Sport Northern Ireland
Annual Review 2007/2008
If you wish to receive the Annual Accounts of Sport Northern Ireland, please contact the Director of Corporate Services:

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# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation and Facilities</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Sport</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disability Sport</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Countryside Recreation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tollymore Mountain Centre</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building Sport</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stadia Safety</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elite Facilities Programme</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Sport</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Institute Northern Ireland</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governing Body Investment</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent Identification and Development</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer Development Centres</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Games</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK School Games</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner Development Programme</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete Support Programme</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events Programme</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Island High Performance Conference 2007</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocates of Sport in Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB U19 Rugby World Championship</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast City Marathon</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk Cup</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally Ireland</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Services</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy, Planning and Research</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facts and Figures</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who’s who in Sport Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Members</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Staff</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sport is instrumental in contributing to other government agendas; education and skills, community cohesion, social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal, Northern Ireland’s image at home and abroad, and the economy. One of sport’s greatest contributions is its positive impact on public health. This has been very well documented, and we know from research that children who take part in sport at a young age are more likely to continue being active throughout their lives. It is essential that Sport Northern Ireland continues to promote sport and physical activity to children in the primary school sector and they are introduced to as wide a range of movement skills as possible, to ensure enjoyment and physical development at an appropriate level for each child, leaving a legacy of lifelong involvement in sport.

Obesity is a huge and increasing problem for all age groups. Unfortunately, with current lifestyle choices we are a lot less active and this is partly responsible for the rise in obesity. It is imperative that all of us who have influence to increase levels of participation should use evidence based practice from around the world to address this problem.

Sport offers direct economic benefits. It contributes to the regeneration of towns and cities, improving health, productivity and quality of life; giving a sense of civic pride. It also contributes to savings in the cost of health care and leads to a reduction in crime and vandalism which in turn offers local environmental benefits that can change the image of a city or a community and lead to increased inward investment.

Image is essential and hosting major events is an opportune way to showcase what we have to offer and enhances Northern Ireland’s image on the world stage. 2007/08 has provided some tremendous sporting occasions such as the IRB U19 Rugby World Championship and Rally Ireland which will stand Northern Ireland in good stead for future events. Sporting events provide an excellent platform to inspire young people to participate in sport, for talented athletes to raise their game, and instil a feeling of possibility among individuals, teams and society. Even community events can excite and encourage people and engender community spirit, giving people a focus.

Sport Northern Ireland is keen to promote the message that sport and physical recreation is for everyone – no matter what age, gender or ability; the benefits of an active lifestyle should be fully embraced and enjoyed by all. Along with our partner organisations - the governing bodies of sport, district councils, the health sector, education and library boards, and local communities, we are moving forward and creating a shared future for everyone in Northern Ireland. I hope that together we can build a healthier, more active and successful sporting society.

I am delighted to introduce Sport Northern Ireland’s Annual Review 2007/08. Sport Northern Ireland has had a thoroughly successful year and has continued its role in the development of sport in Northern Ireland.
Sport Northern Ireland has been working in partnership with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to develop a new ten year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland. It is an ambitious document which sets out the case for ongoing and increased investment in sport and physical recreation to deliver a range of sporting, education and health outcomes over the period 2008-2018. The vision, “a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport” itself suggests what we are aiming to achieve; ensuring people have access to locally available sporting facilities, encouraging high quality participation in sport from childhood right through to adulthood, and enabling talented athletes to compete and win at the highest levels in their sports. I look forward to the Strategy being considered and approved by the Executive.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games also offer considerable sporting opportunities for the people of Northern Ireland; opportunities for our athletes, our officials and our volunteers to be part of the Games.

The Games will provide a positive benefit in terms of encouraging sport and physical activity, performance sport, boosting the active contribution of volunteers, generating business, showcasing Northern Ireland, and leaving a lasting legacy that will benefit society long after the Olympic flame in London has been extinguished.

One of the fundamental principles of Sport Northern Ireland is to increase participation in sport. Therefore the ‘participation legacy’ from the Games is of crucial importance. We must utilise the enthusiasm for sport that will grow in the build up to the Games, and convert it into long-term participation by both young people and adults beyond 2012.

Success at international level is valued by us all and Northern Ireland has talent that is equal to anywhere else in the world. However we are working to put in place the right systems to identify our talented young people, provide them with high quality coaching, training facilities, sports science support and appropriate competition, so that they can realise their full potential and bring sporting success to Northern Ireland. Without proper investment this won’t be possible and the bottom line is funding athletes and sporting excellence costs money. We know what we need to do to create a world-class performance system but we need adequate resources to act now and capitalise on the once in a lifetime opportunity the Games provide to make sport a priority for us all. With additional resources I am confident sport in Northern Ireland will prosper in many ways.

So many people work hard to make things happen in sport – coaches, volunteers, officials, teachers, athletes, and participants – and I would like to thank them all for their continued enthusiasm and dedication. Recognition must also go to the previous Board Members and Chair, Eric Saunders, for their commitment and unstinting contribution to developing sport in Northern Ireland.

Increasing participation and improving performance is always going to be a team effort, and Sport Northern Ireland plays a critical part. I, along with our fellow Board Members, look forward to an exciting and challenging year in sport.

Sport can have a profound effect on peoples’ lives. Whether it’s our future athletes being inspired by world-class performances or school children becoming more active, sport and physical recreation has a massive impact and plays a crucial role in improving the nation’s health, education and confidence.
There are many benefits to be accrued from participating in sport and physical recreation, not least enabling both physical and psychological development while providing a vehicle for enjoyment and fun, but also ensuring people have access to locally available sporting facilities.

During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland’s Participation and Facilities Team has continued their efforts to support sporting opportunities to increase participation levels in sport and physical recreation among people – of all ages and abilities, and to promote lifelong physical activity. This relies on a range of developments and interventions; places for sport, coaches, governing bodies, volunteers, events, quality programmes based on best practice, and marketing and promotion. Sport Northern Ireland is working on many fronts to deliver improvements across all these areas in Northern Ireland.
Health

2007/08 marked a year of renewal, revitalisation and progress in terms of Sport Northern Ireland’s engagement with the health sector and the contribution that sports projects make to improved public health in terms of promotion, awareness and delivery.

At a strategic level, Sport Northern Ireland and the Health Promotion Agency further strengthened their commitment to joint planning, working and implementation. At the ‘Active for Health’ Seminar, held on 4 March 2007, an agreement was signed, ‘The Northern Ireland charter for enhancing health through sport and physical activity’, which tasks both bodies with the aim of promoting the significance of physical activity and sport at all levels for the good health and well-being of the population.

At an operational level, at the end of Year 2 of the ‘Sport in our Community’ Programme, a number of projects have reported a significant increase in Health Referral Programmes using sport and physical recreation as a primary health tool. A total of 258 participants were reported as being referred to projects by a health professional as part of a treatment programme. This represents an increase of over 200 participants from Year 1 of the programme when 54 participants were recorded.

The Old Library Trust provides a relevant example; it delivered a ‘Step Up GP Referral Programme’ in the TRIAX area in Derry which experiences many of the problems associated with an area of high social need including low levels of participation in sport and physical activity and poor public health. This programme is a targeted health intervention programme aimed at people with life limiting conditions who are referred by a qualified medical practitioner to take part in this health support programme with qualified instructors. Clients undertake a twelve week one-to-one personal training and lifestyle improvement programme with a trained fitness instructor and a Wright Foundation GP Referral Instructor. Clients are supervised on cardiovascular and muscle strength endurance programmes, as well as attending weight management support programmes each tailored to suit the needs of the client. To date this programme has been extremely successful with 100 participants in Year 2.

Women in Sport

Larne Borough Council piloted a ‘Ladies Morning’ scheme in Larne Leisure Centre where the need and desire for a regular physical activity programme for women was identified. The programme has grown from a six week programme to a permanent fixture and a showcase for activity groups becoming sustainable.

The programme aims to offer group members the opportunity of high quality, guided and affordable physical activity in an environment that is welcoming to all - regardless of age, fitness and ability. The programme now has 40 female members from young mothers to the 50+ age group. Activities on offer include aerobics, badminton, swimming, and weights, as well as use of the gym and the health suite.
Coach Education

Sport Northern Ireland is responsible for the management and delivery of a range of generic coach education and training courses to support the development of sports coaches and volunteers. Current courses managed and delivered by Sport Northern Ireland include the following:

- Active Leadership
- Child Protection Awareness
- Child Protection Designated Officer
- Equality in Sport
- Junior Club Development
- Junior Leadership
- Skills 4 Sport
- Sports Coach UK Workshops

During 2007/08, Sport Northern Ireland delivered 214 courses in communities throughout Northern Ireland, supporting the development of 2942 coaches and volunteers in an eclectic range of sports.

Awards for All

Awards for All is a joint Lottery awards programme set up to help small organisations in Northern Ireland. Administered by Big Lottery Fund, funding for sports projects is provided by Sport Northern Ireland.

The main aim of this investment programme is to develop projects which:

- Bring people together and increase community activity;
- Involve more people in a wide range of community activities;
- Increase skill and activity;
- Improve quality of life; and
- Are well organised and planned.

Through Awards for All Sport Northern Ireland seeks to support projects that aim to increase participation, or improve standards of performance in sport. During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland invested a total of £394,500 in 69 projects.

In March 2008 the Belfast Community Sports Development Network was awarded £9,770. A partnership between Sport Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, Ulster Branch Tennis Ireland and Disability Sports NI (DSNI), the project will enable 12 people to undertake a coaching qualification that will create the potential for the newly trained coaches to deliver a ‘Park Tennis’ Programme.

Young People

The Fit Futures Yoga Schools Programme started in November 2006 as a pilot programme in two schools focusing on primary seven children who were doing transfer tests. From the success of the initial pilot programme it is now currently being delivered in all seven primary schools in the Outer North Area; on average 300 children participate in yoga each week.

Yoga Delivers:

- Improved physical literacy and fitness including agility, strength, stamina and balance
- Emotional balance including relaxation and a general sense of well-being
- Enhanced concentration, awareness and self-understanding

When the programme was initiated the aim was to find an accessible physical activity that would address issues of obesity and improve the well-being of all children. The programme was not initially designed to impact on the psychological well-being but evidence now suggests that yoga brings many added benefits.
At a Community Level

Sport Northern Ireland through its ongoing partnership with Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI) continued to improve and extend the sports opportunities available to people with disabilities at all levels of sport.

Almost 2000 adults and children with disabilities participated in community events and initiatives in 12 different sports, organised in a range of locations throughout Northern Ireland. Among the many activities organised were archery, athletics, boccia, new age kurling, tennis, and wheelchair basketball.

The Lakeland Forum Leisure Centre, in Enniskillen became the first leisure centre in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales to achieve the prestigious ‘Inclusive Fitness Initiative’ accreditation Mark (‘IFI’), which recognises excellence in the provision of fitness facilities which are fully inclusive of people with disabilities. The accolade marks the completion of a major series of work, largely funded by Sport Northern Ireland’s Lottery Fund, which has included the complete refurbishment of the fitness suite, the purchase of new accessible fitness equipment and the training of leisure centre staff.
At a Performance Level

DSNI continued to work with Sport Northern Ireland and mainstream governing bodies on the development of improved performance pathways in the six ‘focus’ sports of athletics, boccia, swimming, football, sailing, and wheelchair basketball. This included the organisation of annual competitions and trials involving over 250 participants with disabilities, and the organisation and support of development squads involving 60 young talented disabled athletes.

In addition, Sport Northern Ireland funded five individual elite athletes with a disability during the year:

- Matthew Bell (S14 Swimmer)
- Karen Cromie (Adapted Rower)
- Jan Dinsdale (B2 Golfer)
- Janet Gray (B1 Water Skier)
- Philip Jeffers (S10 Swimmer)

At a Coaching Level

Sport Northern Ireland continued to support DSNI’s long-term work in the area of coach education and training, which is key to ensuring that volunteers, coaches and staff have the knowledge and skills required to fully include people with disabilities in sport. During the year DSNI delivered a total of 25 courses involving 373 participants:

- Games for All Sports Leadership Course – 172 participants
- Inclusive Games Training Course – 96 participants
- Disability Awareness Training Courses – 59 participants
- Including People with Disabilities in Your Club/Sport – 46 participants
Countryside Recreation

Canoe Trails

Countryside recreation is a growing leisure activity – providing a positive opportunity for people to escape their usual daily routines, experience the outdoors and get fit.

Following the successful launch of the Lough Erne Canoe trail in 2005 which was the first such trail in the British Isles, Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) launched the Blackwater canoe trail in November 2007 and the Lower Bann trail in February 2008. With two further trails being developed on Lough Neagh and Strangford Lough in 2008 this will complete phase 1 of the canoe trails development.

In March the Lough Erne Canoe Trail won the ‘Innovation’ category at the Waterways Renaissance awards run by The Waterways Trust and the British Urban Regeneration Association. This was the first time a project from Northern Ireland has won an accolade in the Waterways Renaissance Awards.

Surf Kayaking

One of the most adrenalin pumping, exhilarating extreme sports… the World Surf Kayaking Championships which took place in Mundaka in the North of Spain in October 2007, brought home two world champions - Kevin Quinn took the Grand Masters HP World Champion title, and Chris Hobson the Junior HP World Champion title. In the junior team event, the Juniors Long Final, Chris Hobson took the gold medal, Corin King the silver, and Alan Knox the bronze. The Northern Ireland squad finished an incredible second overall.

Slalom Kayaking

Hannah Craig, Northern Ireland’s top slalom kayaker, achieved a tremendous result at the first competition of the World Series at the Australian Open in February 2007 placing an incredible fourth overall.

Mountaineering

The Mountaineering Council of Ireland has been instrumental in developing a new rock climbing club based in Fermanagh called the ‘Hanging Rockers’ club; the club is growing from strength to strength with now over 100 members in just over a year.
Tollymore Mountain Centre

Living the Adventure

Tollymore Mountain Centre (TMC), Sport Northern Ireland’s National Outdoor Training Centre, has continued to provide a wide range of introductory, skills and leadership training and assessment courses in mountaineering and canoe sport, as well as a wide range of multi-activity and team development programmes for organisations.

In 2007/08, TMC provided over 5000 student days on a range of courses, including 1015 on leadership courses and 1252 on skills courses. TMC continues to influence and be involved in the development of a range of governing body qualifications in mountaineering and canoe sport, and plays a key role in the development and introduction of UK Coaching Certificate canoe sport qualifications and a Climbing Wall Award scheme.

With a significant budget of £4 million TMC’s exciting redevelopment of the centre is progressing; in 2007 the design team led by WHS Project Management developed the initial design proposals and it is envisaged that a construction team will be appointed later in 2008, with work due to commence in early 2009.

The anticipated new centre will be a state of the art outdoor training centre with the ability to provide an extensive range of courses to a wider range of groups and individuals from throughout Northern Ireland.
Building Sport

‘Building Sport’, a capital programme from Sport Northern Ireland’s Lottery Fund, aims to provide partnership funding for major capital projects that will increase access to opportunities for sporting development and participation for as many people as possible; particularly in disadvantaged communities to enable older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other underrepresented groups to participate in sporting activities.

Each unique project addresses essential sporting criteria:

- Increasing participation in sport;
- Being sustainable;
- Addressing the factors of social need;
- Tackling social exclusion;
- Promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations;
- Promoting sporting excellence;
- Addressing health inequalities; and
- Providing the structures for long-term athlete development.

This investment by Sport Northern Ireland’s Lottery Fund is a major contribution in tackling social injustice and inequalities. The programme demonstrates the ability of sport to heal divided communities, improve health and well-being, and lift those most disadvantaged out of the poverty of aspiration. The following case studies illustrate the benefits resulting from this type of Sport Northern Ireland investment…

New Facilities a Knock Out

Boxing is perhaps the most challenging sport of all. A boxer requires a unique blend of speed, strength, and endurance; but to help develop the talent of young emerging boxers the proper facilities are necessary.

Boxing also received a major boost with the completion of refurbished facilities at one of the longest serving clubs within County Antrim, Ligoniel Amateur Boxing Club. The scheme saw the renovation of the ground floor of the boxing gymnasium. The completion of this work now means that Ligoniel Boxing Club can provide members with a state of the art, modern and safe environment to compete and train in. The club can now continue with their comprehensive coaching structure and, in turn, increase standards of performance.
A Unique Gliding Experience

Sport is an excellent vehicle for the social development of people with disabilities; providing opportunities to be active, to interact with others, and boost self-esteem.

In June 2007, the Ulster Gliding Club, the only gliding facility in Northern Ireland, introduced a new two-seat training glider fitted with special hand controls making it suitable for flying by the able-bodied and by those with disabilities of the lower limbs.

The inclusion of hand controls and support equipment will provide full equality of access to flying training for wheelchair users for the first time in Northern Ireland.

Funding for the new glider was provided by Sport Northern Ireland’s Lottery Fund and the Enkalon Foundation.
The Stadia Safety Programme aims to assist the owners of major soccer, rugby and GAA grounds, on a strategic basis, to ensure the safety and comfort of spectators attending fixtures played at their venues.

The strategic objectives of the programme are to:

1. Improve health and safety compliance with existing and proposed legislation;
2. Increase spectator numbers and to increase the number of under-represented groups attending matches;
3. Improve the comfort of spectator accommodation within venues;
4. Improve co-operation between owners of venues and both the Police Service Northern Ireland and Statutory agencies.

During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland worked with a number of applicants at various stages in the programme (see Table 1).

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Body</th>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Stadia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)</td>
<td>Antrim County Board</td>
<td>Casement Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Armagh County Board</td>
<td>Athletic Grounds</td>
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<td>Derry County Board</td>
<td>Celtic Park</td>
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<td>Down County Board</td>
<td>Pairc Esler</td>
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<td>Fermanagh County Board</td>
<td>Brewster Park</td>
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<td>Tyrone County Board</td>
<td>Healy Park</td>
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<td>Irish Football Association (IFA)</td>
<td>Ballymena United</td>
<td>The Showgrounds</td>
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<td>Cliftonville Football (Club)</td>
<td>Solitude</td>
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<td>Crusaders FC</td>
<td>Seaview</td>
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<td>Donegal Celtic FC</td>
<td>Suffolk Road</td>
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<td>Glenavon FC</td>
<td>Mourneview Park</td>
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<td>Institute FC</td>
<td>Drumahoe</td>
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<td>Newry City FC</td>
<td>The Showgrounds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Portadown FC</td>
<td>Shamrock Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU)</td>
<td>Ulster Branch</td>
<td>Ravenhill Rugby Ground</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ballymena United Football Club
(The Showgrounds, Ballymena)

Sport Northern Ireland awarded Ballymena United Football Club £161,636 (65%) of a total project cost of £248,100 at The Showgrounds, Ballymena.

This project included the provision of:
- A new crowd control point with the provision of two floodlights to the Slemish Drive car park;
- Automated doors for the new stand and fencing to provide aid to spectator segregation and safety; and
- Toilet facilities and a television broadcast facility at the Warden Street stand.

Down County Board
(Pairc Esler, Newry)

Sport Northern Ireland awarded Down County Board £800,000 (67%) of a total project cost of £1,140,000 at Pairc Esler, Newry.

This project included the provision of:
- An additional 2700 seats on the south stand with a cantilevered roof along with male, female and disabled toilets in the undercroft;
- A new crowd control point was erected in a new building at the back of the east terrace, with CCTV provision and radio links to stewards plus a PA system for communicating with the spectators;
- Fourteen new computerised turnstiles have been installed at the entrance to the south stand and at the entrance to the west stand;
- New safety and information signage at all exit routes and toilet facilities within the ground and the broken fencing on the south boundary was replaced; and
- The south stand received an access lift for disabled people and a viewing platform for seven disabled people and their carers as part of the project. Along with this, two bays of seating in the south stand have been designated as a family area for women and young children.
Elite Facilities Programme

The London 2012 Games offer considerable sporting opportunities for Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to ensuring a legacy that will benefit the public of Northern Ireland beyond 2012.

Specifically, through the Games, there is an opportunity to develop Northern Ireland’s sporting infrastructure, achieve parallel development and address a lack of investment which has restricted the progress of sport in the region. The Sport Northern Ireland Elite Facilities Programme was launched to create an opportunity to address some of the infrastructure deficit which has contributed to the underdevelopment of sports in Northern Ireland, regenerate urban and rural areas, and improve the image of Northern Ireland.

The first project in the Elite Facilities Programme, Northern Ireland’s first Olympic sized swimming pool, was approved to the preferred bidder status; North Down Borough Council won the status after rigorous examination in an open competition. Subject to business case approvals the bid will see the pool built as part of a new £40 million leisure and aquatics centre at Valentine’s Playing Fields in Bangor. The facilities to be developed will include a 10 lane 50m pool, a 5m diving pool, strength and conditioning suites for swimmers, and headquarter facilities for Swim Ulster.

As well as meeting the needs of elite swimmers the new centre will provide a range of leisure opportunities for the wider local community with the facilities planning to include leisure water, a health and fitness suite, sports halls, climbing wall and floodlit synthetic grass courts.

The project will go a long way towards addressing Northern Ireland’s need for world-class sporting facilities and will deliver a sporting infrastructure previously unavailable in Northern Ireland. As a regional centre of excellence, it will be a state of the art facility to be enjoyed by all the people of Northern Ireland.
Pre-Games Training Venues Announced in Northern Ireland

Sport Northern Ireland assisted the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games in assessing venues in Northern Ireland, and the rest of the UK, for use as Pre-Games Training Camps for the London 2012 Games. In early 2008 a massive 27 venues in Northern Ireland were chosen to be included in the Pre-Games Training Camp Guide. The Guide will list over 600 high-quality sports facilities across the UK, which are capable of hosting visiting teams or individual athletes wishing to take part in the 2012 Games.

The Guide will be circulated to all National Olympic Committees and National Paralympic Committees. These organisations will then decide where they base themselves or where to send individual athletes to prepare and acclimatise for London 2012.

Design Input into Healy Park

Sport Northern Ireland’s financial and technical support to Tyrone County Board and their consultants ensured that the Healy Park project achieved an appropriate level of design quality to provide a functional, durable and economically sustainable facility that meets best practice guidelines.

The control tower comprises a retail unit and associated facilities, modern media centre and control room. The control room is home to the event controller, safety officer and emergency services staff and provides a panoramic view of the entire playing area, terraces and stand. Safety is a major feature incorporated into the design by Teague and Sally - a bank of monitors linked to a newly installed CCTV system provides full coverage of all areas of the stadium, while an electronically-controlled linkage to turnstiles keeps up-to-date tabs on the size of the crowd. And for a real bird’s eye view of all the action, camera crews can take to the roof itself where specially designed locations have been included for close up filming. In addition to visual excellence, broadcasters in the media centre on level two can also control the level of external atmosphere in their reports by electronically piping the sounds from the fans directly into their transmissions.

The design team drew inspiration from a number of areas; the team travelled extensively to see some of the top sports’ stadia in the UK and Ireland, and were keen to take an imaginative and innovative approach. The finished product has been achieved through a combination of creative design and practical thinking; there is no doubt it has now become a blueprint for others to emulate throughout the UK and Ireland.

Capital Policy and Technical Best Practice Guidance

During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland worked with government departments and developed a number of documents to ensure capital policy and technical best practice in relation to the design and technical requirements of all sports facilities:

• Policy and capital procedures to ensure compliance with best practice in the areas of the Office of Government Commerce Gateway and Milestone Review, European Union Procurement and Achieving Excellence in Construction.

• Preparation of a disability design guide and statement for Sport Northern Ireland to harmonise with DSNI and Northern Ireland Access Committee Initiatives.

• Liaison and ongoing development of working relationship with the Department of Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland and the Central Procurement Directorate to ensure that all Sport Northern Ireland programmes are harmonised with central government construction best practice.
PERFORMANCE SPORT

Sport Northern Ireland is committed to developing a world-class sporting system in Northern Ireland, enabling athletes and teams to maximise their sporting potential and reach their optimum level of performance.

During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland’s Performance Sport Team has continued to work to bring about an environment that will enable athletes to improve athletic performance.
Providing Aspiring Athletes with a Springboard to Success

Based at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown Campus, SINI continues to prove itself to be a successful partnership between Sport Northern Ireland and the University.

The completion of the University of Ulster’s world-class sports facilities, home to SINI, ensures that institute athletes have access to top-class facilities and expert staff. Sports benefiting from SINI include: athletics, Gaelic football, hockey, rugby, and individual athletes from the sports of; bowls, cricket, cycling, judo, rowing, sailing, squash, swimming, triathlon, and water skiing.

In particular SINI worked with 2007/08 Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls including Richard Archibald, Karen Cromie, Michael McKillop and Jason Smyth.
And off the Olympic track...

Two SINI athletes were fast-tracked to full professional contracts with Ulster Rugby – Niall O’Connor and Mark McCrea. O’Connor was also called into the Irish Senior Training Panel ahead of the Six Nations match against Scotland.

During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland integrated the work of SINI within its Performance Sport Unit to develop a single Performance Team Northern Ireland. The vision being... “the best in the business in Northern Ireland at improving athletic performance resulting in consistent winning performances...”
Governing Body Investment

Striving Towards Improving Athletes’ Performance Levels

Sport Northern Ireland acknowledges that governing bodies play a major role in the development of athletes. Investment of over £1,500,000 from Sport Northern Ireland in 2007/08 enabled governing bodies to work towards putting the appropriate systems and structures in place to improve performance levels of the athletes.

Staffing

Investment was primarily focused on new postholders in the sports who will lead the development of new ways of working to drive up performance standards. These posts include: Business Development Managers, Performance Managers, Performance Coaches, Talent Identification Officers, Participation, Club and Coaching Development Officers and administrative staff.

One such post is that of former Irish International and Derbyshire County Cricketer Ryan Eagleson; he was appointed Cricket Development Officer for the Northern Ireland Cricket Association (NICA) in 2006. During the two years Ryan has been in post he has developed cricket at grass roots level through a multi-skills programme in primary schools and coached under age provincial teams, while also providing guidance on best practice. In addition to this he co-ordinates and manages the NICA cricket academy, ensuring that there is a steady stream of local talent representing Ireland.
Developing a Competent Sporting Workforce

Sport Northern Ireland focuses on the strategic development of coaching through governing bodies, assisting with developing mechanisms to support sports using the UK Coaching Certificate or National Coaching and Development Programme Coaching Framework.

Governing bodies have reported that during 2007/08, Sport Northern Ireland investment has enabled a total of 11,100 people to attend coach development and leadership courses at a range of levels.

Modern, Fit For Purpose Organisations

Modernisation of governing bodies continued in 2007/08. Advice and support was provided to governing bodies to improve their capacity in areas such as financial management, human resource management, board roles and responsibilities, and policy development.

In line with Sport Northern Ireland’s ‘Governing Body Investment Programme’ and its corporate objective of ensuring governing bodies are fit for purpose, Sport Northern Ireland continued to audit governing bodies to achieve this status. A further four governing bodies of sport achieved a reasonable level of assurance during 2007/08…

1. Athletics Northern Ireland
2. Taekwondo Association Northern Ireland
3. Ulster Branch IRFU
4. Ulster Council GAA

As of 31 March 2008 assurance levels were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assurance Level</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child Protection

Sport Northern Ireland continues to work with governing bodies to ensure they are providing a safe and secure sporting environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In 2007/08, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) audited Northern Ireland governing bodies in line with the new child protection audit process, “Getting It Right: Standards of Good Practice for Child Protection”, to assess how they are managing this vital area. Two governing bodies achieved a full level of child protection assurance, 10 reasonable, 19 limited and one nil.

Governing bodies will continue to work with the NSPCC to improve on their level of assurance.
Detecting the Best in Sport

Sport Northern Ireland’s talent identification and development work focuses on creating and developing partnerships in order to introduce and implement policies, programmes and practices that will improve the way in which young talented sports performers in Northern Ireland are identified, selected and developed.

The work involves liaison with governing bodies, SINI and other relevant organisations such as Area Partnerships and Local Authorities.

A Talent Identification and Development Health Check

The development of clear systems and structures within governing bodies for the identification, confirmation and development of talent is critical to the success of performance sport in Northern Ireland. The implementation of effective strategies to identify, confirm and develop talent is essential in the creation of a sustainable pathway which increases the quality and quantity of talent.

In order to develop and refine existing systems in Northern Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland conducted a detailed audit of 21 sports examining the talent identification systems and structures which currently exist within their respective sports.

In particular the audits focused on how talented performers are identified, current talent pools and talent development pathways, frequency of benchmark testing, attrition rates, competition structures/framework, sports science/medicine support, number of world class exposures, coach education structures, and talent transfer.
By completing the audits Sport Northern Ireland is attempting to raise awareness, challenge and encourage critical thinking and to assist governing bodies develop their understanding of the area of talent identification and development.

**Skills Festivals**

During the year Sport Northern Ireland piloted three projects with the North East, South East and Southern Area Development Partnerships focusing on swimming and racquet sports. Aimed at participants in the nine-14 age range who demonstrate talent in terms of multi-skills, the skills festivals provided a ‘sampling’ environment for participants before specialising in a specific sport.

**Talent Orientation Camp**

Sport Northern Ireland hosted its first ever Talent Orientation Camp at the University of Ulster in August 2006. Twenty of Northern Ireland’s most talented young athletes in six sports; badminton, boxing, cycling, judo, sailing, and squash, discovered the diverse elements needed to reach the top.

The Camp provided a unique opportunity for the athletes to receive an insight into the world of high performance sport, and to critically reflect upon their own talent, ability and potential to succeed at the very highest level. The athletes were challenged to think and behave like an elite performer throughout the Camp, and to then integrate this thinking into their future sporting career.

The programme was delivered by staff from Sport Northern Ireland, SINI, and the specific governing bodies involved. One of the highlights of the Camp was the elite athlete panel, Paddy Brown and Bridget McKeever (hockey), Neil Sinclair (boxing), and Tommy Evans and Heather Wilson (cycling), who were on hand to share their experiences of elite sport.
**Performer Development Centres**

**Nurturing Budding Young Talent**

During 2007/08, Sport Northern Ireland embarked upon the establishment of a network of Performer Development Centres across Northern Ireland. The aim of these centres is to refine and improve current talent development systems and structures by bridging the gap between governing body performance programmes and the work of SINI.

Performer Development Centres will afford Northern Ireland’s most talented young athletes with a support structure which nurtures and supports emerging talent. These centres will focus on training and delivering sports science and sport medicine services to athletes with the potential to compete successfully in international competition.

Sport Northern Ireland continues to fine-tune the detail of the Performer Development Centre concept with two pilot centres being developed initially, and further centres developing in association with the Elite Facilities Programme.

**Youth Games**

**Youth Games A Key Youth Sports Event on any Sporting Calendar**

This was the consensus from all who took part in the 2007 event. Albeit different to previous year’s – each sport organised their own event and activities - Sport Northern Ireland was delighted to sponsor a range of sporting events which provide an opportunity to further encourage the youth of Northern Ireland to take part in sport and inspire them to explore their sporting potential.

Over 800 young people aged between 12 and 16 competed in sports including badminton, netball, table tennis, cricket, hockey, volleyball, camogie, judo and basketball. Playing on behalf of the Education and Library Board, the Youth Games gives young people an opportunity to experience the adrenalin and expectation of taking part in a tournament of this size.

The Youth Games provide continued opportunities for talented young athletes not only to develop themselves and their sporting performances, but also to interact with children from other schools and communities and build new friendships.
Providing a Benchmark for Athletes

The second UK School Games which took place in Coventry in August 2006 were a huge success for competitors from Northern Ireland and Ireland as they picked up 32 medals.

This exciting initiative, designed to encourage more young people to take part in sport and provide them with the experience of being involved in a major multi-sport competitive event, saw 1300 competitors battling for honours at five venues across the West Midland’s city, over three days of competition.

Northern Ireland provided a mixed team of boys and girls to compete in eight sports; Northern Ireland athletes won medals in swimming (15), judo (6), athletics (5), gymnastics (2), badminton (2), and fencing (2).

“A Sport Northern Ireland programme to improve the environment for those working at a high performance level in sport.”

During 2007/08 Sport Northern Ireland, in conjunction with SINI, developed and launched its Practitioner Development Programme. The programme focuses on developing a workforce of high performance coaches, scientists and medical practitioners with the necessary experience, skills and knowledge to improve athlete performance.

A total of 13 awards were made. Funding from this programme provides practitioners with opportunities to attend major international competitions and/or conferences, enrol on a higher education course in a relevant subject area, observe athletes in a high performance environment, and/or undertake a research project relating to high performance sport.

Practitioners attended a series of workshops delivered by Sport Northern Ireland in partnership with SINI. The workshops, based on a successful UK Sport model, include the development of high performance competencies essential for those working in a high performance environment; subjects include Striving for Excellence, Teamwork and Collaboration, Influencing, Understanding Others, Communication and Creative Thinking, and Innovative Solutions.
Athlete Support Programme

“Assisting Northern Ireland’s talented able-bodied and disabled sportspeople to improve their performance standards and achieve international sporting success.”

A total of 40 awards totalling £279,478 to 22 governing bodies were made under the Athlete Support Programme in 2007/08 in support of 39 individual athletes and one squad training and competition programmes.

Details of awards are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Body</th>
<th>Individual/Squad</th>
<th>Targeted Competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAAN</td>
<td>NI Surf Kayak Squad</td>
<td>2009 World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling Ulster</td>
<td>Ben Reid</td>
<td>2008 World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling Ulster</td>
<td>Phillip Deignan</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling Ulster</td>
<td>Connor McConvey</td>
<td>2008 U23 Mountain Biking World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSNI</td>
<td>Philip Jeffers</td>
<td>2010 IPC World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSNI</td>
<td>Matthew Bell</td>
<td>2009 INAS - FID World Championships for PWLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSNI</td>
<td>Jan Dinsdale</td>
<td>2008 Canadian Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Luke Robert Carson</td>
<td>2008 European Senior Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Water Ski Federation NI Sub Committee</td>
<td>Ryan McDonald</td>
<td>2008 World Barefoot Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Cycle Union of Ireland Ulster Centre</td>
<td>Ian Lowry</td>
<td>British Supersport Championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Cycle Union of Ireland Ulster Centre</td>
<td>Sasha Turkington</td>
<td>Trials Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle Racing Association</td>
<td>Keith Farmer</td>
<td>2007 British Supermoto Championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Ice Skating Association</td>
<td>Karla Quinn</td>
<td>2009 British Senior Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Judo Federation</td>
<td>Lisa Kearney</td>
<td>2008 Junior World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Karate Board</td>
<td>James Brunton</td>
<td>2008 World Karate Federation Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Karting Association</td>
<td>William Herron</td>
<td>British Super 1 Junior Championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Smallbore Shooting Union</td>
<td>Louise Aiken</td>
<td>2010 Commonwealth Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Smallbore Shooting Union</td>
<td>Alan Lewis</td>
<td>2010 Commonwealth Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Surfing Association</td>
<td>Fergal Smith</td>
<td>2008 World Surfing Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Ten Pin Bowling Federation</td>
<td>Lynda Black-Watson</td>
<td>2008 Commonwealth Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governing Body</td>
<td>Individual/Squad</td>
<td>Targeted Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Ten Pin Bowling Federation</td>
<td>Ryan Press</td>
<td>2008 Commonwealth Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Ten Pin Bowling Federation</td>
<td>Karen Payne</td>
<td>2008 Commonwealth Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Tiffany Brien</td>
<td>2007 Radial Youth World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Russell McGovern</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Matthew McGovern</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>James Espey</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Debbie Hanna</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Chris Penney</td>
<td>Laser Radial Youth European Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Ryan Seaton</td>
<td>2008 European Laser Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Yachting Association (NIC)</td>
<td>Tiffany Brien</td>
<td>2008 Radial Youth European Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Jumping Association of Ireland (Northern Region)</td>
<td>Lucy Buchanan</td>
<td>2008 Senior Nations Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim Ulster Ltd</td>
<td>Conor Leaney</td>
<td>2010 Commonwealth Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim Ulster Ltd</td>
<td>Andrew Bree</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB Badminton Union of Ireland</td>
<td>Sinead Chambers</td>
<td>2008 Under 17 4 Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB Irish Amateur Rowing Union</td>
<td>Orlagh Duddy</td>
<td>2008 World Championships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB Irish Amateur Rowing Union</td>
<td>Richard Archibald</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB Irish Table Tennis Association</td>
<td>Claire Nelson</td>
<td>Junior 6 Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB Irish Table Tennis Association</td>
<td>Paul McCreery</td>
<td>Junior 6 Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster Clay Pigeon Shooting Association</td>
<td>David Christie</td>
<td>2010 Commonwealth Games</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding from the Athlete Support Programme provides support towards coaching costs, personal training and preparation costs, sports science and sports medicine support, competition costs, and personal equipment as identified in an athlete or team’s training and competition programme.

32 athletes benefited from Living Costs Funding totalling £146,940. The Living Costs extension of the Athlete Support Programme aims to maximise an athlete’s potential by providing funding which will enable them to train on a full-time or part-time basis.
Sailing
The following case studies outline the achievements of a number of Sport Northern Ireland funded athletes during 2007/08…

Tiffany Brien sailed her way to 13th place in the ISAF Junior World Championships in Canada in August 2007. While brothers Russell and Matt McGovern positioned an impressive 12th place in the 49er European Championships in September 2007.

Motorcycling
Motorcyclists, Michael Laverty and Ian Lowry finished first and second in the British Supersport Championships in September 2007. Michael Laverty took the Champions Title and Ian Lowry placed second. Michael was later named the Irish Racer Motorcyclist of the Year.

Hockey
Patrick Brown became Ireland’s most capped international hockey player, overtaking the 149 caps held by previous Irish captain Martin Sloan.
Cycling
Ben Reid and Connor McConvey rode to success in the World Mountain Biking Championships in September 2007 – Ben came 14th in the Downhill Division, and Connor who had just recently started competing in the Under 23 category came a credible 21st out of 95 cyclists.

Swimming
Conor Leaney won gold at the British Youth Championships. Conor claimed gold in the 16 years 100m Freestyle as well as silver in the 50m Freestyle and in both he set new Irish junior records.

Ice Skating
Twenty-one year old Jenna McCorkell won gold in the Belgian National Championships in November 2007, came out on top at the British Senior Championships in January 2008 for a 5th time, and later in that year moved into the top ten rankings in Europe. Karla Quinn took the British Junior Title in January 2008, becoming the first ever Northern Ireland female skater to take three British titles at Novice, Primary and Junior levels.
“A Sport Northern Ireland Lottery Fund revenue programme to assist with the bidding for and running of sports events in Northern Ireland.”

A total of £34,500 was awarded to three events from the Events Programme (see Table 3).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Amount (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Association of Aeromodellers</td>
<td>7th World Jet Masters, July 2007</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster Branch Badminton Union of Ireland</td>
<td>Yonex Irish International Badminton Championships, December 2007</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Irish International Indoor Athletics, January 2008</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>34,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yonex Irish International Badminton Championships

A record number of countries were represented at the Yonex Irish International Badminton Championships in December 2007, which was held at the National Badminton Centre for the sixth year in a row.

Nearly 200 players from 26 countries took part in the four day tournament, with Irish duo Chloe Magee and Karen Bing lifting the Women’s Doubles title.
7th World Jet Masters

Considered to be the ‘Olympics of Model Flying’, the 7th World Jet Masters held in Enniskillen in July 2007 was considered to be the biggest event of its kind so far.

Eighty-one model pilots from around 26 countries including Germany, USA, Spain and Australia took part in the event. Flying exact scale replicas of real jet aircraft and powered by miniature gas turbine engines, these pilots, at speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour, performed manoeuvres normally only seen at the world’s most prestigious air shows. The standard of the models and the skills of the pilots were at the highest level, as they strived for the ultimate title of ‘World Model Jet Champion’.

Irish Indoor Athletics Championships

Held at the Odyssey Arena in January 2008, the Irish Indoor Athletics Championships included no less than four Irish records, personal bests by local athletes Amy Foster and Ciara Mageean, and a victory in the 800m by James McIlroy.

City of Lisburn’s Ciara Mageean continued to dominate athletes many years her senior. Fifteen year old Ciara took a massive eight seconds off her personal best and set a new Irish junior record of 4.26.52.

Consistent Winning Performances

The 5th biennial All Island High Performance Conference was jointly hosted by Sport Northern Ireland and the Irish Sports Council.

The two day event presented an opportunity for ‘Sport’ to come together to examine how to create an environment within which consistent winning performances at the very highest level could be achieved by all athletes.

Delegates were able to share experiences and expertise in terms of closing the knowledge gap within high performance, growing local talent, building elite facilities, and educating and training local coaches to deliver world-class athletes. The challenge underpinning all the elements of the conference was systems – the need to ensure Ireland has the right systems in place to create a world-class environment for athletes.
Hosting major events is an opportune way to showcase what Northern Ireland has to offer and enhance its image on the world stage. Sporting events, large or small, provide an excellent platform to inspire young people to participate in sport, for talented athletes to raise their game, and instil a feeling of possibility among individuals, teams and society.
Rugby Mania

Twenty-four countries, 700 young rugby enthusiasts and 250 coaches and officials were brought together for some of the biggest matches of their lives in April 2007 for the IRB U19 Rugby World Championship. The event was broadcast live in over 80 countries around the world, showcasing Northern Ireland, its rugby traditions and its people to an international audience.

Coming into the final Australia were the current holders of the trophy, however it was to be New Zealand’s moment and a thoroughly impressive display as they defeated South Africa in the final at a packed Ravenhill.

This tournament proved to be a fantastic event and a huge success in every way for Northern Ireland. It has brought in over £5 million to the local economy and over 70 million television viewers from all over the world have caught wonderful glimpses of Northern Ireland looking its best.

A Massive 26.2 Mile Challenge

The 26th Belfast City Marathon was a huge success – with a record 14,300 runners taking to the streets of Belfast, making the occasion the biggest mass participation sports event in the Northern Ireland sports event calendar.

Veteran Kenyan John Mutai won in two hours, 16 minutes, 22 seconds. It was the closest anyone has come to beating the 22 year old course record (2:15:51), set by Belfast’s own Marty Deane back in 1985.

The ladies race was won by favourite Marashet Jima, from Ethiopia, in two hours, 41 minutes, 38 seconds.

The team relay was a close race but Habitat for Humanity succeeded in taking first place. The wheelchair race was like a formula one contest as Paul Hannon from Keady fought wheel for wheel for the entire distance with Banbridge man Jim Corbett – but Hannon managed to get to the finish post just ahead.
Celebrating 25 years of Cream of Footballing Talent

The Milk Cup celebrated its 25th anniversary in style by attracting teams from over 50 countries around the world including Europe, the USA, Africa, the Far East, South America, the Middle East, Australia, Russia, New Zealand and Canada.

Since it began in 1983, the Milk Cup has grown into one of the most prestigious and successful soccer competitions in the world.

The competition brings together the finest of young footballing talent from as far away as Brazil and Poland to play alongside household names such as Manchester United, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur. It brings the excitement and challenge of competing to the young players and officials and great entertainment for the spectators.

Many famous names have graced the competition in the past with players such as Wayne Rooney, Ryan Giggs, David Beckham, Robbie Fowler and Peter Crouch all competing.

The 2007 event, once again sponsored by Sport Northern Ireland, didn’t disappoint; Guadalajara (Mexico) came out top in the Junior category, Fluminense triumphed in the Premier section, while Israel defeated Northern Ireland in the elite final.

All Revved Up

Three days of tough racing over wet, muddy Northern Ireland roads may have taken a heavy toll on some of the world’s best rally cars, but it certainly did not dampen the enthusiasm of the drivers for the event, which was held in Ireland for the first time.

Rally Ireland, round 15 of the 2007 World Rally Championship, took place in November 2007 opening with a Super Special Stage at Stormont, Northern Ireland’s Parliament Buildings. The event, sponsored by Sport Northern Ireland in conjunction with Failte Ireland, included eight counties, both north and south of Ireland.

Stormont may have played host to many historic events over the years, but in terms of pure visual and aural excitement few would have matched this inaugural Irish round of the World Rally Championship. Irish motor sport fans were certainly treated to an unforgettable event – more than 11,500 rally fanatics attended the sell-out event.

This stage proved an ideal ‘curtain-raiser’ before the fully-fledged stages being held throughout Ireland, which concluded a Special Stage at Mullaghmore, County Sligo.
Corporate Services are seen to be the ‘backbone’ of Sport Northern Ireland – ensuring efficient and effective administration in sport.

The Corporate Services Team provides a good working environment for the whole organisation through effective delivery of:

Financial Management; Human Resources; Information Technology; Internal Audit Procedures; Investment Assurance; Marketing; and Policy Planning and Research.
Corporate Services

Human Resources (HR)

Essentials of Training

Whether it is for new staff induction, skills enhancement or personal development, there is a need for quality HR training programmes to be in place. Unquestionably, training is crucial to the successful operation of any organisation. Sport Northern Ireland is keen to ensure the right HR practices are in place in sporting organisations; to that end award recipients from the Building Sport Programme benefited from training workshops held by HR staff from Sport Northern Ireland.

During the course of 2007/08 two training workshops were held to provide knowledge and assistance with HR functions. The first of which made award recipients aware of the legislative responsibilities regarding the ‘recruitment and selection’ process; this workshop provided the participants with the capability of implementing best practice guidelines and made the applicants more competent in participating in their own recruitment and selection process. The second workshop highlighted issues that all groups may encounter during the course of operating their facility such as managing staff and equality.

Twenty-five applicants from Building Sports projects such as Hanwood Trust Company Ltd, Donaghamore and District Community Group and Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group attended and benefited from the vast knowledge imparted by Sport Northern Ireland HR staff thus providing award recipients with the opportunity to put systems and procedures in place to improve their facility.

Policy, Planning and Research

Sport Northern Ireland is an organisation that is focused on promoting sport and the benefits that can be derived through sport; its aim is to make decisions that are based on evidence.

The Research Unit responds to the need to strengthen the evidence base for informed decision making in sport at all levels, and seeks to put in place a coherent framework for research and evaluation that is responsive to the research needs and priorities in the proposed Strategy as well as the wider social policy agenda.

Sport Northern Ireland commissions, communicates and disseminates research projects under the following thematic areas:

• Strategic Measurement and Monitoring Participation;
• Strategic Understanding;
• Impact Evaluation;
• Economic Modeling; and
• Communicating and Disseminating Research Findings.

In 2007/08, Sport Northern Ireland commissioned the following research projects, some of which were in collaboration with our key partners…

Physical Literacy – Literature Review

This research project set out to investigate issues within the current literature concerning physical literacy including the development, implementation and measurement of children’s physical development.

A full report on the findings from the literature review, entitled ‘Improving Physical Literacy’ highlighted the importance of understanding physical literacy in terms of long-term athlete development. The recommendations concluded that further research into this area would be required.
Disability Contract Review

Sport Northern Ireland’s Disability Mainstreaming Policy promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities by adopting a ‘twin track’ approach, working towards a programme of mainstreaming disability provision through the inclusion spectrum.

This year Sport Northern Ireland commissioned a review of the Disability Mainstreaming Contract as a means of assessing the effectiveness of services between Sport Northern Ireland and Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI). The study provided for an objective assessment of the implementation of Disability Mainstreaming Policy Contract with DSNI up until March 2008 and made a number of conclusions and recommendations to maximise the future success of the contract and other similar projects and activities.

Barriers to Participation in Countryside Recreation

CAAN, in collaboration with Sport Northern Ireland and The Environment and Heritage Service, commissioned research to identify and examine the key factors inhibiting recreational use of the Northern Ireland countryside by all underrepresented groups such as people with a disability, people from the four biggest ethnic minorities living in Northern Ireland, and people living in areas of greatest deprivation. This research also addressed what potentially can be done to address these issues. The findings from this research are currently being used to inform future policy decisions that will allow for the integration of environmental and health policies.

Economic Importance of Sport in Northern Ireland

A report to determine the economic importance of sport in Northern Ireland was produced by Sport Northern Ireland in 2007. This report outlined a number of key findings and demonstrated the importance of sport-related activity to the overall economy in Northern Ireland. Keys findings showed that in 2004:

- £446 million was spent by consumers on sport-related goods and services in Northern Ireland;
- Sport-related activity added £452 million to the Northern Ireland economy, corresponding to almost 2% of total value added in the region; and
- 13,700 people were employed in sport-related employment.

It is anticipated that this research will be repeated on a biannual basis and in the next two years Sport Northern Ireland will look to establish the first Sport Northern Ireland Research Collaborating Centre on ‘Sport and the Economy’.

All research documents are available for download on www.sportni.net
194,959
People participated in sport and physical activity across all Sport Northern Ireland investment areas

336,111
Spectators attending GAA, Soccer and Rugby fixtures as a direct result of Sport Northern Ireland investment

22,407
People from under-represented groups participated in sport and physical activity across all Sport Northern Ireland investment areas

2,267
People participated in courses run by TMC

40
Athletes/squads supported through the Athlete Support Programme

214
Coach Education courses delivered by Sport Northern Ireland

45
Medals won at prestigious European and World events

38
Projects funded through Awards For All

40
Major sporting events supported by Sport Northern Ireland

2,267
People participated in courses run by TMC
Who’s Who in Sport Northern Ireland

Sport Northern Ireland Board Members...

**Chair:** Dominic Walsh

**Members:**
- Olive Brown (reappointed)
- Murray Cowan
- John D’Arcy
- Una Duncan
- Barry Macaulay
- Brian McCargo (reappointed)
- Hugh McCaughey (reappointed)
- Alan Moneypenny
- Maura Muldoon (reappointed)
- Danny O’Connor
- Jim Rodgers
- Alan Strong (reappointed)
- Patrick Turnbull

**Outgoing Members January 2008:**
- Professor Eric Saunders OBE (Previous Chair)
- Gerry Carson (previous Vice-Chair)
- Hilary Brady
- John Campbell
- Maureen Cusdin
- Jake Gallagher
- Aidan Hamill
- Cathal Logue
- Marie Murphy
Sport Northern Ireland

Key Staff

Sport Northern Ireland Key Staff...

Chief Executive
Eamonn McCartan

Director of Corporate Services
Andrew Sloan

Director of Performance Sport
Shaun Ogle

Director of Participation and Facilities
Nick Harkness