theory of integrated community sport governance.

8.5 Conclusion

The discussion has explored how the GM Moving Executive Group's capability to provide a strategic contribution is based on integration of sport and physical activity into core systems and structures in GM using the GM governance architecture. It is highlighted that, in the community sport context in GM, integrated governance incorporates hierarchical and market mechanisms, but utilises network governance for optimal performance (as documented in Section 6.6 and Appendix 8). It is discussed in Section 8.1 and documented in Chapter 5 and Appendix 7 that the formation of the GM Moving Group has been influenced by contextual factors, but also that integrated working has influenced contextual, social and individual factors that create barriers for participation, such as resources, infrastructure, social networks and age. Despite evident benefits of integrated working for national and regional entities, challenges in integrated working occur due to organisational variations in culture, structure, language, working practice and capacity. The introduction of a new role in community sport, the strategic manager role, supports national and regional entities through co-location across the GM system; however, it is board member strategic skill and will, above and beyond that of earlier integrated working on the GM Moving Leadership Group, that enhances the ability of the board to function. That being said, the board uses access to operational knowledge in decision making provided by the well-marshalled GM governance architecture. These inputs are enhanced through shared leadership between the board members and between the board and the Partnership Strategic Manager; however, it is systems leadership that is required to connect the system, using co-design, co-commissioning and co-production in the co-creation of future activities. Critically, due to the requirement for learning, the board has incorporated the process of revaluation with balanced and integrated cycles of action, reflection and value, incorporating board member and stakeholder perspectives with lived experience, thus moving beyond monitoring and control to organisational

learning. It is interpreted by the researcher that it is the integration of board inputs and processes that enhances the ability of the board to function and the development potential of the board to think and act in a strategic manner in the community sport context.

The strategic capability framework has helped to clarify and explain the multiple levels of community sport governance. Also, in accordance with the theory of board strategic balance, a multi-theoretical approach has been used: to shine light on the different dynamics involved in community sport governance; to show how integration between national and regional entities enhances capability, despite hierarchical and market forms of governance still being in place; and that in order to achieve optimal strategic function, the board needs to have balanced and integrated inputs and processes. This confirms the value of the theory of board strategic balance as an explanatory tool in the context of community sport in the UK.

The limitations of the theory of board strategic balance in the context of community sport governance are, however, evident. These limitations include the board both being influenced by context and influencing context (Shilbury et al., 2016), as well as social and individual factors that act as barriers to participation (Rowe et al., 2013). Further, multiple governance mechanisms are evident in community sport governance in GM, enabling vertical and horizontal integration, which utilises network and market forms of governance, while respecting hierarchical structures both regionally and nationally. This contrasts with the unitary form of network governance used by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) and more recent collaborative governance (Shilbury et al., 2016; O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2018). As such, an integrated community sport governance theory emerges to explain the findings in the GM context supporting ideas of Bullivant (2016). Moreover, the challenges created in integrated working require the role of a strategic manager, emphasising the role of management in the governance function. Further, the use of the governance architecture for integrated governance illustrates that governance expands beyond the board and includes the wider GM system. Critically, in optimising the potential of the governance architecture, integrated community sport governance requires systems leadership (with board members occupying multiple roles across a range of boards in GM), in addition to the

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commitment to co-designing, co-commissioning and co-production in the co-creation of future activities. A further requirement is that board processes extend beyond monitoring and control to embed organisational learning through integrated cycles of action, reflection and value that incorporate board member and stakeholder perspectives with lived experience. Finally, that as the strategic capability framework (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a) develops the framework by Edwards and Cornforth (2003) from tasks to outputs, in the community sport context this extends to outputs that contribute to social outcomes (as documented in Section 7.2). Bringing the influences discussed in this chapter together, it is determined by the researcher that a revised conceptualisation of strategic capability for the community sport context in GM is required to support the emerging theory of integrated community sport governance. These theoretical development will now be conceptualised in the concluding chapter, with supporting practical and policy recommendations.

9.0 Thesis Conclusion

The following chapter concludes the findings of the PhD research in relation to the research aims and objectives. Using empirical evidence, recommendations are presented for policy, practice, theoretical development and future research. This chapter will also reflect on the choices made by the researcher, including the choice of theoretical framework, methodological assumptions and the research process. Finally, the practical, methodological and theoretical contributions to knowledge from the thesis are outlined.

This research has explored strategic capability in the sport and physical activity partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM agreed through an MoU (Rowley, 2016a), focusing specifically on the programme board of the Partnership, the GM Moving Executive Group. The research has achieved the research objectives as follows:

- Objective 1: A review of the academic literature on strategic capability and sport and physical activity partnerships.
- Objective 2: Identification of factors that enable and constrain integrated working for the GM Moving Executive Group at strategic and operational levels.
- Objective 3: An evaluation of the strategic capability of the GM Moving Executive Group.
- Objective 4: The explanatory value of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance has been critically examined, resulting in a revised conceptualisation for strategic capability, based on empirical findings in the context of community sport in GM. The revised conceptualisation supports the emerging theory of integrated community sport governance: the theory of board strategic cycles.

9.1 Research objective 1: Review of the literature on strategic capability and sport and physical activity partnerships

It has been found in the background and context to the literature review that community sport and physical activity partnerships are a construct created to

support social outcomes. The varying nature of sport development has been identified in the literature (Sotiriadou et al., 2008; Houlihan and Green, 2010; Coalter, 2012). However, the Partnership explored in this research focuses on the use of sport and physical activity to achieve social outcomes, such as physical health, mental health, individual, community and economic development (DCMS, 2015; GM Moving, 2017). The background and context to the literature review outlines that sport development for social outcomes in this context derives from the wider development agenda, steered by the UN's sustainable development goals, which highlight the requirement for balanced development initiatives to meet current development objectives without negative impact or creating crises for the future (WCED, 1987). It is identified that national sport policy in England (DCMS, 2015) is unbalanced, due to a lack of an ecological outcome, and that despite contrasting empirical data that indicates a balanced approach that incorporates ecological issues in GM, national policy and strategy results in regional strategy for sport and physical activity excluding an ecological outcome. This unsustainable development is in contrast to policy and legislation in Wales, which enforces sustainable development from all publicly funded organisations (Commissioner for Wales, 2015). However, the changing focus of national sport policy from elite performance to social outcomes is seen as positive step forward. Critically, it is found that a focus on social outcomes, in addition to austerity measures that require improved effectiveness for reduced budget, has steered and enabled Sport England to adopt new governance mechanisms, integrating with regional entities such as local government and health bodies and taking advantage of the process of devolution in the UK (DCMS, 2015). However, the uniqueness of the new approach to community sport governance has created a need to understand the enablers and constraints and the required inputs and processes for optimal performance in making a strategic contribution to social outcomes.

It is identified in Section 3.2 that the construct of strategic capability provides an appropriate lens through which to explore the effectiveness of new governance mechanisms. The foundations of the concept of strategic capability in sport governance emerge from the professional sport setting, and Lesley Ferkins' thesis (2002–2007). Further research by Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2012, 2015a) led to the publication of the strategic capability framework

and theory of board strategic balance, which outlines the influences that may affect the ability of national sport boards to function and the development potential of these boards to think and act in a strategic manner. The framework and theory of board strategic balance enable exploration and evaluation of the ability of sport and physical activity boards to deliver a strategic contribution; however, due to the emergent nature of the theory of board strategic balance it requires critical exploration in different contexts. Furthermore, there is little to no empirical research in the UK harnessing strategic capability theory in the community sport context to assess initiatives, indicating a gap in the literature. This research study aims to fill this gap by examining the governance structures and activity in GM at macro, meso and micro levels in order to shed light on core aspects of strategic capability theory relating to the role and influence of context, integration with regional entities, board inputs and board processes.

The strategic capability framework developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) was used to analyse recent developments in the community sport context in the UK, as it enables exploration of the three types of governance identified by Henry and Lee (2004). It initially explores contextual dynamics and the use of political governance at the macro level, in addition to integration with regional entities through network governance and the formation of inter-organisational relationships at the meso level. Further exploration of the literature on integration through partnership highlighted that, although integration has benefits, in practice challenges occur that can hinder performance and (in many cases) lead to failure to achieve outcomes. Finally, the micro-level factors of board member inputs and board processes are suggested to be required to achieve optimal strategic contribution. The supporting theory of board strategic balance indciates that balancing board inputs and board processes can help to optimise performance and reduce chances of failure. Through exploration of a holistic range of influences on the Partnership, the factors that enable and constrain the GM Moving Executive Group were identified and it was possible evaluate the ability of the board to function and the development potential of the board to think and act in a strategic manner. Due to the emergent nature of the strategic capability framework, critical exploration was required in new contexts through empirical research.

9.2 Research objectives 2 and 3: Identify and explore the factors that enable and constrain the Partnership and evaluate the strategic capability of the GM Moving Executive Group.

Empirical research using the case study of the Partnership and the GM Moving Executive Group has identified a range of enablers and constraints across macro, meso and micro levels, in addition to inter-relationships between the levels of community sport governance. In order to gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of the influences on the GM Moving Executive Group, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data across three areas (Figure 5). The first stage of interviews included interviews with the GM Moving Executive Group, a programme board set up to operate on behalf of the Partnership. The second stage focused on management-level perspectives from individuals working at or funded by the three Partnership organisations, Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (GMHSCP from 2016). The third stage focused on commissioners and providers of sport and physical activity in GM, in addition to a representative of a voluntary sector organisation operating in GM localities, a representative for GM Active (the combined association of leisure trusts in GM) and the Place Development Manager for Sport and Physical Activity for Greater Sport (the regional CSP). The Place Development Manager was given control of the initial £1 million of investment into active ageing by Sport England and the Ageing Hub, effectively operating as a commissioner, as well as being fundamental to integrated working and this research. Document analysis of key strategy and plans (with the exception of documents that were requested but not provided by the interview participants, such as board meeting minutes) provided context to the analysis of interviews documented in appendices 7, 8 and 9 and was used to support or contrast findings in chapters 5, 6 and 7. The documents analysed are listed in appendices 5 and 6.

The empirical evidence documented in appendices 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 has enabled a critical assessment of the GM Moving Executive Group's ability to function, in relation to the wider academic literature in Chapter 8. From

examination of the Partnership and its programme board, the GM Moving Executive Group, it has been possible to identify the factors that enable and constrain its function and development potential to make a strategic contribution to social outcomes in GM. It is interpreted by the researcher that identifying the factors that enable the Partnership to function effectively outlines the factors on which the Partnership is dependent for success in contributing to social outcomes.

9.2.1 Contextual factors

The empirical evidence suggests that regional entities and the national sport organisation Sport England have been constrained by budget cuts introduced following the 2008 financial crisis, with local government and social services being a central focus of budget reductions (Parnell et al., 2016). The budget cuts have been followed by the requirement to improve the effectiveness of public services, while reducing demand on public services. The focus is to reduce the deficit between the cost of public services and taxes raised, while addressing long-term inequalities in GM entrenched through unemployment, which limits growth in the region, as identified in the MIER (2008).

The devolution of budget and powers to GM through a form of meta-governance by the national government, governing via a plurality of networks (Bevir and Rhodes, 2016), as identified in the background and context to the literature review, is found to be an enabler of integration between public services that has presented an opportunity for regional and national organisations to integrate in a place-based approach to reform public services; essentially, addressing the dilemma of reduced budgets faced during austerity measures, while improving the effectiveness of public services and reducing demand on them by shifting towards preventative, as opposed to treatment-based, services.

The integration of public services at a regional level addresses the ineffective siloed approach to working of national government, e.g. employment schemes by the Department for Work and Pensions getting one in ten people into work, versus GM programmes such as Working Well getting four in ten people into work (SQW, 2016). It is this opportunity that presents a reason for national sport organisations such as Sport England to engage in partnership with regional entities based on their newly acquired power and resource, enabling

innovative commissioning strategies with a focus on prevention of health issues that address social factors for health and wellbeing, rather than treatment-based services (GMHSCP, 2015; GM Moving, 2015; Rowley, 2016a). Figure 10 illustrates developments in GM and nationally.

Figure 10: Illustration of the GM Moving time line
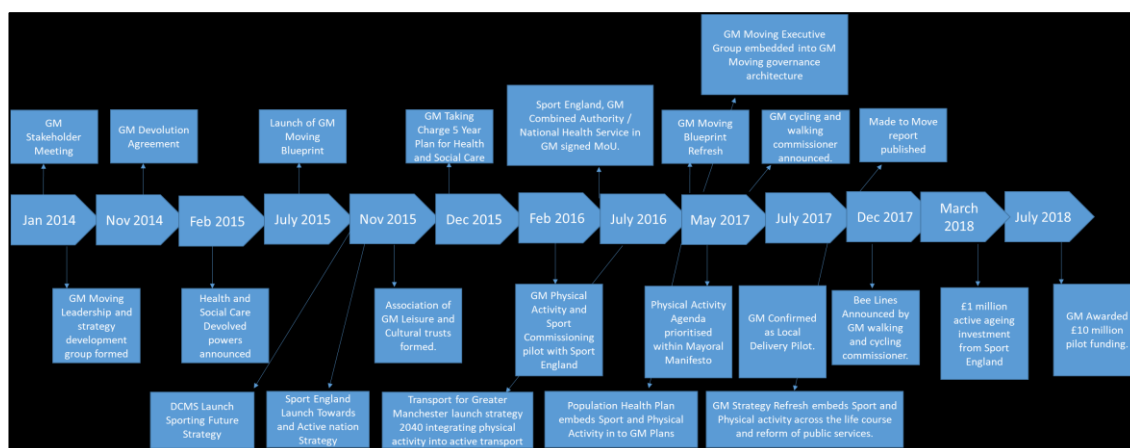
Adapted from (GM Moving, 2017), incorporating empirical evidence)

The time line indicates how an initial stakeholder meeting focused on prevention and wellbeing in the reform of public services enabled the CSP in GM, working with senior leaders such as the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA, to form the GM Moving Leadership Group. This initiated integrated working on sport and physical activity across GM. The production of the GM Moving Blueprint for Change (2015) proposed an opportunity for GM to act as a test bed for national organisations to work in an integrated way at a regional level and move away from traditional siloed working practice used in current national governing bodies and CSP relationships.

It is found in Sections 5.1 and 5.5, however, that integrated working for sport and physical activity in GM pre-dates the development of system willingness, with 32 years of collaborative working in GM through the Association of GM Authorities. The work by the Association of GM Authorities has developed a tradition of collaborative working and strong beliefs in GM that working collectively is the best way for local authorities to progress, as opposed to competing against each other during times of challenges such as reduced

budgets by the national government. Findings suggest that beliefs of integrated working in GM have driven action, supporting ideas of Bevir and Rhodes (2016), and that it is this basis of trust that has enabled GMCA to marshal a governance architecture in GM, integrating agencies across the system during the reform of public services. Furthermore, the governance architecture in GM supports the vertical and horizontal integration of services in the GM system, as well as GMHSCP. It could be argued that without the tradition of collaborative working and the creation of a diverse, well-marshalled governance architecture, Sport England would not benefit from engaging in a direct partnership. Critically, the trust required for collaborative working in regions requires years of development and must be maintained horizontally and vertically in order for the governance architecture to be effective.

The revision of DCMS policy to a focus on social outcomes (as documented in Section 5.4.1), providing alignment with regional entities, as illustrated in the time line, enabled Sport England to take advantage of the devolution process and proposals such as that offered by the GM Moving blueprint and enter into a direct partnership with regional entities. Critically, this meant moving away from national governing bodies playing a central role in community sport strategy and placing CSPs in a more prominent position, especially leading CSPs (such as Greater Sport) that have built high-level strategic relationships with local government and health bodies, where strategy and policy in addition to resource allocation is influenced. It must be acknowledged that this is not the case for all CSPs and that it has taken years of work by the CEO of Greater Sport and their team to build senior-level strategic relationships in GM, as opposed to playing a supporting role. This work led to Sport England commissioning a pilot study to explore the opportunity in GM; this study was led by Linden Rowley, who produced the MoU between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM. A key recommendation of the commissioning work was that sport and physical activity must be embedded into GM structures and strategies as opposed to siloed (Rowley, 2016a). Evidence of this is found in TFGM strategy (2016), the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017) and the refreshed GM Strategy (GMCA, 2017a), and, crucially, in the integration of the GM Moving Executive Group into the GM governance architecture as illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

It is interpreted by the researcher that integrated working is dependent on national sport and physical activity policy maintaining a focus on social outcomes that align with the priorities of regional entities. If a return to elite-focused sport and physical activity policy is made, it becomes much more complicated to maintain relationships. The main reason for this is that regional entities and health bodies have less interest in medal charts than in improving health and wellbeing (which may directly help residents, reduce demand on services and boost economic growth, as acknowledged in Section 5.6.2). Furthermore, if national government does decide (in the ever-changing direction of sport policy) to focus again on elite performance, alternative forms of governance could be required, where hierarchical mechanisms are recommended (Meir and Hill, 2005), as identified in the literature review. Critically, integrated working at a regional level is dependent on national sport policy and, taking history into account, this may change in the future, having negative effects on integrated working and social outcomes. It is interpreted by the researcher that consistency and long-term strategy are required if integrated working has any chance of tackling stubborn inequalities in regions such as GM.

The alignment of national and regional strategy around social outcomes and away from medals and performance has created synergy between national and regional entities, to focus not just on individual and social dynamics, but on contextual dynamics affecting participation levels in sport and physical activity. Through the use of a socio-ecological model, Rowe et al. (2013) identify the importance of contextual dynamics on participation. It is discussed in Section 8.1.2 that integrated working at a regional level, using social outcomes, has enabled the integration of sport and physical activity across public service strategy, which has led to new roles in GM (e.g. the Walking and Cycling Commissioner) and development of the infrastructure in GM (e.g. the Beelines) (GMCA, 2018a). These developments are improving the contextual dynamics (such as the physical environment) in GM, including the number of paths, road linkages and distance between cyclists and cars (Rowe et al., 2013). This integrated and holistic approach in GM strategy enables the Partnership to make a strategic contribution to increasing participation.

It is also discussed in Section 8.2.1 that, in addition to influencing contextual dynamics, the GM Moving Executive Group are also aware of social and individual factors that are influencing levels of participation. Acknowledgement of social factors, such as a network of friends or family members who cycle or knowing others who commute to work, is suggested by Rowe et al. (2013). The use of technological platforms such as social forums is recognised by the GM Moving Executive Group, as in Sport England's experience delivering the This Girl Can campaign and how social forums supported engagement (cited in interview by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England). Furthermore, individual factors such as age are incorporated, with the first focus of the GM Moving Executive Group being work with Active Ageing. The focus on ageing takes advantage of the Ageing Hub, a leading partnership in GM that has developed through over 20 years of work on ageing, resulting in the region being recognised as a leading age-friendly city by the WHO. Integration with other constructs across GM that make up the GM governance architecture has been enabled by positioning the GM Moving Executive Group in a central position in the GM governance architecture, through network governance as discussed in Section 8.2.

9.2.2 Integration with regional entities

It is found that the integrated way of working, incorporating sport and physical activity, that started with the GM Moving Leadership Group and progressed into the GM Moving Executive Group, has embedded sport and physical activity into regional strategy and structures. This embedding of sport and physical activity into the GM system enables co-commissioning, co-design and co-production of services, incorporating sport and physical activity into a holistic offer for residents in the move towards preventive services for health and social care. The integration has added value to the sport and physical activity agenda and Sport England's ability to contribute towards social outcomes. It advances beyond the previous strategy (led by national governing bodies and supported by CSPs), due to national governing bodies being focused on elite performance and having limited reach outside of the organisational boundaries of the sport and physical activity sector (siloed working). Regional integration means sport and physical activity is at the main discussion table in GM as part of the reform agenda, as opposed to outside of

the system. However, it is interpreted by the researcher that in order for sport and physical activity to maintain this position, it will be required to deliver evidence-based results to validate its contribution and inclusion in core strategy. If results are not produced, sport and physical activity may be removed from core strategy and conversation on the delivery of public services. Consistency is required with the integration of sport and physical activity within the GM system; however, this must be supported by correlation to outcome measures.

Ferkins (2007) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a) acknowledge for a national sport organisation to enhance its ability to function, it should move away from telling and controlling techniques of hierarchical governance towards network governance through co-operation, collaboration and partnership. However, it is integrated governance that is found in the GM Moving Executive Group, integrating hierarchical, network and market forms of governance. The empirical evidence suggests that, in the context of this partnership, Sport England has formed a power-sharing relationship with regional entities based on the devolution agreement. The network governance approach, utilising the GM governance architecture, also enables horizontal and vertical integration of services at the regional and local level, which enables insight to be captured across a range of services, from neighbourhood to local authority and regional levels. The integrated approach captures insight and best practice and develops a holistic understanding of barriers to wellbeing, using co-design, co-commissioning and co-production. Furthermore, integrated working through the GM governance architecture enables scale and co-production through integrated delivery of services, providing consistency across the conurbation, with sport and physical activity embedded alongside a range of preventative services. The benefits of using a network form of governance are evident in GM, providing shared insight and resources from a range of actors in the GM system (Skelcher, 2000; Ferlie et al., 2011; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013). However, it must be acknowledged that the network approach has evident constraints, as Sport England have reduced their control over the direction of sport and physical activity in GM. Essentially, by engaging with GMCA and NHSGM as well as other stakeholders, in place of the ability to dictate outcomes through contracts, negotiation and relationship-management skills are required (Henry and Lee,

2004). Furthermore, effective board working, operating by mutual adjustment, requires a high level of skill for the Executive Director of Sport England and Sport England employees (Henry and Lee, 2004). This approach to negotiation has led to arguments within the GM Moving Executive Group due to differing but passionate beliefs on the direction of public policy; however, in interview, the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England, expressed a welcoming attitude to honest exchanges.

It is evident from the illustrations documented in Section 5.1.1 and revised in Section 8.2.1 that Sport England is using network governance in the Partnership with regional entities, which positions the national sport organisation in a central position in the GM governance architecture, connected to wider GM constructs. However, more in-depth analysis identifies that the network governance approach operates between hierarchical and market forms of governance. For example, community sport is tightly controlled by the national government through Sport England and UK Sport, with mandatory regulations on the direction of funding to evidence a contribution to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. These include the requirement for contribution to wider social outcomes, as well as the structure and processes of funded organisations, through the UK Code of Sport Governance (Bitel and Carr, 2017). Also, competitive bidding processes are still in place for investment, creating underlying power for Sport England, and within GM there is an evident hierarchy with decisions being made by senior boards such as GMCA and GMHSCP; even the Mayor has to gain approval and consensus from GMCA members (as documented in Section 6.5.3 and Appendix 8).

When exploring relationships in the governance architecture below the GM Moving Executive Group, it is evident that organisations are controlled using contracts (as documented in Section 6.6.3). For example, voluntary organisations and leisure providers have contracts with local councils in each of the ten localities of GM (with the exception of Bury where services are still operated by the local council). These contracts direct the focus of each organisation using market mechanisms, despite voluntary organisations operating on longer-term outcome agreements and evidence of leisure providers operating through close and well-developed relationships between commissioners and providers (as in Wigan and Tameside). Some providers

operate both roles, as in Salford, demonstrating a high level of trust. However, there is inconsistency across the GM region, with providers' contracts varying between output and outcome measures. It is suggested that in order to enable consistency and integration across GM, all boroughs should operate using an outcomes framework, to further enable vertical and horizontal integration through locality plans and shared outcome frameworks. The empirical evidence supports findings by McDonald (2005) and Grix and Phillpots (2011) that multiple governance mechanisms are present in community sport governance, and those of Bullivant (2016) that health governance operates in a collaborative/market world. In the case of sport and physical activity in GM, with hierarchical governance at the national and GM level, network governance adopted to utilise the full holistic insight from across the whole system in GM, and market forms of governance used to deliver services and drive performance (or decommission services that are deemed ineffective). It is found in appendix 8 and chapter 6 and 8 that this integrated governance utilises the benefits of network governance while respecting hierarchical structures; despite hierarchy slowing progress of the GM Moving Executive Group it ensures checks and balances. This contrasts with the theory of board strategic balance, which indicates the unitary form of network governance, and also with more recent developments suggesting a unitary form of collaborative governance (Shilbury et al., 2016; O'Boyle and Shilbury, 2016, 2018). The emergent theory in the community sport context is one of integrated governance utilising multiple governance mechanisms for optimal performance. The benefits of and challenges to integrated working through inter-organisational relationships have also been identified in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 and discussed in Section 8.2.2.

9.2.3 Inter-organisational relationships

The central core of the new way of working is the formation of an inter-organisational relationship between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM (GMHSCP from 2016). The formation of inter-organisational relationships is found to be a strategic management approach that improves effectiveness, supporting findings by Babiak (2007) and Babiak and Thibault (2009). The strategic approach has developed collaborative advantage for the organisations involved (Huxham and Vangen, 2005) by enabling shared

resources, improved efficiency and mutual learning. However, it must also be acknowledged that, in practice, inter-organisational working can create the challenge of collaborative inertia (Huxham and Vangen, 2005), which is evident within the Partnership due to variations in organisational culture, structure, pace, language and working practice.

The organisational variations create complexity in this way of working and led to the introduction of a Strategic Manager (funded by Sport England), nine months into the Partnership. The Strategic Manager is co-located and accountable to each organisation in the Partnership and employed by Greater Sport, the CSP. The Strategic Manager role enables the board to function, resolving challenges that arise due to organisational variations by weaving a Sport England-funded member of staff directly into the GM system. The evident constraints on the Strategic Manager (such as high levels of administration) are documented in Section 7.2.1. Furthermore, although Sport England have funded this resource, due to resource and staffing limitations, the majority of their employees will 'tap in and out', or drop into GM as and when required, spending the rest of their time in London or other conurbations; the resource-intensive nature of integrated working, coupled with resource constraints, may limit utilisation of this approach in other regions across the country.

As well as resolving challenges, the Strategic Manager provides much-needed capacity for members of the GM Moving Executive Group who lack capacity due to their senior positions. It is found that the Strategic Manager role and shared leadership between the board and Strategic Manager are key enablers to the Partnership and GM Moving Executive Group, supporting findings by Nadler (2004) and Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a), who acknowldege the importance of shared leadership with a CEO. Due to the complexity of the Strategic Manager role, it requires an experienced individual, with the role being currently fulfilled by the ex-CEO of a CSP. By association, this role requires a high level of financial resource, and the question arises how long this level of resource can be maintained; effectively, it means two chief executive-level officers are working on sport and physical activity in GM, funded by Sport England, the Association of GM Authorities and GMCA. This results in questions about duplication and heavy resourcing at the regional

level, during a period of continued budget cuts at a local level that continue to constrain delivery of public services. It is interpreted by the researcher that further research is required to evidence the contribution of additional capacity at the regional level in organisations such as Greater Sport.

9.2.4 Board inputs

Central to developing integrated working in GM is the addition of the GM Moving Executive Group to the GM strategic architecture, with board inputs found to add value to current integrated working in GM.

9.2.4.1 Board member skill

Senior-level positions of members of the GM Moving Executive Group have been found to add value to existing integrated working on sport and physical activity in GM initiated through the GM Leadership Group. These senior-level positions bring strategic experience and the ability to develop and deliver strategy in board members' respective organisations. The strategic experience brings with it the ability to see beyond organisational boundaries to identify the correct course of action for GM and national outcomes. In addition to board members' knowledge, experience and ability, they are also in a position where they access resources. For example, the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England allocated an additional £1 million pounds of investment to active ageing during the first GM Moving Executive Group meeting; this would not have been possible on the GM Moving Leadership Group, and thus value is added to GM working. The additional £1 million is a move towards co-commissioning and away from the old bidding model used by Sport England across the country. A comparison will need to be made between the results of the co-commissioning of the GM Moving Executive Group versus the old bidding model used to distribute the pilot funding. It is interpreted by the researcher that if this is not assessed, Sport England may revert to the bidding model, which will result in the GM Moving Executive Group competing with every other organisation across the country for national pots of money. This competition is claimed by the Lead Chief Executive of Health and Wellbeing for GMCA (in interview) to create duplication of effort and ineffective practice in the GM system; it also reduces the power of board members to control funding decisions, limiting the ability of the board to function. Critically, rather

than a return to the old bidding model, consistency in the approach to co-commissioning is required to enable the Partnership to function and develop.

9.2.4.2 Board member will

Alongside the will of system leaders in GM, the empirical evidence also identifies the passion for community sport and social outcomes of the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England. This passion is exemplified in a preference for constructive debate with senior leaders in GM, rather than controlling direction, and having toned down conversations based on underlying power dynamics linked to resource, as seen in the Executive Director's interview responses. Due to the requirement for negotiation and mutual adjustment, this level of passion is required to ensure commitment to the GM Moving Executive Group and to work through problems as and when they arise through mutual adjustment (Henry and Lee, 2004). If the Sport England directorate were to lack this passion, the result might be a lack of commitment to the Partnership and social outcomes; this emphasises the importance of board member and Sport England recruitment to the ability of the Partnership to function and develop.

The lack of capacity available to board members stems from their senior-level positions both in GM and nationally. However, it is senior-level decision makers who are required on the GM Moving Executive Group, to add value to earlier integrated working on the GM Moving Leadership Group. The senior position of board members brings with it the control over and access to resources required to enhance strategic contribution and control the external environment; evidence of this includes the allocation of an additional £1 million of investment into GM by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England. Furthermore, the board members bring strategic skill and knowledge through experience of strategy development in their respective organisations and access to operational knowledge due to their senior positions in the governance architecture of GM; the use of this latter factor in decision making highlights the architecture as a key enabler for the Partnership and would need to be replicated in other regions to optimise integrated working.

The added value delivered by senior leaders is accompanied by a lack of capacity due to their commitments to managing multiple roles. It is acknowledged in GM, however, that these multiple roles are not seen as

voluntary positions, but as core responsibilities to the wider GM system, where senior leaders operate multiple workstreams as necessitated by a resource-constrained environment. The senior-level positions of board members bring the required capability to the GM Moving Executive Group, but constraints associated with this way of working include a lack of capacity for board members, who are required to integrate multiple roles into their core working routines as GM senior leaders, potentially creating excessive workloads; this lack of capacity also requires shared leadership with the newly created Strategic Manager role (as discussed in Section 7.2.1).

9.2.5 Board processes

As acknowledged in Section 7.2 and discussed in sections 8.3 and 8.4, board inputs are optimised by board processes.

9.2.5.1 Shared to systems leadership

It must be acknowledged that a large percentage of the Partnership's work predates the formation of the GM Moving Executive Group, with initial work being developed by the CEO of Greater Sport in building relationships with senior leaders across GM. These relationships developed a willingness in the system, led by the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing for GMCA, who, it is evident, possesses a keen personal passion for sport and physical activity and a belief in preventative services. It could be argued that the ability of the Partnership to function rests solely on the abilities and processes employed by these two individuals (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing in GM and CEO of Greater Sport in developing a system willingness in GM for sport and physical activity, highlighted through early commitment to sport and physical activity by senior leaders such as Lord Peter Smith and Tony Lloyd. This system will and the narrative for sport and physical activity have been developed by Andy Burnham (the Mayor of GM), who included sport and physical activity in his Mayoral manifesto; however, it is interpreted by the researcher from Burnham's years in national government that he is a keen advocate of sport and physical activity. He has also personally attended board meetings with the GM Moving Executive Group and the CEO of Sport England, enhancing the profile of sport and physical activity in the region. It is documented in Section 5.4.2 that the political will created by the strong

narrative for sport and physical activity in GM has been a key enabler to the Partnership.

It is documented in Section 7.2.1 and discussed in Section 8.4.1 that board member inputs must be integrated, through leadership processes such as shared leadership among board members and between board members and the Strategic Manager. It is evident from the thematic table documented in Appendix 9 and supported by analysis of key documents such as the MoU Rowley (2016a), that the GM Moving Executive Group does operate shared leadership between board members, as characterised by the heated debate on direction alluded to in interview by the Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England. Debate like this (which occurred in the first meeting of the board) is found to be lacking by board members who joined at a later stage; for example, it is interpreted by the researcher that the voluntary sector representative on the board would prefer more constructive debate, based on their experience of operating on other boards across GM, such as the Reform Board. Shared leadership is also found between the board and the Strategic Manager, to resolve capacity issues and drive the GM Moving work forward on a day to day basis.

However, to optimise performance in a resource-constrained environment, systems leadership is also required, reaching beyond the board and empowering leaders across the system, based on a shared vision. Effectively, systems leadership connects the GM system through the multiple roles in the governance architecture being operated by individual senior leaders in GM and the localities. It is found that the absence of systems leadership would constrain the new way of working. Additionally, a shared understanding of systems leadership is required, including how the capabilities of experienced systems leaders can be shared with future leaders in the GM system and other regions. Evidence of systems leadership is found consistently throughout the empirical evidence, from the Partnership MoU (Rowley, 2016a) to interviews, with a focus on co-design, co-commissioning and co-production. The development of a GM Moving plan (2015, 2017), creates a shared vision for sport and physical activity that is embedded into the wider-system vision outlined in the Population Health Plan (GMHSCP, 2017) and The GM Strategy (GMCA, 2017a).

The collective nature of the GM Moving Executive Group and GM system requires systems leadership, working beyond organisational boundaries for the right course of action for the GM system. In addition to its requirement of board member capabilities, systems leadership is seen as a process requiring co-creation of future activities (Senge et al., 2015), which is a key enabler of integrated working to deliver social outcomes.

9.2.5.2 Monitoring and control to organisational learning

At the time of data collection, the GM Moving Executive Group had not set specific outcome measures as suggested in the MoU (Rowley, 2016a), with an output measure of participation used within the revised GM Moving plan (2017). As such, it becomes challenging to assess the board's contribution to the social outcomes documented in the Sporting Future strategy (DCMS, 2015). Furthermore, the relationship between participation and physical health factors (such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease) has not been linked to short-term markers such as body fat percentage, blood sugar levels or cholesterol levels. Similarly, the inclusion of short-term mental health markers (such as low mood or anxiety) by working with GP's who have developed measurement assessments for these health issues, which are checked on repeat appointments, has not occurred. All of these markers could act as proxy measures to extrapolate financial value and enable cost–benefit analysis. Extending this further, links between improvements in these areas through participation in sport and physical activity have not been extended to the impact on employee absence and/or moving from unemployment into employment, or to other social factors, such as relationships with family and friends, counselling services and/or medical treatment. Consequently, the direct contribution that the Partnership and GM Moving Executive Group make to social outcomes needs further examination. The direct contribution of Greater sport the CSP to participation levels and social outcomes also needs evidencing, to build trust between the regional entity and providers in order to be able to document a clear relationship and correlation between the promoted success and improvements to social outcomes.

Importantly, outcome measures need to be communicated effectively to stakeholders within the system, to reduce conflict between regional entities and local providers, who feel that regional entities are taking credit for their

work. It may be the case that the evidence documented in this thesis is sufficient. However, for the contributions to national and regional outcomes of both Sport England and regional entities to be assessed against levels of investment by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, use of national lottery funds and regional investment, specific outcome measures will be required. Furthermore, if sport and physical activity is to be prescribed, types of activity need to go through the rigorous trials that medical treatments go through. This is critical in order to ensure prevention of worst-case scenarios (such as premature death) that may be risked by (for example) moving people off employment services and into employment without the correct support in place. It is also important to consider the types of activity that can be prescribed based on the type of condition or disorder, e.g. yoga or cycling, walking or football, or activity combinations. Further, it has been suggested that the GM Moving Executive Group work is not based on a sufficiently thorough audit of current practice in GM, risking duplication of current practice and creating competition within the system. Evaluation, monitoring and control processes therefore need to be embedded from the start of integrated working, incorporating all stakeholder perspectives in the GM system.

Acknowledging the constraint on the work of the Partnership of the failure to determine outcome measures, it is found that the GM Moving Executive Group has introduced a revaluation process. Utilising the revaluation process alongside existing medical, employment, social services and physical activity records could enable short-term and longitudinal value identification and measurement, if desired by the Board. Through the processes used in revaluation, visible and invisible value is collected across three areas ('the three Cs'): calculate, calibrate and capacitate. Critically, these processes are not separate monitoring and control processes but instead integrate board inputs and processes through self-evaluation and development, also enabling perspectives on the perceived value of the work to be captured from across a spectrum of stakeholders, from the Mayor to people in lower socio-economic groups who may be battling homelessness, thus providing lived experience if desired by the GM Moving Executive Group. It is crucial that these processes are embedded into partnership working from the beginning to consistently monitor and control progression.

Importantly, the value created by the Partnership is examined across multiple levels, including value for shareholders in terms of return on investment, and also value perceived by wider stakeholders. The revaluation process enables effective control of the direction of the GM Moving Executive Group through a much more holistic understanding of GM. Critically, it has been found that board inputs need to be integrated (Nicholson and Kiel, 2004) and action and learning need to be balanced (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a), with effective processes using triple-loop practices (as illustrated in Figure 11b) to ensure continuous action, reflection and value through integrated working in the GM Moving Executive Group and wider GM system.

9.3 Theoretical recommendations

The revised framework for board strategic capability in the context of community sport and physical activity utilises the model developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a), which builds on Edwards and Cornforth (2003) (as documented in Section 3.2). However, revisions are made to the sub-themes to take into account the empirical evidence collected. The key revisions made to the conceptualisation include:

- Theme 1 (illustrated in box 11a.1). Contextual dynamics. Key influences found in the community sport context have been added: political, cultural, socio-economic, technological and ecological. The two-way interaction between board and contextual dynamics is emphasised by the arrows (as documented in Chapter 5 and Appendix 7).

- Theme 2 (illustrated in box 11a.2). 'Board integrating regional entities' develops to integrated governance mechanisms incorporating national, regional and local relationships (as documented in Chapter 6 and Appendix 8).

- Theme 3 (illustrated in box 11a.3). Board 'inputs' remains the same, with the addition of the strategic management capacity sub-theme (box 11a.3.3) (as documented in Chapter 7 and Appendix 9).

- Theme 4 (illustrated in box 11a.4). Board process. Remains the same, with the advancement of 'shared-systems leadership' in a sub-theme (box 11a.4.1) and 'monitoring and control to organisational learning' in a second sub-theme (box 11a.4.2). Outputs develop to 'strategic contribution to outcomes', as the required strategic contribution of the

board is working towards broad outcomes in national policy (DCMS, 2015) and regional plans (GM Moving, 2017).

Figure 11a: Strategic capability framework for community sport governance, GM, England, UK
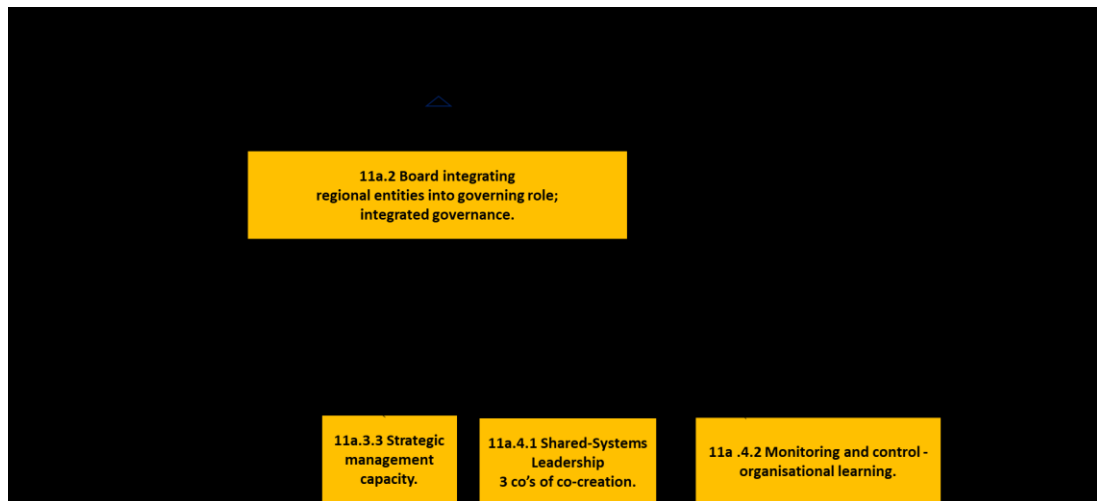
Adapted from Edwards and Cornforth (2003: Figure 2); Ferkins and Shilbury, (2015a: Figure 3a)

As highlighted in orange in Figure 11a, the requirements for integrated governance, strategic management capacity, systems leadership and organisational learning have emerged in the community sport context in GM, producing a revised conceptualisation of community sport governance from empirical evidence of the Partnership between Sport England, GMCA and NHSGM. While acknowledging that the conceptualisation is context-specific and descriptive in nature, it does generalise to theory and offers insights into factors that are transferable to organisations nationally and internationally that may be attempting to achieve transformational change to outcomes through partnership. This is determined by the researcher from the 33 years of experience of collaborative working found in GM and incorporated into the GM system, which suggests a mature level of learning, experience and knowledge of collaborative working.

In attempting to explain the relationships between the themes and sub-themes in Figure 11a an emerging theory of integrated sport governance emerges, termed in Figure 11b 'the theory of board strategic cycles'. This theory builds on the empirical findings documented in chapters 5, 6 and 7 and appendices

7, 8 and 9, to incorporate discussion of the wider literature (Chapter 8). The relationships between the themes are based on the researcher's interpretation of findings in the community sport context in GM and will require further empirical examination.

Figure 11b: Emergent theory of integrated community sport governance: The theory of board strategic cycles.
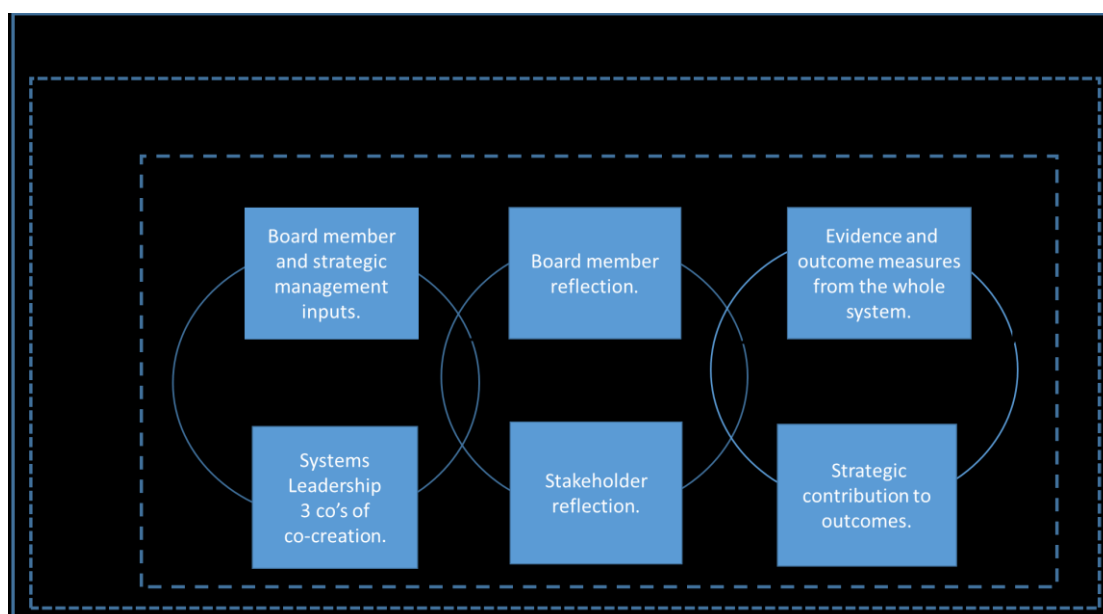
Adapted from Edwards and Cornforth, 2003; Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a); Argyris and Schon, (1996); Senge et al. (2015); Darnton and Harrison (2015).

Box 11b.1 indicates the wider international and national contextual dynamics that influence the setting in which local, regional and national entities operate. The regional context is developed by individuals creating ways of working to manage these contextual dynamics, and in the GM context this has led to an integrated way of working that attempts to incorporate actors from across the whole system. This whole-system working requires the creation of structures such as the GM architecture marshalled by key actors in the GMCA and GMHSCP (as documented in Section 5.1.1 and developed in Section 8.2.1), illustrated by box 11b.2. It is these structures, created by individuals in GM, that enable the integration of national entities into a power sharing role through boards such as the GM Moving Executive Group, while still respecting hierarchical structures both in GM and nationally; this enables the utilisation of

market mechanisms for delivery of services (as illustrated in Section 8.2.1). It is interpreted by the researcher that this suggests an integrated governance mechanism, as opposed to a unitary governance such as network governance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a) or collaborative governance (Shilbury et al., 2016). It is acknowledged, however, that unitary governance theory shines light on the dynamics involved in integrated governance and helps to explain the optimisation of governance through collective working and horizontal integration, within the hierarchical and market mechanisms that support whole-system working through vertical integration (as documented in Section 6.6 and discussed in Section 8.2.1).

Developments on the theory of board strategic balance illustrated in Figure 3b are also indicated by the advancement of processes from shared to systems leadership. As documented in Section 7.2.2, discussed in Section 8.4.1 and illustrated in cycle 11b.3.1, the concept of systems leadership helps to explain the requirement for leadership across organisational boundaries, without direct control (as documented in Section 3.2.3.2), distributing leadership to be inclusive of the board, strategic management and the wider system. As documented in Section 3.2.3.2, system leadership theory indicates the need for deep and shared reflection, and a respect and appreciation of the realities of others, despite conflicting views and/or ideologies. Within the GM context, this reflection incorporates board member and stakeholder reflections (as documented in Section 7.2.2 and discussed in Section 8.4.1), illustrated in cycle 11b.3.2. Empirical evidence (documented in sections 6.3.4 and 7.2.2 and discussed in Section 8.4.1), illustrated in cycle 11b.3.1, indicates that this involves co-commissioning, co-design and co-production in the co-creation of future activities. Findings in Section 6.2.4 indicate that co-creation of future activities incorporates organisational learning, building on Argyris and Schon's (1996) double-loop learning, through the use of revaluation methodology (Darnton and Harrison, 2015). Revaluation methodology utilises the triple-loop learning of action, reflection and value (as documented in Section 3.2.3.3), illustrated by the three cycles in box 11b.3, moving beyond monitoring and control (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a). It is interpreted that action and reflection identify value, which should be captured using evidence and insight from the whole system to guide the direction of the board and enable optimal strategic contribution towards social outcomes, as illustrated in cycle 11b.3.3. It is

determined by the researcher that these cycles create the feedback loops required by Sport England (identified in Section 5.4.1), through evidence and outcome measures from the whole system in GM. As identified in the background and context to the literature review (sections 2.1 and 2.3) and in Section 5.8 of the findings, these outcomes could be more balanced, incorporating economic, social and ecological outcomes (in line with international policy and policy/legislation in Wales), requiring revisions to both national and regional sport and physical activity policy and strategy to include an ecological outcome in order to ensure sustainable development. Further, this could extend beyond balancing these factors to integrating and embedding them into board, management and workforce roles to develop transformative action towards sustainable development outcomes. The illustration of outcomes has been incorporated into the value cycle of Figure 11b, to indicate the ongoing nature of these issues, which have no definite end goal, except 'the ability to meet the needs of our present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987:12), as documented in the background and context to the literature review. Extending this further, it is interpreted by the researcher that cross-sector working should be progressing beyond 'without compromising' (WCED, 1987:12) to enhancing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and restoring the planet. The revised conceptualisation for strategic capability based on empirical evidence in GM and emergent theory of integrated sport governance, termed here the theory of board strategic cycles, both require critical exploration through longitudinal research in GM and research in different contexts to examine their use and explanatory value in GM and different settings.

9.4 Policy recommendations

From the exploration of academic and policy literature, and empirical evidence nationally, regionally and locally, the following policy recommendations are made:

- Introduction of an ecological development outcome to national sport policy and regional sport plans to ensure balanced development, following (UNOSDP, 2015) recommendations, current policy and legislation (Welsh Act, 2015) in Wales and current practice in GM.

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- Long-term consistency in both elite and community sport policy moving forward. Both have their place and can be built on individual cases. Using GM as an example, the Commonwealth Games has its own successful case study for the wider benefits of elite sport; the groundbreaking partnership between Sport England and GMCA and NHSGM now needs a long-term commitment to outcomes in national sport policy.
- Continued transition away from a bidding model by national government towards co-commissioning, co-design and co-production, to ensure optimal use of public resources.
- Continued alignment of national, regional and local strategy through shared outcomes moving forward, to enable integrated cross-sector working vertically and horizontally. By extension, introducing standard outcomes (as opposed to outputs) measures where they are not currently present.

9.5 Practical recommendations

From the exploration of academic and policy literature, and empirical evidence nationally, regionally and locally, the following practical recommendations are made:

- A commitment to sport development that integrates economic, social and ecological outcomes by all organisations funded for community sport and physical activity. For example, developing resources and embedding carbon literacy training into all publicly funded organisations regionally, as part of workforce development of the widest possible cross-sector workforce.
- A thorough audit of current sport and physical activity practice should be produced before integrated working, to reduce the possibility of duplication and ensure partnership work adds value to current practice.
- Collective working by all localities and agencies in city-regions to develop trust and enable integration with national entities. Identification of regions nationally where localities are competing, to explore the pros and cons of both approaches.
- The continued use of integrated governance (or the introduction of integrated governance and required architecture where it is currently absent).

- The introduction of strategic managers to support integrated governance, where there is a system willingness and integrated working is being developed.

- Maintaining senior-level decision makers on boards who have the will and skill to influence funding, policy and strategy (and/or the introduction of senior-level decision makers to sport and physical activity boards in regions where they are absent).

- Introduction and/or training of systems leaders in regions to develop system willingness for integrated working.

- Embedding organisational learning into all future work from the beginning of integrated working to ensure value is captured and used to guide direction.

9.6 Reflections

The following section will use reflection and reflexivity to look back on the research and the researcher's role in relation to the participants. Reflection enables learning from experience (Bolton, 2018); for this research that includes: the theoretical framework used, the methodology assumed and followed and the research process and empirical findings. However, it is also important to understand the researcher's role within the research findings, which requires reflexivity (Fook, 2012:49):

> [Reflexivity] is a stance of being able to locate oneself in the picture, to appreciate how one's own self influences the research act. Taken this way reflexivity is potentially more complex than being reflective in that the potential for understanding the myriad of ways in which one's own presence and perspective influence the knowledge and actions which are created is potentially more problematic than the simple searching for initial theory".

The following sections will reflect on the selection of the theoretical framework and methodology used, before entering into a process of reflexivity with regards to the research process and resulting findings. Finally, the strengths, limitations and requirements for future research will be outlined.

9.6.1 Reflections on the use of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance

The use of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance to explore community sport in the UK has been found to be useful, as

discussed below, despite being derived from the professional sport context in New Zealand and Australia (as discussed in Section 3.2). This may be due to earlier work by Edwards and Cornforth (2003) being the structure on which the framework was constructed, and its being from the UK. Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015a) developed a conceptual framework and added a particular focus on integration with regional entities, through network, or systemic, governance (Henry and Lee, 2004). This integration through network governance has been found to have value in explaining the new direction for Sport England engaging in direct partnership with regional entities, specifically GMCA and NHSGM, (i.e. the focus of this research). It was interpreted by the researcher that the breadth provided by the framework enables exploration of macro-, meso- and micro-level influences on board effectiveness, despite a focus on organisational governance. However, examination of the community sport context in GM finds contrasts with a unitary form of governance and identifies integrated governance mechanisms. This extends to include political governance to outline the importance of national government policy, enabling the inter-relationships between each type of governance to be explored (Henry and Lee, 2004; Dowling, 2018). Further, it is found that in the community sport context, the board influence contextual dynamics as well as being influenced by them. Network governance is utilised, but the use of multiple governance mechanisms (McDonald, 2005) is found within the community sport context, where partnerships form exemplary types of network governance (critically in between hierarchical governance both nationally and regionally) and market governance (in the delivery of services).

Following Dulewicz et al. (1995) and Edwards and Cornforth (2003), the framework pays particular attention to inputs and processes at the micro level. The theory of board strategic balance (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015a) highlights the requirement for balance or integration between inputs and processes to achieve optimal strategic contribution. The focus on inputs and processes was of particular importance in this research on how the board adds value to current practice in GM. Despite the role of part-time and voluntary members not being relevant to the GM Moving Executive Group, the importance of will and skill was a central component, as well as the position and power of senior board members. Moreover, the balance of the strategic and operational knowledge

of senior leaders was provided by the well-marshalled governance architecture in GM, as illustrated in sections 6.1.1 and 8.2.1.

Leadership as a process was also relevant; however, in community sport in GM this moves beyond shared leadership (within the board and between the board and the Partnership Strategic Manager), towards systems leadership beyond organisational boundaries, with monitoring and control embedded and integrated into board processes through triple-loop cycles of action, reflection and value. The emerging theory in community sport suggests integration of national and regional entities, governance mechanisms and board inputs and processes; furthermore, it removes the requirement for balancing performance and conformance, as the work follows an emergent process through reflection and action (in accordance with organisational learning theory), as opposed to top-down instructions that require compliance in monitoring and control. This results in a revised conceptualisation and an emergent theory of integrated sport governance: the theory of board strategic cycles. Criticism of this theory may suggest that a theory of board communicative cycles may be more appropriate to ensure communication with the whole system and develop a social movement in sport and physical activity (Macdonald, 2005), as noted in Section 3.2.1.

9.6.2 Reflections on methodology

It was identified from the review of the literature that, in order to gain empirical evidence for theoretical and practical development, gaining insider perspectives would be a central focus of this research. In Chapter 4, the potential was acknowledged for varying perspectives, due to variations in the social constructions of sport and community sport governance based on competing theories in use in national sport policy. The importance of gaining insider perspectives and the potential for varying perspectives supports the interpretive nature of qualitative research based on individual social constructions. Furthermore, the theoretical framework used to guide data collection highlights variations based on context, relationships and individual experiences and perceptions of others, all of which are social constructions and steer the research away from the objective truth or universal approach associated with positivist research. It was found that the focus on gaining perspectives from board members, management and local representatives

was a key attribute of the research; these multiple areas of data collection resulted in the emergence of conflicting perspectives that will need to be addressed by the GM Moving Executive Group in order to progress the work. It is interpreted by the researcher that this will require bringing together the wider system during the revaluation process and wider evaluation work, to create a shared understanding within the system. It was found, however, that despite having varying perspectives on operational detail, such as board representation (Section 7.1.5) and methods of stakeholder engagement and data collection (operational factors) (Section 6.6.3), there was shared understanding on the requirement to move towards an outcomes-focused approach that enables organisations to integrate based on shared outcomes (Section 7.2.3.3). It is interpreted by the researcher that a focus on shared outcomes enables actors to look beyond operational and organisational detail (where competing perspectives are found) to what is required for the wider system. Crucially, adressing inequality for residents of GM is an area of shared passion and commitment for the whole system, for social and economic reasons.

The researcher deliberated over the impact of structure on participant perspectives throughout the research. At points, it was difficult to determine whether it was structure influencing the actions of individuals within the GM system (as with a critical realist perspective) or the individuals that were influencing structure. Over time and from the analysis of interview data (documented in appendices 7, 8 and 9), it became evident that it was individuals that were influencing structure in GM, though integrated working practices leading to integrated structures such as the GM architecture. It is interpreted by the researcher that these actions are driven by traditions in GM of collaborative working and beliefs in collectivism. It must be acknowledged that these beliefs have developed in GM over years of cooperative working between local authorities, health and social care. It is evident from document analysis that different regions across the country have adopted different practices, and rather than forming health and social care partnerships, have broken up and contracted out public services due to different theories in use, Barnet and Northamptonshire being unfortunate examples (Chakrabortty, 2018). It was found that systems, policy and how organisations and actors respond, were originally socially constructed based on individual and shared

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theories in use. Identification and understanding of these perspectives benefited from qualitative and interpretive research to gain a rich depth of data across multiple areas of the system.

Following advice from the research supervisory team, a retroductive approach was used, incorporating both deductive and inductive practice. Initially, this followed the theoretical framework, to guide the data collection using a deductive approach, while allowing themes to emerge from the data using an inductive approach. The researcher found that the use of the theory of board strategic balance to guide interview questions provided detailed insight into the whole of the community sport process in relation to the GM Moving Executive Group's ability to function and develop. This provided a broad picture of the factors that enable and constrain the board within the context of community sport governance, and honed the research into influences that had already been identified in the literature, for further exploration. It was found that using the theoretical framework as a sensitising device before entering the field with semi-structured interview questions developed the researcher's understanding of influences on board effectiveness. However, concerns arose for the researcher over whether the choice of interview questions may have directed the participant responses and created bias in the research.

The researcher also ponders whether allowing the participants to tell their own stories around events, without being guided by interview questions, may have produced alternative, free-flowing findings. Furthermore, the use of inductive coding (following a grounded theory method) to analyse the stories for data collection may have enabled new themes to emerge, resulting in a contrasting conceptualisation and theory development. However, the researcher believes that the use of a theoretical framework and semi-structured interviews was the correct choice, given that the researcher is a novice. It is interpreted by the researcher that the use of stories would have produced an excessive quantity of data to manage. The amount of data collected using the semi-structured approach was still high (interviews lasted up to 1 hour 50 minutes); despite long interviews being welcomed (as they provided excellent insight), this resulted in high volumes of data analysis for the researcher, something that may have increased further if stories had been used, thus validating the choice of semi-structured interviews. A more experienced researcher could, however,

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benefit from using stories and grounded theory method for analysis. Despite the interviews being semi-structured, the researcher made every effort to allow them to flow like conversations, adding probing questions when required to show interest and unpack meaning. It also seemed that the conversational style of the interviews reduced anxiety for both interviewer and interviewees by building rapport. The framework is developed from 2,785 units of data, of which 341 units of data were removed, resulting in a final framework of 2,444 units of interview data: a solid evidence base.

The researcher believes that an action research approach could be beneficial in future research. For example, once the initial data had been collected through participant stories and arranged into themes, identifying enablers and constraints to the GM Moving Executive Group, the research could have benefited from sharing the findings with the group and wider stakeholders. The researcher has been frustrated by the timescales of the PhD, in particular by only having two years for the PhD project after completing one year of taught classes and assignments (despite gaining crucial learning from the taught year). Furthermore, those two years were effectively reduced to 22 months due to the requirement for revisions to the original research design to pass from a masters in research to the PhD study; the project consequently started in December 2016 and with the allotted time frame it was perceived that a case study approach was most suitable, despite this restricting the opportunity for an intervention during the research. The opportunity to intervene could have been useful, for example, when conflict was identified between the regional entities and local providers, to develop a shared understanding and improve the effectiveness of the GM Moving Executive Group and wider system in real time.

9.6.3 Reflections on the research process

The research process started before the three stages of data collection, with the researcher volunteering at Greater Sport, the CSP in GM. It was found that for the purpose of collecting data, this time – one day per week at Greater Sport for eight weeks – was wasted: as the focus of the study shifted, the information gathered here proved of little use in the final study. However, it was felt that benefits in building rapport with the CEO and team at Greater Sport may have contributed to opening doors to the senior leaders on the board.

Furthermore, the willingness of employees within the CSP to share insight developed an understanding of current practice in GM for the researcher. It is difficult to judge whether this willingness was based on the volunteering work or on other factors, such as the connection between the CSP and the PhD-awarding university who funded the research, or the direct relationship between the supervisory team and the CEO of Greater Sport. Moreover, this period warmed the researcher to the CSP and may have created a bias, based on first-hand experience of what was perceived to be excellent work by the organisation staff and CEO in GM, a perception that was disputed at a later stage by locality providers. The researcher contemplated whether starting the research in localities and working up might have led to a contrasting personal perspective, but every attempt was made not to become attached to any level of the study and as such the researcher remained an outsider to the work of the GM Moving Executive Group, regional entities (including the CSP) and local entities – an isolated, but hopefully unbiased position.

The access in GM provided by participants after introductions from Greater Sport was exceptional, which resulted in one of the historically more challenging aspects of research, gaining access, being relatively straightforward. Whether this was based on rapport built through volunteering for the CSP, university connections, rapport with participants, the perceived use of the research for the Partnership, or a combination of these, it is difficult to say. Focusing on, or at least exploring, all would therefore be recommended for future research: first, planning research that has some potential use for the intended participants and their interests; second, identifying initial connections within available networks to make introductions; third, being willing to volunteer time on tasks that have no benefit to the researcher, but benefit participants (and especially the gatekeepers), to show willing; and fourth, once access is provided, identifying areas in common that can be used to build rapport.

Despite rapport being developed, due to individual circumstances the researcher was understandably declined interviews by some board members (including management-level employees who were taking redundancy). Furthermore, the researcher did not receive responses from several local health commissioners and leisure trust chief executives, all of whom could have added depth and a more holistic perspective to the research. The

Strategic Manager for the Partnership filled the gap in management interviews, while the gaps in locality interviews were filled by a GM Active representative (who represented all leisure trusts) and a sport and physical activity representative from Greater Sport, both of whom had excellent understanding of the sport and physical activity agenda in GM.

Constraints arose towards the end of the research; the researcher was unable to support the Strategic Manager with further research due to being focused on the need to complete the PhD within three years. Future research of this nature could benefit from being completed over six years, part-time, with regular feedback on findings between researcher and participants to aid practical as well as theoretical research. Further, the researcher heeded supervisory advice not to ask for feedback and additional comments on findings and interview analysis, with the aim of ensuring that perspectives were captured at a particular stage of development and not revised with the benefit of hindsight. Both factors reduced rapport, as well as the benefit of the research (and researcher) to the Partnership: being unable to share findings at a useful time or offer extended support limited the practical use of this research to the Partnership, although this measure was effective in maintaining the researcher's role as an outsider to the CSP, in order to provide a balanced account of findings from the whole system.

Over the course of the research, the position of outsider was maintained, with the research being focused on the GM Moving Executive Group (of which the researcher is not a member). However, the researcher's membership of the GM system (as a resident) and the research contract with a large stakeholder have implications of the researcher being an insider, which were further enhanced by the researcher working voluntarily for the CSP on several occasions, being included on the GM Moving partner newsletter and being invited to the GM Moving stakeholder workshop and national Why Sports conference. It was therefore a constant battle for the researcher to remain an outsider to the research, especially with regards to the regional entities; the requirement of the research was to provide balanced insight, giving equal importance to each area of data collection. As soon as conflict within the system (between the CSP and local providers) became apparent, the researcher strove to maintain an unbiased position on the conflict, to ensure a

neutral stance was possible in the findings chapters and discussion. That being said, it may be the case that the researcher has had some bias towards regional entities and board members, due to interviewing them first and listening to their compelling narrative for change in GM. Future research may benefit from starting from the operational level or with residents and working up, despite the complications this may have for mapping the full picture and identifying the relevant actors, something that was much easier to view and access from the top down.

9.7 Recommendations for future research

As acknowledged in the researcher's reflections, longitudinal research of between five and ten years is required to explore the relationship between the work of the GM Moving Executive Group and social outcomes in GM. Further research is also required to explore the community sport governance process in other regions across the country. Action research would be the most suitable approach, moving forward, to enable intervention and iteration between the researcher and participants. Further research would benefit from allowing participants to tell their own story of current community sport practice, as opposed to directing participants using semi-structured interview questions.

Further research is also required in the following key areas identified during the research:

- Research into the integration of social, economic and ecological outcomes in sport and physical activity, to extend beyond balanced development as highlighted by the (WCED 1986, Strong 1996, UNOSDP 2010:2015), to enhancing society for future generations and restoring the planet through transformational development.
- Further research into lived experience in lower socio-economic groups through ethnographic study.
- Research into the strategic manager role in GM and Strategic Manager key characteristics required for successful partnership working in other regions.
- Research into system leadership roles in GM and key characteristics required for successful integrated working in other regions.

- Exploration of the role of professional identity as a motivator for the cross-sector workforce as purveyors of sport and physical activity for sustainable development outcomes.

9.8 Contributions to knowledge

The empirical findings and subsequent discussion relating findings to the wider academic literature has produced several practical, methodological and theoretical contributions to knowledge.

9.8.1 Practical

The main practical contribution of this research is to critically examine the unique approach to integrated sport and physical activity working being developed in GM. The documentation of this critical examination in a consultable record can be utilised by other regions attempting to improve social outcomes through preventative services such as sport and physical activity. The thesis has identified a range of enablers and constraints to integrated working that can be utilised by national government, the national sport organisation (Sport England) and regional entities, to improve their ability to function and develop. Further, insight is provided into the integrated use of governance mechanisms, inputs from board members and a unique role in community sport, the Strategic Manager. It is identified that processes in the community sport context require advancement from shared to systems leadership and from monitoring and control to organisational learning. It is interpreted by the researcher that these integrated mechanisms, inputs and processes optimise the ability of national sport organisations in partnership with regional entities to function and develop towards making a strategic contribution to social outcomes. However, cautions are made that for sustainable development, the inclusion of ecological outcomes is required both in national policy and regional plans. It is interpreted by the researcher that as hierarchical and market mechanisms are found in community sport policy, strategy changes in these areas will all funded community sport organisations, wider society and the planet.

9.8.2 Methodological

The interpretive approach to this research across three areas – board, management and provider/commissioner – is something that had not been undertaken in community sport governance prior to this study. The holistic picture of community sport governance provided by collecting perspectives from three areas has enhanced the research findings and identification of enablers and constraints to board optimal performance. For example, many of the contrasting perspectives identified in the holistic picture of the GM system came from operational-level providers and commissioners. If interviews had focused on board members or their strategic management capacity, or those more primarily included in the GM Moving Executive Group work to date, these wider perspectives may have remained invisible to the data collection; the use of limited perspectives may have provided a more positive narrative of the work, but would have failed to uncover the constraints involved in the new approach to governance in community sport in GM. As such, this methodological approach should be adopted again in future governance research.

9.8.3 Theoretical

The empirical findings have contributed to the academic literature on board strategic capability in the community sport context. The research builds on the use of network governance and identifies integrated governance to explain the governance mechanisms for community sport and physical activity in GM, England, UK. Furthermore, it is suggested that due to the cross-sector nature of community sport partnerships, there is a requirement to move beyond shared leadership to systems leadership, using board, strategic management inputs and a well-marshalled governance architecture to enhance the systems leadership process. Moreover, the use of integration is suggested, moving beyond monitoring and control to organisational learning, and, critically, integrating board inputs and processes through cycles of action, reflection and value. The use of a reflective process to guide direction removes the requirement to balance conformance and performance, as the direction emerges out of the reflective process and the development of stakeholder value. The empirical findings from the community sport context documented in appendices, 7, 8 and 9 and chapters 5, 6 and 7 and discussed in Chapter 8

suggest a revised conceptualisation is required. The revised conceptualisation illustrated in figures 11a and 11b illustrates a developed strategic capability framework and an emergent theory of integrated sport governance, the theory of board strategic cycles. This emergent theory explains the factors that influence the board's ability to achieve optimal strategic contribution towards social outcomes.

9.9 Summary of contribution

The thesis contributes to exploration of the strategic capability framework and theory of board strategic balance developed by Ferkins and Shilbury (2015a) in the community sport context. Despite acknowledging that the framework and theory have been beneficial in guiding the research, empirical evidence has resulted in a revised conceptualisation based on the community sport context in GM. The wider themes of context, integration with regional entities, board inputs and board process are consistent in this context; however, new sub-themes emerge that contribute to theory development. These sub-themes contribute to gaps in knowledge with regards to integrated governance (as documented in Section 6.6 and Appendix 8 and discussed in Section 8.2.1); the input of strategic managers (as documented in sections 7.1.6 and 7.2.1 and Appendix 9 and discussed in sections 8.3 and 8.4); the process of systems leadership (as documented in Section 7.2.2 and Appendix 9 and discussed in Section 8.4.1); and, finally, the use of organisational learning in sport and physical activity partnerships (as documented in Section 7.2 and Appendix 9 and discussed in Section 8.4.2). It is acknowledged that further research is required to critically examine the researcher's interpretation of each of these sub-themes identified in community sport in GM, as well as the emerging theory of integrated community sport governance (the theory of board strategic cycles), in different contexts.

It is determined by the researcher that the thesis provides the first academic exploration of the new approach to community sport governance developed in GM. It is interpreted that the new approach advances beyond Sport England's current practice with CSPs, with the national sport organisation being steered to take advantage of integration with regional entities such as local government and health bodies. The findings documented in chapters 5, 6 and 7 and discussed in Chapter 8 help to develop an understanding of the factors that

enable and constrain the new approach in practice, through analysis of empirical evidence (documented in appendices 7, 8 and 9) and key documents (listed in appendices 5 and 6). The findings should effectively contribute to developing optimal performance for the GM Moving Executive Group, tasked with improving effectiveness of public services despite budget cuts, and similar partnership boards working on development outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Guide.

Please tell me a bit about yourself and your background and your role in the Partnership.

Why do you think the Partnership has been formed?

Can you tell me the current structure of the management board?

Can you tell me how the part time/voluntary nature of the board contributes to the board's ability to function?

Can you tell me your view on the board being actively involved in operational detail?

Can you tell me how important you think regional entities are in delivering the strategic outcomes of the Partnership?

Can you tell me how integrating regional entities with national sporting bodies in the Partnership develops the ability to function and deliver strategy?

What are the main challenges with this way of working?

Can you tell me about the process to assess strategic outcomes?

How will decisions on the direction of the Partnership be made?

Can you tell me how the board will develop strategy?

Can you tell me how the board will integrate strategy into processes?

Do you have anything else you would like to add or feel would benefit this research?

Appendix 2: Research Stages and Participants, Dates and Times

Research stage	Interview participants	Date	Time
Stage 1	Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA	15/12/ 2016	12:00 pm
	CEO, Greater Sport	23/01/2017	10:30 pm
	Strategic Manager for the Partnership	22/03/2017	12:30 pm
	Deputy Director, Population Health	24/03/2017	3:00 pm
	Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA	28/03/2017	11:00 am
	Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England	29/03/2017	1:15 pm
Stage 2	Local Government Relationship Manager, Sport England	4/05/2017	1:00 pm
	Policy Officer, GMCA	28/06/2017	2:00 pm
	Strategic Lead, GMCA	27/07/2017	2:00 pm
	Strategic Manger for the Partnership	1/08/2017 and 09/11/2018	9:00 am 3:00 pm
	Population Health Project Manager, GMHSCP	17/08/2017	2:00 pm
	Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, GMHSCP	8/09/2017	3:00 pm
Stage 3 .	Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active	24/10/2017	9:00 am
	CEO, Active Tameside	02/11/2017	11:00 am
	CEO, Oldham Community Leisure	03/11/2017	1:00 pm
	CEO, Salford Community Leisure	15/11/2017	1:00 pm
	Head of Strategy and Performance, Salford Community Leisure	15/11/2017	1:00 pm
	Director of Public Health, Tameside and Chair of Directors of Public Health Group, GM	22/11/2017	12:30 pm
	Place Development Manager for Sport and Physical Activity, Greater Sport	24/11/2017	11:00 am
		05/12/2017	3:30 pm

	CEO, Action Together, representing more than 1000 local charities and community groups		
		08/12/2017	1:00 pm
	Programme Manager for Public Health, Wigan	12/12/2017	1:45 pm
	Health Commissioner for Oldham	13/12/2017	3:00 pm
	Managing Director, Inspiring Health Lifestyles Wigan		

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Strategic Capability in Sport and Physical Activity Partnerships.

Sub Title: Exploring strategic capability in the partnership between Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester NHS and Sport England.

Introduction

I would like to invite you to participate in this research as part of my PhD degree with Manchester Metropolitan University. Before participating in this interview, you need to understand why the research is being conducted and what is involved. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask questions if anything you read is not clear or you would like more information.

In this research, strategic capability refers to the ability of the board to function strategically and recognises the development potential of the board to think and act in a strategic manner. The aim is to explore strategic capability theory within the context of the partnership and identify any barriers and challenges to delivering outcomes. This will enable development of strategic capability theory and suggestions for how this could be applied in practice. I consider you the most appropriate person to provide me with vital information.

The semi-structured interview will last for approximately 1 hour and will be recorded, transcribed and analysed. You may be asked to provide supporting documents to support the research. A copy of the findings can be shared with you at your request.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you that leaves the university will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used to develop a thesis for potential publication in academic journals. The findings can be shared with participants for their use.

What will happen if I want to withdraw from the research?

You can withdraw from the study at any point upon request. Information collected may still be used. Any taped interviews that can still be identified as yours will be destroyed if you wish.

Yours sincerely,

Jordan Peel.

Participant name:

Participant signature:

Mobile: 07772019050 – Email: jordan.d.peel@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Director of Studies: Sara Ward – s.ward@mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 4: PhD Research Time Line

Year	Oct '15 - Sept '16			Oct '16-Sept '17			Oct '17-Sept '18		
Months	Oct-Jan	Feb-May	Jun-Sept	Oct-Jan	Feb-May	Jun-Sept	Oct-Jan	Feb-May	Jun-Sept
Tasks									
Research Design 1	█								
Research Design 2		█							
Progression Viva/Revisions to Research Design 2			█	█					
Data Collection and Transcription				█	█	█	█		
Data Analysis							█	█	
Findings Write Up								█	█
Discussion Draft									█
Conclusion Draft									█
Final Thesis Completed									█

Appendix 5: Documents Analysed

Published reports and minutes

Butcher, L. (2016) *Greater Manchester strategic plan for health and social care devolution. Report to the Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board*. *Item 6*. Manchester City Council Health and Wellbeing Board.

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Policy, strategy and planning documents

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Appendix 6: Memorandum of Understanding

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Appendix 7

	Macro level community sport governance influences
Theme, S*ub-theme*, O*pencode* (sources/units of data in Nvivo)	*Example of Verbatim*
Context (23/582)	
Culture (9/25)	
GM History of Collaboration (9/25)	*"And there is obviously quite a long history of collaboration, especially amongst the councils, going back to I think the mid-eighties. I think Sport England would be coming in to quite a well-established partnership structure. Whether that kind of relationship between a national and regional entity would work as well somewhere those relationships are less mature would probably be more of a challenge"* (Interview Deputy Director of strategy and system development, Health and Social Care Partnership).
	"There is a long history of the authorities working together in that way. Things like I was talking to one of the chief executives the other day and asking; 'How do you justifying being the head of one committee but working across ten?' And he said, 'Well that's part of my job description.' You know? When you take a job in an authority here you have a commitment and a responsibility to the ten. I don't know if that's the same anywhere else, but I think that's hugely important because it's not questioned. Like you were saying earlier about them volunteering to give their time to the Greater Manchester project, it's woven in to their work." (Interview GM Moving Executive Group Strategic manager).
Ecological (8/15)	
Natural Capital (5/6)	*So as its becoming, as the engagement exercise is continuing I am starting getting people asking 'Right can we come and discuss physical activity in this meeting or this place.' So, for example next week I am talking at the Natural Capital Group, which is outdoors, open space and all of that. Where they look at issues like low carbon quality, connections with nature. All sorts of stuff on their agenda which they are recognising have a connection with physical activity. The relationship of physical activity and natural*

	*capital is really important. Now that has not happened before. (*Strategic Manager GM Moving Executive Group).
	Well look the ten authorities own most of their assets. If they are going to make a difference in Greater Manchester they have got to make that asset work for them more effectively. It is not one of these boroughs, over fifty percent of landmass is green space in Wigan. If you don't use that and see that as wellbeing-based asset than you are missing a trick. We run two major country parks, our investment and the council's investment has been about sustainability, commercial, it is about creating opportunity in those parks for families, groups, events, for a whole range of physical activity. Our whole outdoor learning team are based in those parks are delivering that to schools. We have got divorced from the green space in many ways particularly in our urban areas and our value of it. We don't let our kids off the leash as much, we don't create the opportunities for them to get out there." (Chief Executive Leisure trust).
Air Quality (5/9)	*"That's my point, but if there is a narrative around, a person's wellbeing, which I think there is which is fundamentally about air quality around health and traffic congestion then I think that is where the political narrative needs to be and we need to follow it through"* (Lead Chief Executive Health and Wellbeing GMCA).
	Probably the big one is active transport. You know I think the move to introduce Chris Boardman is a great move to champion that. It is reducing the amount of car journeys, reducing the amount of vehicles with obviously combustible engines, buses and whatever. And I think creating a greener more welcoming environment facilitates more people wanting to walk and cycle. So, if there is going to be a population wide scale difference made that is prime. That is absolutely fundamental. And obviously we know about Copenhagen and the investment that went in there, the investment in infrastructure. I am happy to see that is a priority because again there needs to be a better balance struck between trying to provide silver bullet solutions by these super motivational activities and actually changing the environment which is absolutely prime. (Chief Executive, Leisure Trust.)
Political (23/345)	
GM Devolution agreement (23/228)	*"So, devolution has created a really good opportunity to look at how we work across Greater Manchester. And that is not necessarily about what money might be subtracted from the system. That is just more about, how can we take advantage of all these different agencies coming together? From the health sector through to the public health sector,*

	to voluntary sector through all those different partnerships. How can we take advantage of that? (Health Commissioner and Locality Representative, GM Moving Executive Group).
	*"It is a much bigger agenda, and sport cannot do it on its own. So it has to embed within the systems locally, and it has to be systemised…. Transport for Greater Manchester are probably a really good example, whereby they are really supportive of active travel (*walking, cycling and using public transport) *and the travel choices team are great at Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM), but I think our spend per head on cycling infrastructure is something like £1.96 per head of our population. Whereas in London they spend £17 per head. So actually there is a whole cultural shift in London on riding your bikes because it is becoming safer, it is more seen therefore more people do. Now that does not come from a little revenue programme that supports active travel. It has come from because someone at the top has decided we are taking this chunk and we are going to do this with it, and it is across the system. So that influence cannot happen with that Department, it has to happen in a Greater Manchester context with the Head of that Department, the Chief Executive of Greater Manchester and actually, more importantly, moving forward, the Mayor."* (Chief Executive Officer of Greater Sport).
	"So the narrative sort of comes out of lots of places, but actually political leadership is quite fundamental. Which takes me back to that point about locating this with the Reform Board, led by the interim Mayor (Tony Lloyd), because actually political leadership will be critical regarding driving this work forward and the narrative is key. Going forward if Andy Burnham says I need some more cycle lanes, I am pretty sure it would not land well. If Andy Burnham says actually 2000 people die a year of poor air quality in GM, that is quite shocking, and when we look at where they are dying, they are dying on major routes. And therefore actually we need to do something about that. If he says actually average speeds are only 10 miles an hour now and it is only going to get a lot worse in terms of congestion, we need to look at alternative transport measures" (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing GM).
National policy/strategy changes (19/117)	*"Traditionally Sport England would have worked with Greater Sport who are the local County Sport Partnership and we would have also worked with the leisure departments of the 10 boroughs, but actually we need to work just as much with the care department. We need to work just as much with the Education Department, the Transport Department and we certainly need to pull in Clinical Commissioning Groups and people like that maybe*

	the Local Enterprise Partnership, so the Board seeks to replicate that whole approach that's why we have created it" (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England). *"It is now you [Regional entities] tell us what you are interested in and we will partner with you to co-produce it. Rather than it being a really transactional type of thing to something that is much more about co-production and that is the way we should be working. So it is systems thinking and systems working, rather than creating artificial barriers I think"* (Deputy Director of Population Health, GM).
Socio-Economic (23/186)	
Influenced by Funding for Health and Wellbeing (15/59)	*"clearly sport England with the funds they have and the strategic direction of those funds, around, not just the kind of high end, kind of Olympic excellence, but also the, social dimension, the issues of equity, and deprived communities, having access to, where we have go the greatest concentrations of ill health there strategic sort of agenda, played into taking charge strategy"* (Deputy Director, Greater Manchester Combined Authority). *So, funding is a big one. So, Sport England I am assuming have a lot more funding available than localities at the minute. So, there is certainly a funding stream there for localities* (Population Health Project Manager).
Improving Health and Economic Outcomes (19/127)	*"When you look at Greater Manchester across its 2.8 million population, actually, it is about 300,000 people who draw on the Health Service, draw on unemployment services. Yet, some are a drain because of drug abuse or crimes, but actually doing something for that 300,000 people will lift the whole city....and will free up money that can actually be recycled back to do better things rather than just put things right."* (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England). *"And that because the health economy always spends money on beds or the sorts of things it should be spending money on which is supporting people to be healthier, but then actually when I saw the transfer, 80% of the public health budget was being spent on treatment, now that is fascinating because this is money here's 12 million pound, oh no no, it all goes on drugs and alcohol and sexual health. So actually 80% of the money was being spent on treatment as well, treatment based services. And if you look at any public health system that has a medically qualified, director of public health, you will see it is medicalised."* (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, Greater Manchester Combined Authority).

	"Everything the CA works to or I hope everything that the CA works to is in the interest of prevention rather than reaction. In all kinds of services, because, fundamentally its better for peoples outcomes of course but also the economic situation we find our selves now we don't have the, clout, resources, capability to just do reactionary stuff anymore, I think there is a realisation that that is going to become even more important, and the other side of that which is something I was talking to you a little bit about before is the economic potential of that is huge." (Policy Officer Greater Manchester Combined Authority).
Technological (4/7)	
Enabling information sharing (4/7)	*"So, there is something called 'My City' (https://mycityhealth.co.uk/) which I think Salford are about to launch. Very much around if you go on, put your postcode in, it tells you everything that is going on around your postcode. It gets a little bit more sophisticated when it knows you have got a gym membership, you have paid your council tax online, you like going to the cinema etc., and it starts firing stuff back at you. So quite sophisticated going forward, so it fits in quite nicely with opening up our data for that sort of platform as well"* (Head of Strategy and Performance, Leisure Trust).
	"I think if you look at the This Girl Can campaign, yes it's an advertising campaign, but actually it's the social forum around it, which actually I think has made the biggest change, so women talking to women about 'Did you see this? What have you done?'. It is really interesting whenever the campaign has been condemned by somebody, we have not had to say anything as 200 women have come online and actually 'You're talking ▮▮,'... and that shows, just shows" (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England).

Appendix 8

Meso level community sport governance influences in Greater Manchester, England.	
Theme, *Sub-theme,* Open code (sources/references in Nvivo)	*Example of Verbatim*
Organisational Relationships (23/456)	
Extra-organisational relationships (22/157)	
County Sport Partnership role (14/65)	*"So had we not done the work that we have done, physical activity would not be as strong in the plans as it is now, and the system would not be as willing to work together." (Chief Executive Greater Sport, County Sport Partnership).* *Like I say I think there are some organisations that are more wholly invested in it. So probably do affect the direction more. So, Greater Sport would be one of those..(Chief Executive, Action Together)* *I don't think it is fully collaborative. I think Greater Sport …… in the early days had very strong influence on key aspects of it. That was before GM Active days and as an individual trust we had virtually no influence or input in to it, or extremely low-level input in to it. So, in terms of that I think there was a fairly narrow input. I think there was little bit more when the refresh work was done, and it has probably been tweaked and been more reflective of a joint approach but in many ways the dye was cast in terms of the key themes"* (Leisure Trust, Chief Executive).
Relationships via governance architecture (18/92)	"*So the proposal is to have the steering group, which is broad and representative of all those twelve areas of the plan, feeding into an Executive Group which is almost like the filter through to the key decision making".* (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group). *You have got the GM Leadership Group that exists and the Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing in GM chairs. So that could be a route to*

	task that group with doing that, and we will task the provider network to do that." *"For any success of delivery, it needs to be embedded in local delivery structures. So, it is not a completely separate project or programme, where you are bringing in an army of people to deliver something that stands alone, has a start and finish, goes great but then you never hear of it again. Whereas if it is embedded into the work of our local care organisations in GM, into schools, our housing associations...any of those partners where they are not going to go away".*
Inter-organisational relationships (23/299)	
Collective Commissioning, Design Production as an enabler (18/87)	*"What we need to do is bring our respective resources to the table, and we need to co-design and co-commission it. That is the difference and actually what we are doing is weaving it into the existing public services and the reform of public services. What we are not doing is running a stupid competition and wasting a lot of time and effort, and actually we will land over here while the work is over there"* (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing GM). *"We don't want to control the money, you know it's raised from the general public it shouldn't be used to substitute for public funds, but it should align, and if it aligned more effectively then we could probably improve the challenges facing communities more quickly than we are doing…… not just Sport England resource, but how that can be layered with the resource that we have control of to deliver more...you know the most effective physical activity programme that this country has ever seen"* (Deputy Chief Executive, GM Combined Authority). *"There is an approach within the plan, an approach to transformational change, which we are on that journey with and testing out how you go about this in a, in this kind of whole system way. Co-creating solutions with people. You know with ageing being the first opportunity to test that out really"* (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group). *"So, for me as a commissioner I am just thinking it creates new opportunism to be able to learn what goes – sometimes historically being in a commissioner's world, you were doing things in isolation, you were working in your own local patch. You were commissioning around how you thought you*

should do things, what would be working best etcetera. But this is an opportunity now to get learning and insight and also funding through Sport England. To be able to test things out ultimately and I think that is a really bold thing for them to be able to do. Collectively we come together, and we can test things out that we think may work, and if it does work it stops areas having to reinvent the wheel themselves. Take less risk with their very precious resources" (Locality Health Commissioner).

"I think it is because ultimately, the Programme Management Board are so far removed, aren't they? From what is actually going on because the very nature of the board they are strategic thinkers aren't they? I think it is something along the lines of the suing something like, the deal is a great example of how something strategic transcends in to something really operational. We recently had an example of that potentially, we have been talking about the deal and what it means to us locally around service delivery. Making sure how we deliver our front-line services are meaningful. That they are done in a co-produced way. But ultimately that they are working towards a vision for the council, they are contributing to what we have set out what would happen within our locality plan etcetera. We were recently scrutinised, well I say scrutinised that probably wasn't the right word, although I wasn't involved in it. A peer review. So, the Local Government Association came in and did a peer review of the deal. Basically, what they were trying to do was find out, is this something that just everyone has heard about and goes, 'Oh yeah I have heard about it but I don't really know what it means to me' or is this something that actually does means something to people who have to deliver, to residents who are the recipients of our service or a piece of work, project. By which they understand what is the deal in Wigan. And that peer review came back saying do you know what it is embedded in the work that people do. People don't just think it's a phrase, they don't just tag it on and go, 'Oh yeah, this is the deal, it is that kind of thing that we do or the council said you know whatever', they are able to explain, 'Well the way in which I work towards the deal is, I have a different conversation with people and when I find out they are interested in x and y I go to the community book, I look at what is available in their local community. I get in touch with the link worker and sure that people are connected in to the local community, utilising community groups, partners etcetera. I promote, and I endorse.' And that was their way of operationally

	saying yes, it is a strategic operation, but it isn't just a tag line. You know and ultimately what it is, it is about making sure that it is not, for the people who are on these boards for the people who are strategic thinkers that there are the mechanisms for communication for that vision, for that work delivered in a meaningful way. Others wise it just gets lost. You get people saying just, 'Oh yeah that was the MOU or whatever at it is at the time to get in to the hearts and minds of the people who are operational. If you do not get that right, then nothing changes" (Health Commissioner).
Challenge of varying cultures (5/7)	"That is what's so interesting about it, it is different, the culture of those organisations is different, and the language of them is different. The way they operate and the way things get done are different and they are coming together under devolution" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
	"I think one of the challenges for all types of public organisations and I guess this is no different, is they tend to be housed around professions. So housing professions, teaching, sports professionals. People are trained in a certain away and have a world view. There are certain organisational and cultural norms that develop" (Strategic Lead, GM Combined Authority).
Challenge of varying perspectives on working practices (8/16)	*"So my ask of Sport England would be, like the Centre for Ageing Better have done, like Public Health England have done, national organisations have signed MoUs with GM, and they have taken their staff and they have woven them into the GM structures"* (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing, GMCA).
	"What I would see is so Active Ageing is all about tackling inactivity, so some of the people that sit in my inactivity team will also be spending time up in Manchester. Helping them write the bid, the collective objectives, the simple measurement, so people will kind of tap in and out as needed supporting that local team" (Chief Executive of Community Sport, Sport England).
Evidencing contribution as an enabler (5/8)	*"It is ultimately for them to be able to evidence what the role of sport, leisure, physical activity etc., is going to be making for health and wellbeing. How does that filter into National Health Service outcomes? How does that filter into GM Combined Authority expectations around understanding and stating a case for physical activity? You know, is it helping us to get people more well? More people in work? More*

	people skilled up?....and having that broader understanding" (Health Commissioner). *"Sport England have got a challenging set of directives that they need to deliver to government and they have got their own challenges around ensuring that they invest wisely in delivering those outcomes. And so, if they are going to have any chances of succeeding in what is a challenging environment they absolutely need to partner with not only local government but also the NHS as well and other local decision-making entities and partnerships. So, one hundred percent. Absolutely critical. And I think the Local Delivery Pilot is an approach that captures that really, which is good" (Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active).*
Improved efficiency (5/7)	*"So rather than Sport England having ten conversations with ten local authorities, each of which might have a slightly different interpretation or plan,....there is a route in through a regional entity, through the GM Moving Executive Group, the Combined Authority, ...then Sport England can kind of work on that regional level to get things implemented locally" (Executive Director of Community Sport, Sport England).* *"I have a real fear about the current system that all we are doing in devolution is great, but all you are doing is developing another tier by what is happening in Greater Manchester. And to some extent you are replicating which is almost more worrying, with a tier that actually do not know what is happening on the ground and doesn't have the expertise or insight" (Chief Executive, Leisure trust).*
Improved return as an enabler (4/11)	*"You will get a bigger bang for your buck Sport England in terms of your strategic objectives, because we have marshalled a system here of 10 Local Authorities, Police and Fire Service, 27 Health Bodies and Clinical Commissioning Groups' and Foundation Trusts and Mental Health Trusts. We have got governance that we can plug you straight into and nowhere else in the country can do that presently"* (Deputy Chief Executive, GM Combined Authority). *"we have demonstrated in a number of areas, that more flexibility in national programmes to take account of the specific challenges of place, will mean you can get more value for money, you can get a bigger bang for your buck. Whatever you have got to spend you can do more with it. And we demonstrated it with the work programmes and we demonstrated*

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	this with the work programme" (Deputy Chief Executive, GM Combined Authority).
	"And to be honest physical activity could play into every agenda across GM, what we have to understand is where we will get the biggest bang for our buck and I don't mean that in terms of impact and I mean that in terms of change because we can't be everywhere" (Local Government Relationship Manager).
Language challenges (8/14)	*"You know you sit around a table and people use system language, and I genuinely think sometimes people have not got a clue what they are talking about (i.e. understand the language used) and people do not say it (i.e. check terminology/understanding through fear of embarrassment). There is not enough honesty, in that people talk and talk and not very often do people go, 'What does that actually mean?' And not in a rude way!"* (Chief Executive Action Together and Voluntary Sector Representative, GM Moving Executive Group).
	"They all talk a different language, you know right down to the detail of what we call things and out understanding of each others worlds and I think that's what is the valuable things about say my role sitting within health and social care and the combined you know sort of trying to bridge those sort of worlds if you like, you know I'm coming form a sport and physical activity background, so I understand that world. Work with health quite extensively, but until you are immersed in the language and the culture of that sector, you don't really understand so you know you see that type of things coming put I conversation, where different sectors have different approaches" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Legitimacy as an enabler (4/6)	*"So, having that national interest has probably pricked people's ears as well. That this is not just about some local authority officer banging a drum about needing to be more physically active"* (Health Commissioner and Locality Representative on the GM Moving Executive Group).
	"It is dead exciting that I think for me this is one of the first of a health and social care system formally coming together with an organisation like Sport England. I think it demonstrates a real commitment to saying actually, we can't keep on delivering health services the way they have always been delivered. Actually, we need to be looking at someone's health and wellbeing is determined not purely by the GP and hospital services they would use, but actually how do

	they live their life in the day to day. So, if we can have someone with the experience and national weight of Sport England working with the partnership. I think it gives a really god signal that being active, being involved in sport, accessing leisure is a really important path to physical and mental wellbeing" (Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership). .
Memorandum of Understanding (9/27)	*"There has been a move to break down that silo working and work more holistically, and I think MoUs' are a good step in formalising the breaking down of those silos"* (Policy Officer, GM Combined Authority). *"What we could offer to Sport England was an opportunity to trial a more sophisticated strategic approach and that is what the MoU kind of aspires to. So I suppose the potential of the MoU is that we have got strategic intent and support from the tops of a big Quango, a big Combined Authority with significant reach and the National Health Service in Greater Manchester"* (Deputy Chief Executive, GM Combined Authority).
Pace challenges (11/44)	*"I think Sport England have agreed to the principles of the MoU because they believe in them. So those principles have to drive how they all work and that is a challenge because it is a different way and you know for Greater Manchester everything is very much at pace. It is so fast, and the national system currently can't respond to that"* (Chief Executive, Greater Sport). *"The progress of the work with Sport England has been fairly slow. From our perspective, it has been very slow. We are very supportive of the vision and the objectives around the MoU and the work going forward but likewise there are a number of priorities we have wanted to pursue more immediately"* (Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active). *"....something about timing and aligning of pace..... So, the GM [Greater Manchester] pace is phenomenal! The rate at which things get done is phenomenal. I guess over the period I have been here and prior you probably can sense that. For example, Greater Manchester is wanting to crack on and accelerate the pace, but there are certain things that need to happen. So, for example, the local delivery pilot conversations with Sport England have taken a year to go around that, apply, stage 1, stage 2 etc..... the decision will have been a year, near enough. So*

	there is a little bit of impatience to crack on with stuff" Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group). *I guess the other thing is the balance between. There is a real sense of urgency with getting things moving but at the same time we are setting out in a journey here which is to totally transform the landscape and the way of working and you know really if this is the right approach we should be looking at a generation of work, not just, so yes we want some pace with it but we also need to do the right things based on evidence, rather than just dashing around for all the different investment opportunities that are about there. So, I think that is going to be a balance for us, satisfying enough people that things are happening whilst making sure we take enough time to do the right things. And not just rushing to stuff, you know (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).* *"I think that is the other challenge. It is for all of us sitting around the Board to be quite nimble. I think we can, because although we have got you know a billion to spend and things like that and we are a national organisation, we are not that hierarchical, we actually have quite a lot of power. I have also found that the NHS can move quite nimbly, which actually was a big surprise to me. The thing that has often held us up is the Local Government side of it. That yes we all want to do this but we will have to take it to our ten councils, or we will at least have to take it to our leaders' group. Exec Director of Community Sport, Sport England"*
Planning challenges (12/33)	*"We have not got a programme plan that sits behind the MoU, there is a draft action plan, but it has not been agreed as such"* (Chief Executive, Greater Sport). *"Well like I say I'm working that is what I am trying to get agreed, with sport England partners greater sport partners, including Hayley and then actually, my perspective form a population health plan, we have put a set of objectives in but we need to be clear on how we are going to enact these objectives, how are we going to move the agenda forward? So that's why I have asked for the high level road map so then I can begin to say and the board and the that can go to the board and the board can then say how are we progressing against that road map"* (Deputy Director of Population Health, 2017).

	"I would look at not necessarily the purpose but more, 'what does this allow us to do that we could not do before?' So clarity on, ok we have got this MoU what does that mean? What can we do that we could not do before? What opportunities does this represent? What barriers does this remove?" (Population Health Project Manager, Health and Social care Partnership). *"So, Sport England have led on the implementation plan for GM Moving and they have conducted a consultancy exercise around that plan, which we have been involved with. I do not think the plan has been produced on a thorough enough audit. So, I think the plan has significant weaknesses as a result of that"* (Chief Executive, Leisure Trust).
Alignment of regional and national strategy (6/19)	*"I am not trying to say there are not differences between organisations, but I think there is a common strategy and vision. That makes it just easier for a national body to come and have a conversation"* (Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership). *"So the way we are looking at how all of this fits together, we have kind of got the overarching Taking Charge.... you have got GM Moving as the framework, the blueprint for Sport and Physical Activity in Greater Manchester. You have got the MoU, that will deliver a significant element of GM Moving …….. and you have got the population health plan that will help us drive all of that agenda"* (Chief Executive, Greater Sport). *"Some of the priorities Sport England have, and some of the priorities that we have do differ. So there is a Venn diagram, Sport England does not deal with kids under 5, Sport England are not allowed to go into schools* to promote Sport and Physical Activity, *that sort of stuff. Greater Manchester does prioritise Sport and Physical Activity for kids under 5... Greater Manchester does prioritise Sport and Physical Activity for kids in and around schools, but these are the organisational constraints of Sport England"* (Lead Chief Executive for Health and Wellbeing GMCA). *"So, we have at least two members of staff who are not featured in Sport England's money you know....under-fives, younger years. So where do they fit in with the Greater Manchester investment or sport investment?* (Place Development Manager, Greater Sport).
Integrated governance (23/327)	

Horizontal Integration (14/99)	
Locality Integration (11/54)	*"We are looking at ten authorities and putting these initiatives in ten authorities and actually it is horizontally....it is horizontal to the demands. So, this initiative linked to this other initiative. So, the place-based organisation where we are involved and do all this co-production stuff is really important"* (Strategic Lead, GM Combined Authority). *"The second theme was about service development. So that was about how we could look at how we could deliver services perhaps collectively across GM but also probably more importantly about sharing best practice and where we know things are working really well... we could look at scaling that up or certainly sharing it in a peer to peer way across the city region"* (Strategic Partnership and Development Manager, GM Active).
Service Integration in Localities and neighbourhoods (14/45)	*"Even though you have got your integrated ways of working across Greater Manchester, at that strategic well at part of the strategic framework across Greater Manchester... you have not got that whole system at localities, ….but where it is starting to work, it is starting to achieve good outcomes. I think that place-based integration which is working, and the models of that systems thinking and all of that, that does seem to be having an effect and makes sense in my view around achieving some of those outcomes"* (Chief Executive Action Together, Voluntary Sector Representative GM Moving Executive Group). *"So, everything we intend to do, to improve life expectancy, healthy life expectancy all of those measures, physical activity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, etc..., all of our performance measures are all collated for Health and Wellbeing in that one place which is Heart of Wigan"* (Health Commissioner). *"Place-based integration is neighbourhood working, but the idea is that you bring together services, to work at a place level, so there are a couple of examples of it, one in Platt Bridge in Wigan and one in Hyde in Tameside. They have someone from housing, someone from troubled families, someone from employment services, adult services, Police, maybe Fire and they all sit together as one organisation working for the betterment of that place"* (Strategic Lead, GMCA).
Vertical Integration 23/228	

Communication between region and localities (17/70)	*"I think it could be improved by the board determined strategic level leadership in each locality and charging each of those with providing the insight coming from that locality. Because then you are not just getting good ideas on post it notes at workshops, you are tapping into local strategies and the insight at a strategic level…….Whether it be something we have in Tameside called the Active Alliance. So as a leisure provider, we have thirteen key stakeholders, including Housing Associations, Age UK, Local Health Care, and Foundation Trusts. We have a strategic plan with those organisations locally"* (Leisure Trust, Chief Executive). *"Next week, I need to go to Bolton, spend a whole day in Bolton, meeting all sorts of different people who live in Bolton to understand that place better. What is going on? How does all of this GM stuff interact with what they are trying to do locally? How can we support them rather than make demands of them? And I just think if you are not careful, I could spend my whole working life going between Churchgate House, Piccadilly Place and the Greater Sport offices meeting lots of different people, but not get out of Manchester that much"* (Strategic manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Conflict between region and localities (12/30)	*"I think that is a dilemma for Greater Sport and the GM Moving Executive Group ...in order to achieve their outcomes they have to get to get everyone together. So, if Greater Sport and the GM Moving Executive Group report on what they have achieved, but they have not done it, it's other partners that have done it..... And also, you have got to work, and it is a difficult balance between how you can influence what has been delivered without taking ownership and the other side of that is not pissing off the deliverers... that you are taking all the credit for what they have delivered..... "I suppose in a nutshell to summarise, that connection with local and between regional and local, is making it relevant. It is about taking everyone with you. And that is about relationships and partnerships. And I suppose it is about maybe being clever, cleverer around how we use information, how we share information, how we learn from each other. We do bits of it, but we don't do anything at scale"*(Leisure Trust, Chief Executive). *"I think that there is always a challenge. And I have certainly found it, it has been quite an interesting one in the last couple of months. Where we are getting some feedback from localities about, is there actually too much coming out of GM and is there too much*

being done at GM level?" (Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership)

"I think leisure is certainly underfunded. Leisure services in localities. So, whilst it is our priority at a Greater Manchester level is sit a priority on the ground? So, I am thinking, so putting my early years head on. I worked for Bury council, I was responsible for the Children's Centres, as part of my role – and my role changed significantly over time. I ended up closing, I went from fourteen Children's Centres to five. So, the cut backs in localities are phenomenal and there doesn't seem to have been any improvement since I left localities. I know it is a massive priority for Greater Manchester, where I am sat but whether it is a massive priority for people on the ground I am not sure. People don't see the importance of sports and physical activity and leisure. It is probably one of the first things to be cut. You think about waste management, I don't know housing, there are more pressing issues in localities than sports and physical activity. Which is sad but it is the way we are. We need to do something to change that. We need to be conscious of that in the implementation plan" (Project Manager, Population Health).

"In my own organisation I have got things I am being measured at and paid for to deliver, ultimately that is what I am doing. Anything else I can do on the fringes I kind of will do anyway and there is an element of whatever we are doing is due first and foremost to our own strategic aims. Because they happen to be aligned to Greater Sports it doesn't mean that I am doing there will for them. It actually means that so when we are funding the set up of the Junior Park Run I am doing that for my strategic aims, it will ultimately help effect Yvonne's. But what frustrates me a little is that they will take credit for it. All the chief execs in Greater Manchester are doing the same thing, they are all focusing on Salford on Warrington and all that kind of stuff. So, we are all trying to do our own things to get people active, the fact that they are in an office someone in Manchester saying the same thing. They are not actually doing anything. I don't feel, or they are certainly not doing enough. If they were to come to me and help me, it goes back to that point about the Ten K. I would actually be quite happy, I had my arm around them in a photograph for an annual report, if they were genuinely coming to me and helping me achieve it. But no-one is knocking on my door saying how can I help you? These are the resources I have got" (Leisure trust Chief Executive).

	"And I remember the last one where they had the, where Andy Burnham was doing his launch, and I remember because it was absolutely pissing it down and I got soaked in the town centre. It was a, I think it was Friday, it was five o'clock or something stupid. To get in to Manchester and then walk across town I got soaked and then stood there and just to be there and to be supportive of it. And I was invited forty-eight hours before! The event had been organised weeks ago and I was still there. Through gritted teeth, thinking I am going to show we are willing and committed here. But I know a lot of colleagues who are never there because they have turned off from it, other chief execs of trusts. This is not just me having a whinge here this is a collective, I can tell you!" (Leisure Trust Chief Executive). *"Oh, I think you know I am not on my own put it that way. A lot of people in the room are struggling with that local GM conflict but also struggling with how when we are sitting at our desk in our day to day job, how I am supposed to be delivering the GM vision when they haven't articulated it? They seem to have done it a bit backwards as in they have created a very big programme of training and values but collectively no one really knows what they are trying to achieve"* (Leisure Trust, Chief Executive).
Connecting regional with local (13/56)	"There was a notion around this whole making sure that whatever we do at a GM level connects in with the localities. So I think from a capability point of view there is a real need to understand the GM landscape, but also understand how that lands in the ten……. Now in many ways they connect anyway because they are being driven by central plans. However, they all land slightly differently and they have all got their own demographics and priorities locally" (Chief Executive, Greater Sport). *"Yeah. It was really interesting. So, I was there as part of the assessment visit and it was really interesting the question they asked that stayed in my mind. 'Well, how do you get this fantastic system, that is doing all this fantastic and very big stuff to really work in a small community? I don't see really how that connects.' And in a way, were the voice within that space to say, 'There are ways in which bridging does happen, but you are right we do have to make sure that there is quite a lot of this thinking and money and whatever else does actually get to that local. So, it is creating that space for the local to respond in a way that is genuine and means something to them"* (Chief

	Executive Action Together, Voluntary Sector Representative GM Moving Executive Group).
	I think the third thing is, it's a bit of a cultural thing, it's a bit of a relationship issue. But I think in some senses there is a bit of a push back from some of the areas on a few fronts. One is, there is a perception that devolution is all about Manchester and the city centre and what is it doing for someone who is in Oldham for example? I think the Mayor rightly so, has given a really high priority to homelessness and rough sleeping and you can see in the city centre that is really visible but is it as visible in Rochdale, Bolton etc? So, is it as much as a priority to them? And I think secondly there is sometimes there is a push back too for similar reasons, the argument would be, this might this this is a good example and a good initiative at a GM level but is not going to work in Wigan, Bolton because of x y z reason. So, I think one of the things for Sport England is and again it goes back to the board. The board might come up with a brilliant initiative that would work regionally for GM, works nationally for Sport England, the question is how do you go and implement it in the ten areas of GM?" (Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership).
Shared Outcomes enabling integration (5/10)	*"If you have got key performance indicators, they are so focused on getting that activity.... Whereas what we are saying is.... this is the outcome. If you need to flex in here about how you are delivering and achieving that, then that is what you do. I need you to tell me how you are achieving that outcome and what progress you are making"* (Director of Public Health, Health and Social Care Partnership).
	"Maybe the most strategic objective for the GM Moving Executive Group is to say, 'Well actually we want all commissioners to be commissioning their prime sports and physical activity providers on outcomes and these are the standard outcomes we want them to deliver. These are the standard measures we want..... And actually, we are going to use some of our resources to roll out some training and support for locality commissioners and providers to work towards this standardised measuring framework" (Chief Executive, Leisure Trust).
	"Okay so that is very similar to the other strategies and organisations. So again, if people are looking to achieve outcomes together. There is more chance of meeting them I guess. And having a bigger impact. In think in my head, we are the only area doing this where we have such organisations coming together.

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	So, I feel we are a really strong region at the minute, potentially paving the way for other areas, who will look to us for learning and things" (Population Health Project Manager, Health and Social care Partnership).

"So, the strategy we wrote a couple of years ago which was called, 'Inspiring People to Live Well and Feel Great'. The vision of that strategy was to conquer inactivity and improve health and life expectancy. So, what you will see in that document is not a range of objectives around operating healthy - sorry safe, tidy, clean, well-managed buildings because that is the important apart of it but actually it is very outcomes focused on what actually the buildings are doing in the community. What it is achieving around turning the tide on physical inactivity and improving health and life expectancy" (Chief Executive, Leisure Trust). |
| Multiple governance mechanisms (17/62) | *"Something just came in to my mind which was about hierarchies and systems. Also, the balance between - so there is a sense here I think of anyone can talk to anyone. There isn't a 'Oh you can't talk to them because they are at the top of the tree and you are not.' There is a real commitment to creating leaders throughout the system. And an acknowledgement that it is a sort of messy, complex system whilst at the same time we've got a very hierarchical structure still. Which we have got to have. From a decision-making perspective you have got to have that hierarchy in place. One of the things, the other challenge of this work is getting the best out of this very complex system and growing that and making it stronger and engaging people with the work. And then interfacing that with taking things through a decision-making process and hierarchical world that we live in"* (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).

There is a contract for, in different areas for different things. In Tameside it is called a core contract. So essentially it is around, they give us some core resource through which it allows us to build, to attract other funding in. It has some outcomes attached to it, but it isn't procured with a contract, it is more of an ongoing grant arrangement. Which is very positive. In Oldham it is a contract, it has been wavered a number of years, so it is not open tender because essentially, they are looking for, because we are a community anchor organisation really. (Chief Executive, Action Together and Voluntary Sector representative on the Board). |

| | "So I am Head of Service for Public Health, youth services, leisure and sport…. There is a number of services within that, as it would suggest. But one is mainly around public health which is around commissioning support, business development and business planning and financial planning around business and public health. Then that is quite in brief. But what I also do is I manage the leisure contracts. So, I look after all the leisure facilities as if I am a client, from a management commissioner's perspective. And so, that included the building of leisure centres and what was in them but also commissioning the leisure contracts to actually run them and then the day to day management of that contract" (Health Commissioner and Locality representative on the GM Moving Executive Group).

"I mean the risk here for organisations like myself is, if we don't deliver the outcomes which our commissioner want, which is improving healthy life expectancy, we lose a contract. So, this is no, the stakes are not low here. We have to perform. And unlike Sport England we have not got the luxury of time. We are measure quarterly, annually. So how long has the GM Moving strategy been on the shelf, three or four years? What is the impact and who is holding the custodians of that strategy to account about the impact?" (Chief Executive, Leisure Trust).

"Our client in Wigan also wanted something that demonstrated what we do on their behalf. They own their assets. Their buildings will always be their buildings. We worked in partnership with them. So, if you look at our buildings in Wigan all our buildings are branded 'Wigan council' so they are co-branded with 'Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles', so it works on that level. Yeah? It became more generic, we do what it says on the label. It became out common cause. It became our mantra to get us integrated. We had three very clear values that we do our work under, we innovate, we collaborate, we enrich. We have three impact areas. We impact on health, we impact on education and schools and we impact on environment. And that became our simple business strategy for the last three years" (Chief Executive, leisure Trust). |

Appendix 9

Appendix 9: Micro level board influences on community sport governance in Greater Manchester, England.	
Theme, *Sub-theme,* Open code (sources/units of data in Nvivo)	*Example of Verbatim*
Board Inputs (23/450)	
Board member capacity (12/28)	
Lack of Board Member capacity (1/3)	*"We cancelled the last Board meeting……. I was double booked, and while this was important, I have a more important hub to go to, which is the bottom line"* (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA). *"...the people on the Programme Board and the key people closely involved in the work all have responsibilities outside of this work, and so it feels to me that they needed someone whose entire focus is this work. So Yvonne, when she goes back she has Greater Sport to run, Steven, when he goes back, has Tameside council. With all the best will in the world somebody to say well, I will crack on with that, and this is my whole job, is perhaps where I will make the difference* (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Part of main role not voluntary role (6/14)	*"You know we cannot create a huge industry at the centre to drive all this work. If we are thinking towards longer-term sustainability of making some of this happen and this change in culture and behaviours around system leadership, that to me is what it epitomises.... That we do it as part of our core business, instead of seeing it as an additional piece of work"* (Director of Population Health). *"Well I guess if they are representing an organisation it is part of the job you know. In that way I wouldn't see it as being voluntary if you are on one of these boards, you do have I guess executive members, but you will have representatives of other organisations"* (Strategic Lead, GMCA).

Board member Position (18/89)	
Decision making power (13/70)	*"I think the other thing is getting the level of person who...., and I am not a particularly hierarchical person…., but you need people sat around the Board who do not have to refer everything back 25,000 times"* (Exec Director, Community Sport, Sport England).

"So the other bit to the board is that literally has people that actually has people that are empowered, to take those sorts of things and also not just think about the bureaucracy and not just think about well we have always done it like that, so you have got to take a few risks" (Exec Director, Community Sport, Sport England).

"I've got a responsibility around resources in the Combined Authority and bending them and we want to do all we can to support. Yvonne and Hayley in bringing forward these proposal for funding" (Deputy Chief Executive, GM Combined Authority).

"So that is a mayoral function but the mayor will require unanimous support of the combined authority....., so there is checks and balances all the way through the constitutional settlement that we have negotiated here" (Deputy Chief Executive, GM Combined Authority) |
| Board member influence (7/19) | *"So, they are key influential leaders, well within Greater Manchester. They have a lot of presence….They are strong leaders, they have the ability to make change. They certainly have the access to the powers to do that and levers that exist to make the change"* (Project Manager, Health and Social Care Partnership).

So, what I mean by the influences is sports and physical activity was on the agenda but actually It wasn't really on the agenda very highly. It wasn't really on the agenda it was just being done so we ran leisure centres, we commissioned leisure centres and we commissioned a bit of physical activity and sport. Sport development and schools, we had all been things but actually it wasn't making a difference. So, the big out put of that piece of work was about influencing the influencers. Particularly the chief execs and making sure that not just sport and physical activity agenda but the wider agenda, i.e. adult social care, the whole of the housing, the police, making sure it was on their agenda" (Health Commissioner and Locality representative on the board). |

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	"I think the partnership and the boards were set up, someone had some foresight and thought, 'there is some real power here and we can get some more power....' - and I think collectively it is the right thing to do at GM. Particularly around health and social care for them to look at how to better use that money. And if it works I think its brilliant" (Head of Strategy and Performance, Leisure Trust).
Board Member strategic skill (17/73)	
Board Member Strategic Abilities (17/73)	*"Ultimately.... they are the best minds, the best thinkers, the best connected and probably the most capable from their knowledge and expertise"* (Health Commissioner). *"It comes down to having good individuals that can transcend those barriers, at an operational level, but also those people managing the relationship between the kind of policy and strategy side and its delivery"* (Strategic Lead, GMCA)
Board member will (9/32)	
Commitment (4/7)	*"You have got everybody around the table in terms of system reform side and to improve the health of the population as quickly as possible, and everybody understands the importance of physical activity in that. So there is a system willingness around prevention that I have not seen in any other system…, It has been really interesting for me to come and see that all partners and all system leaders are bought into that…, You do not see that commitment and that sign of commitment elsewhere"* (Deputy Director of Population Health, Health and Social Care Partnership). *"It needs a bit of discipline, and I think this is probably where and I am not pointing the finger at anybody, its just as much us as is them, it need discipline to really, value that board turn up for it, even if you have got something really pressing, to do it and that's the one thing that we haven't quite cracked, yet, I think I've cancelled a meeting, I think a meeting was cancelled by GMCA, so you need that discipline"* (Exec Director Community Sport, Sport England).
Will to create change (5/12)	*"One of the things that hit us and the consultants that did the first commissioning piece of work was the 'can-do' attitude, the 'we will'. From every strategic conversation, the 'we will'…. Be it the Health and Social Care Partnership, be it the Combined Authority. There is a will to make it happen,*

	and to really turn the Juggernaut around in terms of all those stubborn inequalities" (Local Relationship Manager, Sport England).
	"So for example we had a meeting back in the end of May – was it June? No, it was June. Where we brought, Andy Burnham, Jennie Price Chief Executive of Sport England in to a conversation with the programme board. To look at, you know what did the Mayoral Manifesto say, how does the MOU and GM Moving help to deliver our manifesto pledges? What is the relationship between the mayor and Sport England in this context? It's you know it's, in very practical terms it's very hard to get those people together. But there is a real willingness to make it happen" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Operational knowledge (8/14)	
Governance architecture provides operational knowledge (7/15)	*"Because of the way wider Greater Manchester work is happening and all of the locality planning and all of the locality-based work and the way that all feeds through to the Combined Authority and Health and Social Care..... Even when I was sitting in those high-level meetings like I was last week, you get a sense that the people who are in there do know what is happening in their communities and their localities. Even if they are a Chief Executive or Portfolio Holder for an Authority, they are very well informed about what is going on locally".*
	"We will regroup, and we will sit on the steering group that will bring the locality pilot work forward. In many ways, that is the right time for us to get fully engaged. What does this opportunity fully represent? What can we come to the table with? Leading examples of what we do now. How can we help co-design the solutions that need to be taken forward?"
Wider representation needed (8/35)	*"Yes well the board members will be formed members who are doing lots of other important stuff, so the skill we will get to get senior representation across the system, we will want, senior representation for transport, senior representation, for public health, senior representation from the health commissioners, senior representation from leisure providers, health providers"* (Lead Chief Exec, Health and Wellbeing, GM).
	I guess I should make the point, that we have made on a couple of occasions the point that we feel we should as a network, the prime provider network of physical activity in Greater Manchester we have made the point to Hayley and Yvonne, Steven and others that we should be represented on the programme board as well. Thinking about a true co-

	production approach where you work, where you bring kind of commissioners and providers together rather than keeping them separate. So, we have raised that point on a number of occasions but for whatever reasons that is not been forthcoming (Strategy and Development Manager, GM Active).
	"So, I find it weird that none from the delivery sector or the sport centres, or the leisure, the venues if you like where physical activity takes place, and there are different venues don't get me wrong there are sports grounds and amateur sports grounds. But to miss an opportunity to get them reflected at all in that programme board is a shame" (Chief Exec, Leisure Trust).
Strategic Management capacity (16/199)	
Strategic management capacity (16/199)	*"We will need to put it into place some programme management, with an overarching programme manager, and some capacity that sits around that individual with some capacity for administration and logistics and the rest of it, and then identify project leads, and those project leads"* (Lead Chief Exec Health and Wellbeing, GMCA).
	"What I do think you then need is a doing group underneath it, is a doing group underneath it, and so yes at the moment its Hayley (Strategic Manager), it will Yvonne Chief Executive Greater Sport and her team are playing a bit of that there are some other people form NHS Greater Manchester. I think we will see the core team grow a little bit. It's not the person who goes and digs up the road to put the cycle path in or runs the session the mosque, but it is somebody who can then get empowered by the board and then get on with it, so I think that the other bit, you have the board, but you also have the doing bit" (Exec Director Community Sport, Sport England).
	We have missed Hayley (Strategic Manager) I think that kind of more permanent capacity will be really really helpful" Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA)
Board Processes (23/640)	
Monitoring and Control (23/130)	
Board Review (4/7)	*"I know they are reviewing the Board ....Maybe it is partly around there are some missing gaps, perhaps it is because like me there are not enough people there who are truly all*

	in and active. Capacity might end up being the problem for them there. If they were to say they need to increase capacity, I would not be surprised" (Chief Executive of Action Together, Voluntary Sector Representative on the Board).
	"Whether I will stay there as that rep, because there are a few other people who arguably could be better suited to that space. I am in the process of just looking at who is best placed to sit in that space. But essentially, I was asked to do a bridging role to get that going and to see what is needed next. There might be an opportunity for a number of other people to be involved across the programme and the way it develops out. Or perhaps there are other people with different skill sets we will want at that level. Quite open and flexible in terms of we wanted an opportunity to be active in that space and I think it was valuable. But we also want to make sure it is the right people and the right spaces" (Chief Executive of Action Together, Voluntary Sector Representative on the Board).
	"I haven't been involved in it, I think it first and foremost started as a representative board, I think probably, we will certainly use a skills matrix for the team that works underneath it, I'm not sure we have used it on that, I think that probably something we should do, not least because we require everybody, else we fund to do that, (laughs) so you kind of have to do it yourself" (Exec Director Community Sport, Sport England).
Common standards framework (8/20)	*"So there is a number of different parts of the public health system through the GM Health and Social Care Partnership that are coming together to create common standards. I guess the delivery of the Greater Manchester Moving one is the main one...which is trying to deliver that strategic framework across Greater Manchester"* (Health Commissioner and Locality Representative on the Board).
	It is really trying to get the whole partnership to work to that standard. Wherever you are set from a GM Health and Social Care Partnership their idea is if we get those standards that will quite easily transfer in to Rochford or Oldham, Tameside or Bury, Wigan and so on and so on" (Health Commissioner and Locality Representative on the Board).
	Sport England want scale and it is right that they do. So, they want to be able to have a test, but then they want to think well how do we replicate it so that is not a project that stops and starts? I do get that, and I get that that is important. I am not sure that I have the answer to that really, other than some of the alliance contracted models are quite interested in how to connect up different providers who provide different things in to common outcome framework"

	(Chief Exec, Action Together and Voluntary Sector representative on the Board).
	"I think one of the areas we have struggled most in the partnership is really getting a clear set of outcomes. That most importantly aren't just the set of outcomes that we have always measured in the health service. If you see what I mean? And traditionally in the health service we have measured things like, waits in A&E? How long you are waiting for an operation? How many emergency admissions are we having in to hospital? Which are all really important. What we want to do here is say, they are really important things, but they don't tell us a huge amount about the wellbeing of a population. So, they tell us a bit about 'how much are we using hospital resources or GP resources and how efficiently are we using those resources' but nothing about - I think there is a really good approach to this in Wigan which is asking people about 'Well what does a good day look like for them? What are their strengths, what can they contribute?' And really powerful stuff around using sport as a way to boost people's self-esteem and as a way to integrate in to a community, as a way back in to employment for instance. And that is the sort of stuff that I would love to be able to measure and say we are doing something really exciting and innovative about this and the results have been this and we can conclusively say we have improved outcomes and equally we have reduced demand on services as a result of doing it. I don't think we are quite there yet. But Sarah Price has formed the group to kind of look at outcomes across GM" (Deputy Director, Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership).
Outcomes (5/10)	*"If you have got key performance indicators, they are so focused on getting that activity.... Whereas what we are saying is.... this is the outcome. If you need to flex in here about how you are delivering and achieving that, then that is what you do. I need you to tell me how you are achieving that outcome and what progress you are making"(Director of Public Health).* *"Maybe the most strategic objective for the GM Moving Executive Group is to say, 'Well actually we want all commissioners to be commissioning their prime sports and physical activity providers on outcomes and these are the standard outcomes we want them to deliver. These are the standard measures we want..... And actually, we are going to use some of our resources to roll out some training and support for locality commissioners and providers to work towards this standardised measuring framework."*

Performance measures (19/69)	*"Not the measure necessarily no, that is something that needs to come through the plan and actually the timely thing will be that that the population health plan does not have those measures in either. It did have them in an earlier draft, but they have come out because they have not necessarily been widely agreed by people"* (Chief Executive, Greater Sport). *"So, it is identifying what is the actual - basically we are trying to create a spreadsheet. Convert what it is in a GM Moving strategy. Lift from that what are the main things we want to achieve? What has already been measured? And so Active Life Surveys are one of the main sort of outputs that you can measure, things. So how can you measure that? Whether you are making an improvement? And then tracking that back, what can, what difference can we make about making all of those improve outcomes?"* (Health Commissioner and Locality Representative on the Board). *"Here and one of the things we probably will do is some kind of longitudinal study which takes a sample of people and says how active are you now, and the help the active ageing one, that's exactly what we are going to do something really big for older people, getting them active and we will have a sample of people particularly in that target audience which will be the lower incomes, where we baseline at the start of the work, how active are you? 6 months are you a little bit more active? 12 months on are you still doing it? So that's a kind of headline. And I also think we need to find things of so what does that mean, has the number of GP visits gone down? Have the number or people saying they are depressed gone down? all of those things that give us the wider benefits, also do I feel safer in my community? Do I feel connected? And was it because I have done something to be active? the other thing then when measuring the success of this, are what are the problems we are trying to solve and have we seen a behavioural change?"* (Exec Director Community Sport, Sport England).
Value (6/10)	*"Are we having the right conversations and capturing the value of what we are doing all the time"* (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group). *"We are all talking about the whole system and physical activity. It is about what is the value, what is the added value, hidden value of working in the system?"* (Place Development Manager, Greater Sport) *"So, actually it creates an environment where you have to be really clear on your aims and objectives, so people always understand and see their role. They wont always necessarily be happy, but you have also now got to*

	demonstrate the value of the partnership" (Strategic Lead, GMCA). *"And you do spend quite a lot of systems time I think completing forms and doing evaluations to which it is then, it is not credible in the eyes of others. So, my frustration with evidence-based practice is that people only value the evidence that they gather, or it is gathered in a way that they recognise. So if you do something particularly in the voluntary community based sector, if what they value and what they think makes a difference is the strength of a relationship to say, you came through the door and I really care about you and that your life is going to be better and the fact that you haven't got food on your table or you haven't got a bed to sleep in that is what I am going to sort out. I am not going to make you fill out this form because that does not matter to you at the moment. In a year maybe, I will ask you to fill out this form and you can tell me how great it was that you got some help but actually that is not what is important. So how does a system measure everything that is important? And that is where I think social accounting is an interesting area, social value and frameworks around social value should always be kind of hand in hand in terms of that economic insight and evidence based"* (Chief Exec Action Together, Voluntary Sector Representative on the Board).
Organisational Learning (23/288)	
Bottom up learning from Insight and Evidence (23/208)	*"What we always say is you start with an evidence base. If you have got an evidence base to support what you are suggesting, you are in a much stronger position. Now this can always be disputed and there might be contrary evidence and that is where it becomes interesting, but if you are certain that this is the right direction and this is the right way. Then you need to be prepared to evidence that and that has been critical to a lot of the devolution stuff"* (Deputy Chief Exec, GMCA). *"We have recently had the data and insight session, so this was through Press Red, who are a consultancy firm, who have been commissioned to gain insight and explore - this is like secondary research to find out the levels of physical activity across GM and the key trends based on existing data sets. I think the next step then is to commission some primary research, to speak to the people on the ground to get a more in-depth insight"* (Project Manager, Health and Social Care partnership). *"I think we all learn from working together. And I think we have to listen to each other. You have to be openminded. I think you do have to, I think the people who are most*

	important to learn from is the people working in communities and neighbourhoods. Unless you get tour hands a bit dirty, spend a bit of time wherever it is, and you see, and you understand the lives (Strategic Lead, GMCA).
Knowledge sharing (14/28)	*"So one of the key things that came out of it was establishing an insight group, basically you have got the health and social care partnership with a huge amount of insight and they have just done all the crowd sourcing of information to look at the six typologies, of Greater Manchester residents, you know, greater sport have got a whole range of insight, sport England have, new economy have, public health England, you have got all of these organisations, but we are not bringing it together, therefore we don't know what we do know and we don't know" (Chief Exec, Greater Sport).* *"To I guess eventually hold in a data bank..... All that insight and where is the commonality? ....And ultimately from a Greater Manchester Health and Social Care, the conversation we have not had yet...., but we will have...., is about actually, where is the gap in the insight?"* (Health Commissioner and Locality Representative on the Board). *"I think that the work that we did in Salford and colleagues did in Oldman replicates that there are things that are happening and can be shared in approaches. So, I think there are. And through the work of the collection of all the Leisure Trusts through GM Active, there is a lot of sharing there, there is a lot of pooling amongst the providers about how we do things" (Leisure Trust, Chief Exec)*
Learning about integrated working (14/27)	*"The other thing is things will go wrong, or people will get things wrong, but you need to be able to kind of move on from it don't you and learn from it. You know if we are going on this learning journey together, people have genuinely got to be prepared for things to go wrong and not work, as much as we are looking to find things that do work" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).* *"That obviously led to the MOU so I think one of the challenges for sport England will be, being close enough to it, without trying to dictate what it is, because I think there is a lot of learning to do and no one has done this before, so we don't know we are moving as we go along" (Chief Exec, Greater Sport).* *"I would say is that in the last month there has been that sort of tension because – but it is it's strength and its weakness because if GM Moving, because I may have to write eight or ten different reports about GM Moving, the plan, so that it can go through the system in all of those places. And that is time consuming and for me to do that for the first time has been learning how they all operate. Down*

	to who gets the papers out and what the timescale is and when the meetings happen and how you navigate yourself through the system. Which you know has been a bit of a headache but it's also its greatest strength because now that plan has been through the leadership team, GMCA, it's been through the Health and Social Care partnership board, executive and the board, the Population Health Plan, it's gone through Sport England, you know its gone to the Greater Sports Board. So I've been grappling with my frustration to have to write all these papers but recognising this is exactly how it should be. So, I guess the challenge is making it as efficient as it can be. And in doing it again, and I am sure I will have to do it again at some point, I know now who writes the papers and their timescales and deadlines and how you get it through the system, so it would be easier" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Learning to action (11/13)	"*We need to use the data to direct us into where we should be working and which priority groups we should be engaging with locally and all of that.... And then we need to be in those places and listen to what people are saying. …..but there has to be a point at which you do something…… It is always this balance of using all that stuff to inform your approach. Not analysing stuff to the nth degree and paralysing yourself with data*" (Strategic manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
	"The way things like strategic focus and commissioning how that is translated to the different area of work, how that is translated to policy how that is translated to a strategy for the next 5 years, how that is translated to an operational delivery. And an awareness I think as well that you have to constantly adapt, we are not in a position where, nothing is static, you know it changes all the time, the other thing that is really important is and it is something that is really important and it is something we are trying to build into our ageing work, is some kind of review evaluation mechanism, which I think is really important" (Policy Officer, GMCA).
	"Also no one is wedded to - one of the refreshing things here is no one is trying to hold on to a system or a structure because it's always been that way. People are very open to a conversation about how can we make this happen in the best way possible. And if that means a group needs to evolve or change then that is absolutely fine. It doesn't feel like any one is grasping on to 'well we set it up this way so that is how it has to stay'. And that is the same throughout the system because you've got various other groups that exist in Greater Manchester, for example the Commissioner Group and you know all these different groups and they are open to change, if change makes sense" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).

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Scaling Up (8/12)	*I think it is there if they want to listen. Sarah has said what we can do and there is evidence out there. No one has actually come to us and said, give us examples of what has worked before that we can replicate. All the noise throughout all this is about doing things differently. It is all about doing things differently. And whilst I don't want to sound like I am set in my ways and there is nothing new out there. Actually, trying to genuinely do something just because it is different to what has been done is not necessarily the best way to get the outcome that you want to do* (Chief Exec, Leisure trust).
	"....And that will be an example of we tried something, we have refined it, and then that is big time scaled up..., And the whole, 'This Girl Can', you know we did the insight, we have got the staff behind that campaign, we know the effect on the audience, we are getting our messages, we have developed some products and programmes behind it. We launch it. Sport England can do it. Public Health England can do it. Greater Sport have never done it. Maybe other parts of Greater Manchester have, but we need to. And the test and learn approach is embedded in Greater Manchester principles" (Place Development Manager, Greater Sport).
	I guess for sport England as well, in terms of delivering outcomes we are talking about a two point eight million conurbation and a six billion Health and Social Care spend and a twenty-two billion public service spend, I don't think anywhere else is operating at that scale. So, if you are looking for those real scalable long-term outcomes at a population level, I would probably argue that some of the other areas in the country wouldn't get the chance to engage at that scale before" (Deputy Director for Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership).
	Now having said all that the advantage of city region is scale, scope, currently the democratic mandate the Mayor has to make change, high profile, the ability to share best practice across local areas, the ability to do things at scale. I think all of that is positive (Strategic Lead GMCA).
Shared Leadership (18/79)	
Individual leadership (10/19)	*"Sport England are driving the MOU, in lots of ways, with both the Health and Social Care Partnership and the GMCA being ready willing and able, so whilst we are driving it there is always that check and challenge all the time, and I guess that's fair, because sport and physical activity is our*

	business on a day to day basis" (Local Relationship Manager, Sport England).
	"It feels to me like Sport England have been prime. I think there is a recognition by the Health and Social Care Partnership that although they have an influence they feel comfortable dissolving that leadership because Sport England are the experts and they have a level of investment. They are dangling that carrot of investment, so my feeling is that has brought with it an amount of compliance by other leaders in the GM system. To say, 'That is fine. We will allow you to come in and execute your prime authority on this because A, we know you are experts and B, you are bringing some investment to the table. And we feel secure because you have this national strategy that is saying the right things" (Leisure Trust, Chief Executive).
Shared decision making between board and strategic manager (3/8)	*"What is really important, and I think we are seeing this now, is that the Board really does give power to the Strategic Manager"* (Exec Director Community Sport, Sport England).
	"Hayley (Strategic Manager) is based here in this building, she is also at PP3, Piccadilly Place, which are both my offices. I do see her as a member of the Population Health Team, so my team" (Project Manager, Health and Social care partnership).
	"One example is me…. floating between the system if you like in this role.... because the Combined Authority, the Health and Social Care Partnership, Sport England and Greater Sport all seem to see me as belonging to them. So, they ask of me and want me to come to their strategies and their plans. Whereas elsewhere and in the past, you might be sitting outside the system trying to get in the door. Whereas this feels more like you are in the system" Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
	"It is its strength and its weakness for GM Moving, because I may have to write eight or ten different reports about the GM Moving plan, so that it can go through the system in all of those places" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Shared decision making between the board (14/48)	*"I would like to think through a consensus….. We have had some humdingers of rows over things, and that has been really helpful…, When you have a policy debate, and it is about putting citizens first and doing something for them..., You get really passionate about it, …, We often get everything really sugar-coated, people telling us the things they want to tell you, and actually the things they want. Where again the judgement with this will be people being*

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	really honest with each other" (Executive Director Community Sport, Sport England). *"I mean the key to this is effective governance, we have got a good track record, of working in partnership and understand the, challenges the limitations the frustrations the challenges, there is no point Steve and I turning up to that and banging the table, and saying you know this is what we want and if you don't like it you can F Off, because they can. Where as in other areas it is kind of naïve that we are the CA we have got a mayor and you do what we tell you, well actually that's not the way it works its collaborative… and that doesn't mean that we don't have robust exchanges, but it should never get personal and out of that sort of constructive tension you get really good outcomes, a mutual respect is at the heart of it"* (Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA).
Systems Leadership (19/133)	
Making decisions as a system (16/75)	*"Yeah, so the system leadership is, our initiatives is about bringing together a number of partners who work around Ageing, so elements of local government, elements of the universities, elements of the NHS, voluntary sector organisations…… So, economy and work, research, advice, housing, transports. And then on the level of districts. So, we work with the ten district authorities to work on their initiatives as well. We try and bring that whole system together in a way that is able, you know - a simple example is, we work with the ten local authorities and I know this from my own experience, if you have been charged with being a leader in your own council on a certain issue, you know and you are thinking' what do I do here? Where do I go to find out?' and if you can bring together those with the nine other authorities you have got a better chance than if you stick it out on your own"* (Strategic Lead, GMCA).. *"So you think of the kind of the bigger picture and then you kind of work it out to, upto policy and actually some of this isn't about sport or leisure, its actually changing the transport system, maybe repairing some of the paths, putting in some safe routes for cycling it might be not putting all of the sport on in a traditional leisure centre, taking it to a faith centre, or a church a mosque or a community centre. So you take a kind of whole approach and that means that you have around the table"* (Exec Director Community Sport). *"when people talk about systems leadership and how you engage the whole system in making things happen and addressing physical activity. You hear people talk about,*

	feeding the beast, how much time do you spend feeding the beast and going through structures and hierarchy's and all of that when actually what you want is to be creative and to give people the scope to innovate and come up with creative solutions those two things are sometimes in conflict with each other, I think there is a huge systems leadership challenge to the sector, never mind the wider sector" (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
Systems leadership on the board (8/34)	*"The notion of systems leadership, because that is the language that they use, and the NHS has done a number of things, and it seems to have emerged out of NHS transformation. About actually the kind of leaders that are needed for systems leadership are very different from your traditional leaders"* (Chief Executive Greater Sport). *"Probably a good example is someone like, to use an example of an individual, is the lead Chief Exec for Health and Wellbeing GM. Where there is a recognition that I lead my own organisations and I lead my own local authority but actually I am not going to get the most benefit for my residents by working only within the confinements of Tameside Council. So, I need to work with wider partners in Tameside, so the health service in Tameside, business community in Tameside, voluntary sector in Tameside, to get the benefits to my residents. Equally I need to be able to work at a GM level as well to make sure Tameside is contributing to and getting the benefits of Devolution as a whole. So, I think it is that kind of approach"* (Deputy Director of Strategy and System Development, Health and Social Care Partnership). *"I guess it is probably about that co-production. It is about you know, over the years we have tried, some things have worked, some things have not, but they have never had a consistent approach. So, in this way of working, we are working together to find that solution"* (Health Commissioner and Locality representative on the Board).
Systems leadership wider than the board (10/18)	*"So, when I say systems leadership, I think historically we have always looked at leaders from organisations, but when I describe system leadership, I describe that as a leader for Greater Manchester, operating across organisations with the gravitas and the authority to be able to do that. So, you know, they are in a position, in that role to really influence across the different organisations that create that system"* (Director of Public Health). *"The system leadership is about having a vision and a map about how you can improve, that is my understanding of what it is! People that can get things done, so you do not have to go to five different people or ten different people"* (Strategic Lead, GMCA).

	So, the idea is, and it is described within the plan. So, the approach to transformational change, which is in here, is the way we want to make decisions. So, you would follow that, whether it is on a specific thing like Act of Aging or whatever. So, if you go on this journey when it comes to co-design, implementation, decision making, that is what we are committed to, as a way of making decisions. And then people should be making decisions on specifics around within the experts of that thing whatever that thing is. There is a group at the moment working around Act of Aging - we need to make sure we've got the right people on those groups but they should be making decisions and then taking that back to the steering group to inform, 'This is what we've decided. This is how it is going to work.' Making the connections across. And then the higher level, executive group don't need, they shouldn't be making decisions about specifics like that because they can trust that the right people have been involved in the right conversations. But you know the programme board or what becomes the executive should be making decisions about the higher-level stuff that they are well placed to do (Strategic Manager, GM Moving Executive Group).
	"I think it is because ultimately, the Programme Management Board are so far removed, aren't they? From what is actually going on because the very nature of the board they are strategic thinkers aren't they? I think it is something along the lines of the using something like, the deal is a great example of how something strategic transcends in to something really operational. We recently had an example of that potentially, we have been talking about the deal and what it means to us locally around service delivery. Making sure how we deliver our front-line services are meaningful. That they are done in a co-produced way"….. You know and ultimately what it is, it is about making sure that it is not, for the people who are on these boards for the people who are strategic thinkers that there are the mechanisms for communication for that vision, for that work delivered in a meaningful way. Others wise it just gets lost. You get people saying just, 'Oh yeah that was the MOU or whatever at it is at the time to get in to the hearts and minds of the people who are operational. If you do not get that right, then nothing changes (Health Commissioner).

Appendix 10: Revaluation Table (Darnton and Harrison, 2015)

	Visible	Invisible
Calculate		
Calibrate		
Capacitate		