

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES

CONFIDENTIAL

Eighth Meeting 2007

Held on Tuesday 4 December 2007 in Malone House, Barnetts Demesne, Belfast, BT9 5LA

PRESENT

In the Chair: E D Saunders

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

Chief Executive: E McCartan

Staff in Attendance: N Harkness
S Ogle
R McCormick
R McDowell
E Bailey
T Smyth
J News
C McGurk
J Poots
T Gorman

1. APOLOGISES

M Muldoon

2. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 2.1** The Chairman welcomed Members and referred to this being the last meeting of the present Council. He asked if Members would be prepared to consider remaining in post should the Minister ask them to do so for another month until the new membership was completed.

The Chairman put on record his thanks to Mr E McCartan, Chief Executive, Ms Elizabeth Bailey, Secretary to Council and Lisa Beattie, Personal Assistant with whom he had worked closely since 2000. He thanked the Members for their hard work and commitment to Sport Northern Ireland

during his Chairmanship he also thanked all the staff of SNI. The Chief Executive spoke of the Chairman having been a member of Council for eleven years. Under his guidance the current Council had gone from strength to strength. It had been an absolute delight to have him as Chairman and he extended his best wishes to Professor Saunders. The Chief Executive informed Members that the Minister had not yet appointed a Chair for the new Council and he asked Members to give consideration to a possible request for them to sit for another month or two. Professor Saunders praised the group of Members with whom he had worked for so many years and the Vice-Chair for his rigour and fairness and strength of opinion. He also thanked those Members who had Chaired hard working Committees and commended the work that they had done over the years of membership it had been a tremendous input and effort by volunteers who do not get paid.

Ms Brady on behalf of Members thanked Professor Saunders for his Chairmanship and for his leadership over the last seven years.

- 2.2 The Chief Executive reported on a recent meeting of the CAL Committee on the subject of funding for sport and the Draft Comprehensive Spending Review Budgets. A copy of the presentation made to that Committee was tabled for Members information. Members noted that financial constraints for the next three years could potentially jeopardise the implementation of the Strategy for Sport. Members supported keeping the targets as they are in the Strategy as this provides the case to bid for additional resources in the future.

2.3 Audit Committee

Mr J Gallagher reported on a meeting of the Audit Committee which had taken place earlier on 4 December 2007. He reported that satisfactory approvals had been received on all issues and he reported that matters pertaining to SINI were the reason for holding up of processing of SNI accounts. Interest had been expressed by the auditor present at the meeting in the IFA and the need for SNI to develop mechanisms to provide protection. The NIAO representative showed particular interest in an IFA procurement matter recently referred to in the press and the failure to move to a competency based Board and asked for a separate meeting to be set up between NIAO and SNI on the matters.

2.4 Staffing

The Human Resources Manager reported on a meeting which took place earlier on 4 December 2007. He updated the meeting on recruitment and new employees in SNI and reported that an update on organisational structure for SINI had also been provided. Members noted that Youth Sport NI Capital Team is to be restructured.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the 7th meeting held on 2 October 2007 were taken as read, approved and signed. Dr Brown referred to Item 8.4. of the minutes of 2 October 2007 where it stated that Ladies Gaelic Football would not be recognised as a sporting activity because Gaelic Football is already recognised as a sporting activity by the Sports Councils in the United Kingdom. However Dr Brown said that it had been discussed that

the reason Ladies Gaelic Football had applied for recognition was because they felt that they were not being treated equitably by the Gaelic Athletic Association. It was agreed that this was a separate issue between ladies GFA and the GAA.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Irish Sports Council

Members noted a letter dated 19 October 2007 which congratulated Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) for the excellent hosting of the 2007 All Island Sports Conference.

5.2 Senator Marc MacSharry

Members noted a letter dated 26 November 2007 congratulating all at Sport Northern Ireland on the great success of Rally Ireland.

6. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chairman asked everyone individually if they had any interests to declare. Mr H McCaughey, Dr O Brown, Mr C Logue and Dr M Murphy declared an interest in the Sports Institute Northern Ireland (SINI).

7. PARTICIPATION

7.1 Building Sport Programme Stage II Assessments

Members considered Paper SNI/07/174 which asked members to note project assessment reports and note the recommendations of the Participation Committee. Members approved the recommendations.

7.2 Capital Programme

Members considered Paper SI/07/175 and noted the revisions to the post – completion monitoring policy which was presented to the Participation Committee in June 2004. Members noted the rationale for the provisions and the conclusion that the revised policy would allow SNI to focus post-completion monitoring activity on those projects which represented the highest risk in terms of accountability and ability to achieve sports development outputs and outcomes. The policy would also allow SNI to achieve reductions in its administration costs through reduced post-completion monitoring activity on low risk projects. After discussion Members approved the recommendation and the revisions to the post-completion monitoring policy.

7.3 SINI Capital Award

The following Members left the room for this discussion Mr G Carson, Mr H McCaughey, Dr O Brown, Mr C Logue, Dr M Murphy.

Members considered Paper SNI/07/176 which updated Members on the

legal status of the Sport England contribution to SINI Capital Award and sought approval for de-commitment and commitment of £3 m of Lottery Funding. The Paper sought approval for a change in the funding mechanism with no change to the value or purpose of the SINI Capital Award. Members approved the recommendations to note the current legal status of the SINI Capital Award; approve the de-commitment of £3M Lottery funding for the University of Ulster; and approve the commitment of £3M Exchequer funding to the University of Ulster.

7.4 Implementation of the Disability Mainstreaming Policy

Mr A Strong left the room.

Members received Paper SNI/07/177 which had been circulated for information. The Paper provided an update on the implementation of SNI's Disability Mainstreaming Policy. Members complimented officers on the Paper and on the improved relationships with Disability Sport Northern Ireland and agreed that the recommendations in the earlier paper, Disability Mainstreaming Policy SC/06/15, should be moved forward.

7.5 Report of Delegated Decisions

Members noted decisions taken in accordance with Council Policy (Paper SNI/07/178).

Mr A Strong returned to the room.

7.6 Community Sport Programme

Members received an update on research associated with SNI Community Sport Programme. This is designed to create, develop, and manage opportunities that enhance the development of Community Sport and Physical Recreation within disadvantaged communities. Members noted the findings of the Year 2 Impact Report and the additional investment secured by SNI from the Big Lottery Fund to carry out project level evaluations. Paper SNI/07/179

7.7 Northern Ireland Mountain and Cave Rescue Co-ordinating Committee

Members considered Paper SNI/07/180 which discussed two business cases in support of Capital Expenditure for two mountain rescue vehicles in 2007/08. Members noted that existing vehicles are no longer fit for purpose due to age, wear and tear. Due to increased demands there is a need for additional vehicles to transport personnel and equipment. Members approved the recommendation to approve the capital bids of 100% funding for additional and replacement vehicles as per the business cases attached to the Paper for North West Mountain Rescue Team - £42,000 and Mourne Mountain Rescue - £47,855 subject to SNI standards, terms and conditions of Capital Award and full expenditure by March 2008. NH identified the need for capital equipment for the Irish Cave Rescue team based in Fermanagh. SNI finance team had identified a £14k capital budget that could be applied to this need before the end of 07/08. Members approved delegated authority to officers in relation to this subject to the preparation of a suitable business case.

8. PERFORMANCE SERVICES

8.1 Athlete Support Programme

Members considered Paper SNI/07/185 which provided a summary of applications for funding individuals through the Athlete Support Programme and consideration of two Sports Cost applications and seven Living Costs applications to the Athlete Support Programme.

After discussion Members approved the applications for funding.

8.2 Report of Delegated Decisions

Members received a report and decisions taken in accordance with Council Policy (Paper SNI/07/186).

8.3 Practitioner Development Programme

Members considered Paper SNI/07/187 which sought approval for the information and guidance booklet for the Practitioner Development Programme. It also sought approval for Performance Committee Members to have delegated decision making powers on awards as decisions are required before the end of March 2008. Members agreed that this was a very good scheme as it encouraged capacity building. After discussion Members approved the programme for the Development of Practitioners to work with High Performance Athletes as outlined in the Paper and approved delegation of decision making to the Performance Committee. Members also noted that the Policy had been screened and that it was currently out for consultation.

8.4 SINI

The following Members left the room Mr H McCaughey, Mr C Logue, Dr M Murphy, Dr O Brown, Mr E McCartan and Mr N Harkness also left the room.

Members considered Paper SNI/07/188 the purpose of which was to consider the Business Case submitted by the Sports Institute Northern Ireland (SINI) for the purchase of Sports Science, Sports Medicine and Talent Identification equipment for SINI use within the High Performance Centre at Jordanstown. Members approved the expenditure as detailed within the proposal attached to the Paper under Option 3 of £107,430.

8.5 Soccer Strategy

Members considered Paper SNI/07/189 which provided Members with an update on the Playing Facilities Programme and Project Risk Issues. The paper highlighted key project risks and outlined SNI proposals to ensure continued roll-out of the programme whilst protecting SNI against risk exposure. Members noted the background to the Soccer Strategy facilities component; the current status of the Facilities Programme and proposed solutions as contained in the paper. Members raised various questions about the paper, progress regarding improved governance in the IFA and commented on the lack of confidence in football which was evident in the document. Members felt that there were various governance issues within the IFA which needed to be resolved. Members

noted that work had been ongoing within SNI to resolve these for some years. Members agreed that limited assurance of financial controls and governance of the IFA was not sufficient to justify the further release of funding.

Members were informed that the IFA in 2007 was a more accountable organisation than it had been four years ago; it is just not where we need it to be at the moment. Members noted the amount of time that work on IFA had taken with staff such as Ms T Smyth and Mr J Beggs and other officers. Members drew attention to the leaks which had appeared in the press from the IFA. It was noted that a meeting was taking place with IFA very soon at which their aspiration to go forward or not would be confirmed. It was agreed that it would be sensible to hold this particular paper and any further release of funding subject to the outputs of the meetings of the IFA and compliance with the FPM Governance recommendations. It was agreed that the paper be deferred.

Councillor J Rodgers left the meeting

8.6 Recognition

Members considered Paper SNI/07/191 which sought approval to recognise Stoolball as a sporting activity; reject applications to recognise Historical Fencing, X Training, Contract Bridge, Paintball Games and Paintball as sporting activities; and to change the name of the recognised sporting activity of Unihock to Floorball. Members approved the recommendation to accept the application for recognition of Stoolball as a sporting activity; reject the application for recognition for Historical Fencing, X Training and Contract Bridge as sporting activities; reject the application for the recognition of Paint Ball Games as a sporting activity and reject the associated application by the UK Paint Ball Association to be the recognised Governing Body for Paint Ball Games; accept the request from the British Floor Ball Federation to change the name of the recognised sporting activity of Unihock to Floor Ball.

9. **CORPORATE SERVICES**

9.1 Management Accounts

Members considered and approved the Management Accounts for the seven month period ended 31 October 2007 for submission to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Paper SNI/07/181).

9.2 Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Members considered Paper SNI/07/182 the purpose of which was to seek Members approval on SNI Policy on Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality. Members approved the recommendation and also approved a slight amendment to the Policy on Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality in that the Chief Executive had given Directors and budget holders authority to approve hospitality in their own budget areas. Members noted that as the amendment to the Policy did not constitute a material change no further screening would be required.

9.3 Investors in People

Members received a slide presentation from the Human Resources Manager on the recent report received from Investors in People (IIP). The report from IIP assessors had noted that Sport Northern Ireland was a role model organisation, tribute was paid to the work of the recently retired Human Resources Manager, Mrs Jenny Crooks and to her successor Mr Turlough Gorman for the superb effort which was put into this most recent assessment.

9.4 Appeals

Members considered Paper SNI/07/183 which informed them of four appeals against the decision of Council. Members noted that the Appeals Committee met on 21 November 2007 to hear the Appeals from the following Partnership of Comber Rifle Club and Hollow Farm Ltd, Owen Roe GAC, Coleraine, Bracken Projectile Club and Dergview Football Club, Castlederg. Members approved the recommendation to reject the four Appeals and noted that the Chairman of SNI would write to the four organisations informing them of this decision.

9.5 Marketing

Members received a Press and Media report (Paper SNI/07/184). This provided an update of recent activities in Marketing and Communication.

9.6 Dates of Council and Committee Meetings in 2008

Members considered Paper SNI/07/190 which set out dates of meetings of Council and Committees in 2008. Members agreed that the first date of Council in 2008 should be put back to the 11 February 2008 rather than the 5 February 2008 as the Chief Executive would be on holiday on 5 February 2008.

10. **COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR ADOPTION**

10.1 Northern Ireland Mountain Training Board

Members adopted the Minutes of the 91st meeting held on 27 June 2007.

10.2 Delhi 2010 Preparation Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the 1st meeting held on 30 July 2007 and the 2nd meeting held on 27th September 2007. Members congratulated Dr O Brown the progress made at the second meeting held on 27 September 2007 chaired by her.

10.3 Participation Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Participation Committee held on 18 September 2007.

11. **PUBLICATIONS**

Members received the following publications:

- 11.1 Consultation draft of the Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2007-2017
- 11.2 Community Sport Programme. This was tabled for those Members who are not Members of the Participation Committee.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 11 February 2007

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms H Brady referred to the forthcoming vote in connection with the Lottery Fund and various schemes that are applying for funding. She encouraged Members if they felt so inclined to vote online for a local project. It was agreed that a link would be put on the SNI website regarding this.

There being no further business the Chairman informed Members that there was a small number of Christmas Cards available for Members if they wished.

He thanked Members for their attendance and wished them a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

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