

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES

CONFIDENTIAL

Sixth Meeting 2007

Held on Tuesday 4 September in the Lord Mayor's Parlour, Belfast City Hall, Belfast BT1

PRESENT

In the Chair: E D Saunders

Members: G Carson
H Brady
O Brown
M Cusdin
J Gallagher
A Hamill
C Logue
M Muldoon
M Murphy
B McCargo
H McCaughey
J Rodgers
A Strong

Chief Executive: E McCartan

Staff in Attendance: N Harkness
A Sloan
E Bailey
J Beggs
A Campbell
R McCormick
J Poots
P Scott
C Southern

Belfast City Marathon D O'Connor
C O'Reilly

1

APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Mr J Campbell.

2 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

- 2.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked the Lord Mayor, Councillor Jim Rodgers OBE for his hospitality at lunch and the Council meeting. He wished the Lord Mayor well for the rest of his year in office. The Lord Mayor welcomed everyone to the City Hall and said it was a pleasure to be able to host Sport Northern Ireland (SNI).

The Chairman then introduced Mr Danny O'Connor who gave a presentation on the work of the Belfast Marathon Committee. He referred to the increased numbers taking part in the event and the sponsorship opportunities that existed. Progress was being made to produce a specialist Marathon package to attract a number of countries. Members noted that it is the biggest single fund-raising event in Ireland.

The Chairman thanked Mr O'Connor for his involvement in the Belfast Marathon over the years and invited him to submit a business case to SNI who would consider it in terms of their financial support.

- 2.2 The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to report on the recent Bid in Thailand for the World Transplant Games to be held in Belfast in 2011. Members heard that the Northern Ireland (NI) bid had been an excellent presentation and that the business case had impressed the committee of the World Transplant Games Federation. Three countries had made a bid – Finland, Denmark, Northern Ireland; and it was hoped that a response from the organising committee would arrive in the coming days.
- 2.3 The Chairman informed Members that the Minister, Mr Edwin Poots MLA, would visit the Sports Institute Northern Ireland (SINI) on Wednesday 19 September.

3 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Third Meeting of 2007 held on 5 June and the Fifth Meeting of 2007 held on 10 July, having been previously circulated, were approved subject to the following changes and signed.

Meeting 5 June – item 9.6 World Rally Championship Event and Rally Ireland – Ms H Brady asked for to be recorded that their appeared to be limited sports development benefit arising from the event or indeed the investment.

Mr Carson expressed disappointment that no-one from the general public had been present at the open meeting of Council in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh on 5 June despite significant funding from SNI to the county.

Meeting 10 July – item 9.3 Culture Arts and Leisure Committee Update Report – "Members noted that there were no female members of the CAL Committee". Dr Brown said that she had "expressed concern" that there were no female members of the CAL Committee. It was agreed to change the Minutes to "Members expressed disappointment that there were no female members of the CAL Committee".

4 **MATTERS ARISING**

- 4.1 Members raised the issue of funding for sports development programmes. It was the view of Members that funding should not be ring-fenced by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) for specific sports or projects

The Chairman reported that this had been raised at a meeting of Sports Cabinet. Members expressed concern at the Government making £40 million available for sport under the heading of Sport Coach UK which was in fact available only to England; and that Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland would not have access to it. However it was noted that we have made provision for an equivalent bid for coaching within our submission to the comprehensive review.

Members expressed their concern that a significant proportion of SNI's funding was ring-fenced. They believed that this was not the best way to handle funding in that it was not strategic and that, in the first instance, the SNI was the strategic body.

The Chief Executive outlined the need always to work strategically but pointed out that ring-fenced funding for sport was better than no funding; and to this end the task for SNI was to spend it strategically and innovatively within its Corporate Plan and the Strategy for Sport.

The Chairman advised that Members and staff did all in their power to gain maximum revenue funding from DCAL for sport.

- 4.2 Dr Brown drew attention to item 9.2 of the Minutes of 5 June 2007. The Performance Committee had noted its concerns about the disproportionate amount of time spent by SNI working with football, gaelic and rugby. The Chief Executive pointed out that this was only partially true; that there was undoubtedly a disproportionate amount of time spent on football and the Irish Football Association; but that this was not the case with gaelic and rugby.

- 4.3 The Chairman asked Ms Brady for an update on safe sports grounds. She informed Members that Safe Sports Grounds Legislation has been enacted but not implemented. In parallel with that is the Public Order Legislation and a letter had been sent to the Permanent Secretary expressing protest at the lack of progress. Government is proposing an overseeing body that is desk bound; that does not go out and visit venues. That is what happened in England before the Hillsborough disaster and the Safe Sports Ground Committee believes that that proposal is wrong. The Committee proposed following the England model and asked for similar legislation to be brought into Northern Ireland. The legislation was passed in Parliament in February 2006 but the main elements of the legislation have not been implemented. To do so will require a body similar to the Football Licensing Authority.

It was agreed that this was a very valid point and that there should be no further delay. Council agreed to send a letter from the Chairman to the Minister; and a letter from the Chief Executive to the Permanent Secretary.

Members heard that as a result of these failings, firemen and fire engines were often located under the stands in Windsor Park during matches and that the grounds are not implementing security plans. Chief Environmental Officers of Councils are unhappy about what is being done.

5 **CORRESPONDENCE**

5.1 Glentoran Football Club

Members noted letter dated 18 August 2007 referring to the success of the recent Glentoran v Manchester United match and stated that the credit for making this possible rested fully with Mr Paul Scott, without whose expertise and guidance it would not have been achievable. They expressed their gratitude to Paul for his hard work and dedication.

Cllr J Rodgers also thanked Mr Scott for the splendid job he did and for his dedication and conscientiousness which was beyond the call of duty.

6 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman asked everyone if they had any interest to declare and it was agreed that if Members had any conflict during consideration of the Elite Facilities Programme recommendations they would leave the room.

7 **PARTICIPATION UNIT**

7.1 Elite Facilities Programme

Members considered Paper SNI/07/120 and noted that each proposal contained therein would be referred to individually.

Members were reminded that up to £53 million had been made available within the investment strategy for Northern Ireland for creating Olympics-related facilities. £15 million had been notionally allocated to a 50-metre swimming pool, leaving £38 million to other Olympic-related sports.

Members heard that the recommendations had been assessed through staff, governing bodies, peer group review, and the Facilities Committee. Those staff present to present the paper included Mrs A Campbell, Project Manager, Mr C Southern, Facilities Architect, and Mr J Beggs, Business Consultant.

Mrs Campbell reported on the evaluation criteria, essential eligibility requirements, and the rules of the programme.

Dr M Murphy extended her compliments to the staff on the unbelievable amount of work done and the effective efficient and professional way in which it was conducted.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that primary responsibility for declaring conflicts of interest lay with the individual Member. Members declared interest in the following projects and accordingly left the room at the appropriate time.

Left Room

Carrickfergus Amateur Rowing Club	M Murphy
Antrim Borough Council	
Down District Council	
Rathgael Gymnastics and Trampoline Club	
Lisburn City Council	
Grosvenor Grammar	G Carson J Rodgers
Lisburn Racquets Club	
Dungannon Rifle and Pistol Club	
Belfast City Council	J Rodgers A Strong J Rodgers
Belfast City Council – Athletics	
Coleraine Academical Institution	
University of Ulster	E Saunders E McCartan M Murphy A Strong O Brown
McAleer and Rushe Ltd	
Salto Gymnastics Centre	M Murphy B McCargo
Adfinch Merchants Ltd	
NI Civil Service Sports Association – Hockey	
Newforge Country Club	H Brady B McCargo
Meadows Equestrian Centre Ltd	
Ballyholme Yacht Club	
Queen's University – Rowing	M Cusdin
Newtownabbey Borough Council – Taekwondo	H Brady
Newtownabbey Borough Council – Boxing	
Countryside Recreation NI	O Brown
SELB	
Craigavon Borough Council	
Derry City Council	C Logue
Comber Rifle and Pistol Club	

Dr Murphy expressed every faith that due diligence that occurred in the early meeting of Facilities Committee was done with great detail and she also complimented the team.

Members discussed the status of the Councils bidding for funding, the possibility of amalgamation of Councils, and noted that a mechanism would be found to deal with commitments to be taken on by amalgamated Councils.

***Dr O Brown and Cllr J Rodgers left the room.
Ms Brady and Mr C Logue left the room.
Cllr J Rodgers returned to the room.***

The Chairman brought to Members' attention the table at Appendix 4 which was the suggested fee levels for design team input to a Business Case. This was to ensure that applicants do not incur excessive costs. It also protected SNI in that people are not saying our expectation was too high.

Mr J Beggs and Mr C Southern presented the Appendix.

Mr C Logue returned to the room and left the meeting.

***Professor E Saunders left the room.
Dr M Murphy left the meeting.
Professor E Saunders returned to the room.
Mr H McCaughey left the meeting.***

Staff sought delegated permission to apply the design input contribution as proposed at the second half of Table 1 in Appendix 4; that applicants be pre-warned that they are moving forward and there are risks associated within the strategic business case and that there is not more funding.

Ms M Muldoon left the meeting.

Members approved the recommendation to accept the "due diligence" inspection of the assessment report, carried out by those Facilities Members with no declared interest; and, based on the summary assessment findings, accepted the recommendations of Facilities Committee and approved the assessment decisions attached to the Paper.

7.2 Building Sport Application/Lottery Budgets

Members considered Paper SNI/07/121 the purpose of which was to establish the Lottery budgetary position prior to any further commitments being made under the Building Sport Programme

Members noted that in overall terms, compared with the previous six-year period (2001-07) SNI is projected to lose £14.02 million (33%) of its Lottery income over the next six years.

The projected NLDF balance over the period 2007-13 against the current schedule of commitments was attached as Appendix 1 of the Paper. Members noted that the impact on the current round of Building Sport Applications was that only 13 applications received approval under delegated powers of the Participation Committee. However, as a result of this Paper (SNI/07/121), those applications would be put on a reserve list pending the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The Chief Executive updated Members on the next steps of the Comprehensive Spending Review process.

Cllr J Rodgers left the meeting.

Members expressed the view that in the 13 applications their projects met all SNI's key criteria. They were very well managed organisations and would contribute to SNI's objectives but could not be funded.

Mr Strong referred to bids coming in from neighbouring bodies who could not get together to resolve issues more strategically. The Strategy for Sport required an action plan and he believed this was a positive opportunity to re-address those issues and have a greater degree of joined-up thinking. The Chief Executive pointed out that the organisational structure of local governance in Northern Ireland will change and enable a greater level of joined-up-ness.

After lengthy discussion Members approved the recommendations:

- to approve the recommendation of the Participation Committee that no further commitments should be made against the Lottery funds until it is possible to consider a SNI-wide budget based on the outcome of the CSR and ISNI II later this year.

Members noted the delegated decisions of the Participation Committee made on 29 August 2007 as outlined in section 4 of the Paper.

7.3 Access to the Northern Ireland Countryside and Mourne Access Study

Members received Paper SNI/07/122 which provided an overview and background to the current situation regarding access to the countryside in Northern Ireland; a report of issues arising out of the Mourne Access Study; and information on recommendations for actions arising from the Mourne Access Study.

7.4 Pre-Games Training Camps/Assessment Reports

Members received Paper SNI/07/128 which provided the outcome of applications submitted by venue owners in Northern Ireland for consideration as Pre-Games Training Camps prior to the 2012 Olympics.

Members noted that assessments by Facilities Committee had been submitted to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games who would carry out a further assessment.

The Chairman thanked Mr P Scott for his input into this work.

8 **PERFORMANCE UNIT**

8.1 Athlete Support Programme

Members considered Paper SCI/07/123 which outlined five living costs applications to the Athlete Support Programme.

Members approved the recommendation to approve the Living Costs assessment report and make living cost awards totalling £16,857.

8.2 **SINI**

Members received an update on the developments of the Sports Institute Northern Ireland (Paper SNI/07/124). Members were informed that the Minister, Mr Edwin Poots, would visit the Institute on Wednesday 19 September.

9 **CORPORATE SERVICES**

9.1 Management Accounts

Members considered and approved the Management Accounts for the four-month period to 31 July 2007 for submission to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (Paper SNI/07/125).

9.2 Lottery Accounts

Members received a report on Lottery Distribution Activities and Lottery Distribution Account for 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 (Paper SNI/07/126). Members noted that the Accounts had been agreed and signed off by the National Audit Office; and that an unqualified audit report had been given to SNI.

9.3 Marketing

Members received Paper SNI/07/127 which updated them on recent activities in Marketing and Communication.

Members congratulated the Marketing Manager and said they found the electronic media reports very useful. Members also thought it would be useful if the electronic media review was also sent to the Chief Leisure Officers' Association (CLOA).

The Vice-Chairman asked for more proactive communications about forthcoming events, highlighting a number of events that he was unaware of.

The Director of Participation Unit suggested that an up and coming events list be produced to facilitate Members.

10 **COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR ADOPTION**

10.1 Mountain Leader Training Northern Ireland

Members adopted the Minutes of the Eighty-Ninth Meeting held on 27 June 2006 and the Ninetieth Meeting held on 27 February 2007.

10.2 Northern Ireland Mountain and Cave Rescue Co-ordinating Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Eighty-Second Meeting held on 11 January 2007 and the Eighty-Third Meeting held on 19 April 2007.

10.3 Participation Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Eighty-Eighth Meeting held on 24 July 2007.

11 **PUBLICATIONS**

There were no publications.

12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 2 October 2007 in the House of Sport.

13 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

13.1 Dr Brown informed Members of a group called the Manchester Volunteers Association funded by Sport England and formed after the Manchester Commonwealth Games. She asked if there was a similar organisation in Northern Ireland. The Chief Executive replied that the Northern Ireland Sports Forum was leading in this area within the Olympic Northern Ireland Task Force.

13.2 Mr Carson asked for an update on the Strategy for Sport. It was noted that consultation is due to commence on early October.

13.3 The Chairman reported on the meeting with the Commonwealth Games Council which had not gone as well as had been hoped for.

Members noted that SNI had produced a High Performance Strategy and was supporting individual athletes through their governing bodies. Mr Strong suggested that every avenue should be explored to consult, negotiate and build bridges with governing bodies and the Commonwealth Games Council.

13.4 The Chairman referred to Dr A Hamill's recent retirement as Principal of La Salle Boys' Secondary School and wished him well in his retirement.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting ended at 4.20 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

House of Sport
Upper Malone Road
Belfast
BT9 5LT