

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES

CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes of Meeting held on 10 September 2012 in the House of Sport, Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5LA.

PRESENT

In the Chair: D Walsh

Members: G Campbell
M Cowan (by conference call)
P Cummings
B Delaney
R Mallon
S McCullough
D O'Connor
P Turnbull

Acting Chief Executive: M Harkness

Staff in Attendance: A Sloan
T Gorman
J News
P Donnelly
R Gregg
J Beggs
P Scott
T Smyth
E Bailey

In Attendance as Observer C Watson, DCAL

1 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman asked everyone individually if they had any interest to declare
No one declared an interest.

2 **APOLOGIES**

An apology was received from Mr J D'Arcy, Mr B Macaulay, Mr J O'Neill.

3 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 August 2012, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

4 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Acting Chief Executive referred to the Action Sheet attached to the Minutes giving details of actions taken on Action Points arising from the last Meeting.

5 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

- 5.1 The Chairman referred to this being his last meeting as Chair of Sport Northern Ireland (SNI). He asked Mr C Watson to update Members on the situation regarding a new Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr Watson reported that the Minister had today decided to appoint two Members of Council to act as Interim Chair and Interim Vice-Chair until such times as the appointment competition came to a conclusion. Mr P Turnbull would be Interim Chair and Mr J D'Arcy would be Interim Vice-Chair.
- 5.2 The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Paralympic Games. He commented on their incredible success and the atmosphere at the Olympic Park which had been equally as vibrant as the Olympic Games as had the superb attendance at all events.

He commended the performance of the Paralympic athletes which had been outstanding and he had presented flowers to medallists alongside Sir John Major.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE**

- 6.1 Members noted letter dated 3 September 2012 from DCAL relating to Human Resources matters.
- 6.2 Members noted letter from DCAL relating to Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (TNOC) and agreed that the Acting Chief Executive should draft a response to DCAL for Members' comments.

Members agreed that this required a high level of debate guided by the Executive team. They also expressed the view that it is the responsibility of SNI to deliver the Business Plan and put sport first regarding the use of this facility.

It was agreed that the Acting Chief Executive would circulate the findings of a strategic stocktake carried out in 2011 and the post project evaluation carried out by DCAL.

Action 1: Acting Chief Executive to draft a response to DCAL letter for Members' comments.

Action 2: Findings of strategic stocktake to be circulated to Members along with the post project evaluation carried out by DCAL.

In the context of a discussion regarding concerns expressed by some private sector outdoor adventure activity providers about TNOC, Members drew comparisons between the delivery of Fitness/Leisure services by District Councils and commercial operators. Parallels were also drawn in relation to the services provided by other publicly owned buildings such as the Titanic Signature Project, Belfast City Hall, and the Metropolitan Arts Centre.

- 6.3 Members noted letter from the World Police and Fire Games (WPFG) regarding secondees from SNI who were now leaving their WPFG positions and Members noted the valid reasons for their doing so. It was agreed that the Acting Chief Executive would reply to the letter confirming that SNI would continue to help WPFG.

Members noted that a meeting had taken place with WPFG officials regarding steps to replace the terminated secondments and deliver on the intended support as set out in the MOU. The Acting Chief Executive advised that this was most likely to involve a secondment from the services to SNI and then on to the WPFG company.

7 **ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

Members noted Paper SNI/12/114 which provided information on a range of current topics and events since the Council meeting on 15 August 2012.

Members received a further tabled update on the 50-m Pool section of the Paper. Members also received a further tabled update on the performances of NI athletes at the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012.

In relation to the information on Cliftonville Football Club Mr S McCullough declared a perceived conflict of interest, given that he was a member of the Club Licensing Committee of the Irish Football Association and as such was privy to some of their finances.

In relation to the Issues Log Members noted that this is an operational tool and that a more succinct summary of the priority one issues would be provided for the next meeting.

Action 3: Summary of the priority one issues within the Issues Log to be provided for next meeting.

8 **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Members considered and approved the Management Accounts for the five-month period to 31 August 2012 (Paper SNI/12/115).

9 **BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET PRIORITISATION**

Members considered Paper SNI/12/116 and received a slide presentation from the Policy Planning and Research Manager and also from the Manager of each related area.

The purpose of the Paper was to enable Members to consider and approve the proposed business planning process; consider the priority programme areas for investment for 2013-15; and approve the Executive team to meet with DCAL to further discuss the Business Plan priorities.

The Executive Team had, since the last Council Meeting, met to develop further detail on potential priority areas for investment and how these would address the targets set out within Sport Matters. Officers presented the detail of these programme areas to facilitate discussion and asked Members to note that at this early stage of the budget prioritisation process, planning figures were indicative and based on a number of key planning assumptions.

Members also noted that there were already a number of new strategic priorities that had emerged. Members were introduced to these and in particular considered:

- Whether the investment area is considered to be a Ministerial priority.
- Whether the investment area has potentially high impact within the Strategy for Sport targets.
- Whether the investment area could be delivered within available financial, human and physical resources or an alternative delivery model.
- Whether the investment area's development timeframe and proposed spend profile matched the remaining budget profiles.

Members heard that in order to meet the Departmental deadline for the submission of the draft Business Plan 2013-14 it was proposed that DCAL was further consulted in relation to Business Plan priorities. Members heard that a meeting between the SNI Executive team and DCAL Sports Branch was already in the diary. A draft Business Plan 2013/14 would be prepared and brought back to the SNI Council Meeting in November 2012 for approval. Members asked that at that meeting DCAL be asked specifically about their view on supporting a programme that goes beyond the CSR period. It was noted that the investment areas could be scaled up or down in subsequent years and that the proposed budgets were from Lottery.

A considerable time was spent on questions. Members challenged a number of the figures shown and asked that the relevant staff member be present in the room when such debates took place. Members also emphasised that detail behind such Papers was important to manage time in discussion.

Members expressed the view that a careful balance needed to be achieved in relation to the investment in performance and participation. The Policy Planning and Research Manager reported that each of the options presented had already been the subject of consultation.

Members discussed the issue of Ministerial priorities. They noted that the Strategy for Sport is a Northern Ireland Executive document which is the Ministerial priority and recognised that this can change over time. However Members felt that the Strategy for Sport should have first consideration. Members recognised that Boxing has been under-funded and noted that there is a Boxing Programme in progress. Members commented that development in other sports is also under-funded.

The view was expressed that Sport Matters is the priority of the Executive; and Members queried the role of SNI Council if Ministerial priority continued to take precedence. Members commented that this was a valuable debate with the future of sport at the centre.

Action 4: Executive to meet with Sports Branch and work up further proposals for the consideration of the Members in November.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN SNI AND SINI

Members considered Paper SNI/12/117 which sought approval of the service level agreement between SNI and SINI for the period 1 October 2012 and 31 March 2013.

The HR Manager presented the Paper and informed Members that he and the Director of Sports Management Services Unit had met with the Chair of SINI earlier in the day. At that meeting the Chair had requested that a number of changes be made to the Paper and subsequently it was now before Council for information only.

Members made the point that this was an operational and not a strategic matter and agreed that officers should proceed under delegated authority to progress the Service Level Agreement.

11 **DELEGATED DECISIONS - CONTRACTS**

Members considered Paper SNI/12/118 and noted delegated decisions taken in respect of contracts for goods and services in accordance with Council's Delegated Decisions Policy.

12 **DELEGATED DECISIONS – SPORTS MATTERS COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROGRAMME (SMCCP)**

Members considered Paper SNI/12/119 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Council's Delegated Decisions Policy.

13 **STAFFING COMMITTEE**

At this point the Chairman asked staff and C Watson to leave the room.

The Council then met in a private session to receive an update from the Chair of the Staffing Committee via Mr D O'Connor. This included an update on matters around the recruitment exercise to fill vacant posts and scoping interim Senior HR support to ensure that SINI has this resource while the recruitment for a new HR Manager takes place. The report also included an update on the situation regarding the Chief Executive; and an update on the Directors' Job Evaluation exercises.

Finally the Staffing Committee acknowledged the contribution to SINI, the Board and Staffing Committee by Mr T Gorman during his tenure as HR Manager. They wished him well as Mr Gorman was leaving SINI later in the month to take up a position in the private sector.

14 **AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (ARMC) - UPDATE**

The Council met in private session and the Chairman of the ARMC gave a confidential overview to Council Members on the current status of the Governance Review programme. He reported that the information gathering phase had now been completed and this included all of the interviews with all parties. CIPFA would then prepare a draft of the report for private review by the ARMC and the aim was then to circulate the final draft to all stakeholders on 24 September with a period of one week allowed for any comments on items of factual inaccuracies.

15 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

There were no Committee Reports.

16 **PUBLICATIONS**

There were no publications.

17 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 9 October 2012.

18 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 18.1 Mr P Turnbull referred to the Internal Auditor's Report on St Colman's Project and requested that a report be prepared in relation to the statement that the Council Members had not been formally informed about the financial implication of the removal and re-instatement of the high jump fan in the St Colman's project since the initial approval.

Action 5: A Report is to be prepared in relation to the removal and reinstatement of the high jump fan at the St Colman's project.

- 18.2 Ms R Mallon referred to reform of local government and local Councils taking responsibility for sporting facilities. She asked what implication that had in terms of Business Planning and SNI functions. The Acting Chief Executive replied that local Councils currently have responsibility for providing sport and recreation opportunities and it was noted that the current Act states that District Councils will provide adequate facilities for sport and recreation facilities. The Acting Chief Executive undertook to investigate this matter further.

Action 6: Officers to investigate the matter referred to in the Northern Ireland Assembly Research Paper.

- 18.3 The Acting Chief Executive referred to this being Dominic Walsh's last meeting as his term as Chair was ending today. He referred to the significant contribution to the work of Sport Northern Ireland in the years since he became a Member in 2008. He thanked Mr Walsh for that contribution and presented him with a small gift.

The Acting Chief Executive also referred to Mr Alan Money Penny, Vice-Chair, whose term of office ended on 31 July 2012 and said that an opportunity would arise to acknowledge his work and that of other Members whose term of office had recently ended.

In replying, Mr Walsh reflected on his time with Sport NI and thanked the Executive team with whom he had worked, in particular Mr Eamonn McCartan, Chief Executive, and Mr Nick Harkness, now Acting Chief Executive. Finally, he thanked the Members for their support during the term of his membership.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

House of Sport
Upper Malone Road
Belfast BT9 5LT

