

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES

CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 13 November 2012 in the House of Sport, Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5LA.

PRESENT

In the Chair: P Turnbull

Members: G Campbell
R Carr
P Cummings
J D'Arcy
B Delaney
B Macaulay
R Mallon
S McCullough

Acting Chief Executive: N Harkness

Staff in Attendance: S Ogle
J News
J Beggs
R McDowell
E Bailey

1 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

2 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr M Cowan, Mr J O'Neill, Mr D O'Connor and Mr C Watson (DCAL).

3 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 October 2012, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

4 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Acting Chief Executive reported that there were six items recorded in the Minutes for action and a progress report on those actions had been circulated to Members. All of the actions had been completed.

5 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

5.1 Chief Executive

The Interim Chair referred to the retirement of Mr Eamonn McCartan, Chief Executive on 31 October 2012. He acknowledged the unique contribution he had made since joining Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) in 1994 in putting sport high up the Programme For Government. The Minister and Permanent Secretary had indicated that they have written separately to Mr McCartan to thank him for his contribution to Sport Northern Ireland. It is intended to mark Mr McCartan's retirement in an appropriate manner and at a time suitable to him.

The Interim Chair also referred to the pending retirement of Miss Elizabeth Bailey who joined SNI in 1992 and expressed his thanks to her for her contribution to the work of Council.

5.2 Governance Review

The Interim Chair reported that he had received a letter from the Permanent Secretary regarding the Governance Review and Implementation Programme for Sport Northern Ireland which he had found encouraging.

He reported that a series of meetings would take place on a weekly basis to implement the action plan and they would be facilitated by the attendance of a CIPFA representative.

Members also heard that a Staff Briefing would take place later in the week to inform staff of the progress made to date regarding the Governance Review.

The Interim Chair reported that a permanent Chair had not yet been announced.

5.3 Members noted that the Permanent Secretary was attempting to arrange a meeting with the Minister. It was hoped that she would meet Members on Wednesday 12 December at 4 pm at the House of Sport and the Interim Chair would work towards setting a constructive agenda for the meeting. It was also suggested that a Council Meeting would then take place after that meeting.

5.4 St Colman's

The Interim Chair reported on the very large amount of correspondence and information and media requests since March from Mr P Welsh, Deputy Editor of the Newry Reporter. Members noted the correspondence between the Editor of the Newry Reporter and the Permanent Secretary and subsequent DCAL information request.

Members agreed that the Interim Chair write to Mr Welsh to inform him that his deadline for a response could not be met but that a reply would be sent to him as soon as possible.

The Interim Chair read for the record from the correspondence from Mr Welsh. This called into question the validity of information in a paper (SNI/10/112) set before the SNI Board for funding of £1.5 million and implied that the Paper misled the Board.

The Interim Chair undertook to follow this through and address the issue in his reply to Mr Welsh.

6

CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

Staff members left the room for this item.

The Interim Vice-Chair reported in his capacity as Chairman of the Staffing Committee on progress with the planning for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive, following the recent retirement of Eamonn McCartan. He thanked Members for their comments on and contributions to the draft job description and personnel specification. He confirmed that these had been revised and were further reviewed by the Staffing Committee. After some discussion and minor amendments, Members approved both documents.

Mr D'Arcy then outlined the proposed process which would include DCAL representation throughout as well as the use of a series of detailed competency-based interviews for candidates following shortlisting. The Board noted the essential role of the Permanent Secretary with regard to the Accounting Officer role and that the Interim Chair and Interim Vice-Chair would discuss this with the Permanent Secretary on 26 November 2012. It was agreed that the preferred position would be for the incoming permanent Chair and Vice-Chair of Sport NI to be part of the recruitment panel. Members noted that this would be determined by the appointment process.

It was hoped that advertisements would be placed in December with the process of shortlisting and interviews taking place in early 2013. The Chairman thanked the Staffing Committee for their work on this matter.

Staff returned to the room.

7

PERFORMANCE FOCUS

Members considered Paper SNI/12/134 and requested that Papers as lengthy as this (ie 50 pages and more) be sent to them in hard copy as well as electronically in order to facilitate their reading and understanding.

Action 1: Officers to ensure that lengthy papers are forwarded in hard copy as well as electronically.

The Interim Chair tabled a Sport Northern Ireland Brochure featuring the Sporting Pyramid. The pyramid diagram encapsulated how SNI's strategic priorities are aligned with and contribute to key policies and strategies within Northern Ireland.

The Director of Performance introduced PerformanceFocus. He referred to the pyramid diagram which links into the NI Executive's Programme for Government. The process started in 2011 and the business team had now put together a business case for the PerformanceFocus 2013-17 Programme.

The Paper sought Members' approval of the Programme Level Business Case for investment in PerformanceFocus 2013-17; and approval to commit up to £13.2m from SNI's Lottery Funds to the PerformanceFocus investment programme.

The Investment Assurance Manager presented the Business Case. This had been prepared by SNI to assess the justification for strategic investment in the development of performance sport systems and supporting structures through governing bodies of sport and their branches operating in Northern Ireland.

The Business Case established programme objectives, budget and benefits for the PerformanceFocus 2013-17 investment programme. The programme level Business Case had been prepared in accordance with Department of Finance and Personnel guidance, namely "Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation") (NIGEAE).

The Programme Level Business Case included the following headings:

- Strategic Rationale
- Assessment of Strategic Need
- Programme Level Aim, Objectives and Constraints
- Options Development and Appraisal
- Programme Level Costs
- Programme Level Non-Monetary Scoring
- Programme Level Risks, and
- Programme Financing, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

Slides were used to illustrate each of the above items in detail and Members noted that further Papers would come to the December Council Meeting proposing investment in the Athlete Investment Programme as well as sport specific awards under PerformanceFocus.

Action 2: Officers to bring further papers to December Council Meeting on Athlete Investment Programme and Sport Specific Awards

At the end of the presentation the Interim Chair asked for Members' overall thoughts on the Business Case and a lengthy discussion ensued during which many points in the Business Case were challenged.

Concern was expressed that as Northern Ireland is a small country the reality is that it will not be a world force in 35 sports. Members also raised issues relating to the retention of retired athletes as part of the sporting workforce.

There was a detailed debate about the additionality of Lottery funding; and also the commitment to funding beyond CSR. Members heard that this was Lottery funding and was not the subject of CSR limitations. The Business Case would not have to go to DCAL because it is Lottery funding.

Members confirmed their support of driving performance through this investment programme. Whilst recognising Ministerial priorities and funding issues it was still important to make investments that will support the achievement of high performance goals.

The view was expressed that the words "world leading" and "world class" should be avoided as with a budget of £13.2m that will not be achieved across 35 sports. Some concern was expressed about the strategic incongruence. The programme is 2013-17 and SNI's strategy ends in 2019.

Members again queried the capacity of governing bodies, 40% of whom had

managed to come up to speed with governance. Would they now be able to take on such additional processes?

Members made various comments and observations and endorsed a view that efforts be made to find the best athletes who could compete at the highest level of their sport in the world. This programme should put in place a system that would support natural talent.

The Director of Performance responded to Members' comments.

Targets within the programme are not medal exclusive. Targets set are in line with measuring transitional changes in sports systems. Medals are a real bonus at the end. The intention is to demonstrate that our athletes are progressing and that athlete performances are improving.

Not all the sports build success on a large participation base. In terms of a shallow base for example Triathlon has a small base but has demonstrated that they can succeed at a world level.

Regarding athletes dropping out of the system this was recognised some time ago and the SNI Practitioner Development Programme had been introduced to encourage athletes going out of sport to remain involved in a variety of roles eg as mentors.

Regarding timelines, the Investment Assurance Manager was conscious of that and confirmed it could be managed.

Regarding the opportunities for the less well-off to succeed in sport it was noted that the most successful sport currently in Northern Ireland is boxing with participants coming from the most deprived communities.

Regarding additionality in funding, it was noted that this is a different programme and way of working, albeit building on and learning from the previous investments. As SINI will likely be funded from Exchequer SNI had little room to fund this work from elsewhere.

Members queried if all 34 sports would be involved for the full duration of the programme.

The Acting Chief Executive said that not every sport will move forward with the same speed in each programme. Those sports that fall out can be directed to a participation or coaching route. An escalator analogy was used with athletes being able to step off smoothly.

The Director of Performance stated that progress can be measured horizontally within the five pillars of the performance system, as well as measuring movement vertically. High performance operations are only one pillar of the system and are supported by work with clubs and young people from an early age, without which support future success would be unlikely. The 34 organisations are all at different stages in development. It is not foreseen that 34 organisations will continue to receive PerformanceFocus funding throughout the life of the programme.

Members queried the capacity of SNI to deliver PerformanceFocus from existing resources. Members were assured that, with some changes in staffing, the

programme will be delivered.

The Interim Chair noted the broad spread of views of Members and that there was a general consensus to support the programme. Members -

- Approved the programme level business case for investment PerformanceFocus 2013-17.
- Approved commitment of up to £13.2m from SNI's Lottery Funds to the PerformanceFocus investment programme.
- Noted that individual project assessment recommendations for individual governing bodies will be brought to the Board for decision in due course; and
- Noted that a Programme Level Business Case for Athlete Investment Programme and Sports Institute Northern Ireland will be brought to the Board for decision in due course.

8 **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Members considered the Management Accounts for the seven month period to 31 October 2012. (Paper SNI/123/142).

Members queried if the Lottery surplus of £2.4 million was being carried over and if it had been ear-marked for other expenditure and noted that Lottery income was recorded in a different way. It was not year-end sensitive and it remained in the NLDF balance.

9 **CLIFTONVILLE FOOTBALL CLUB LEGAL CHARGE**

Members considered Paper SNI/12/136. This Paper conducted a risk assessment of a proposal put forward by Cliftonville Football Club concerning the preferential status of the SNI legal charge. It drew conclusions and made a recommendation to Council.

Members discussed the proposal from Cliftonville Football Club and the case for and against supporting Cliftonville Football Club's proposal; and they paid cognisance to the increased risk to public funds highlighted by the LPC valuation.

Members approved the recommendation that as a public body SNI's responsibilities for managing public funds need to take precedence and rejected the request to re-prioritise SNI's legal charge.

10 **MOYOLA PARK FOOTBALL CLUB**

Members considered Paper SNI/12/138 which referred to a number of changes to the "revenue tail" element of Moyola Park FC's Building Sport Award.

Members agreed the recommendation to approve the re-assignment of the Moyola Park FC Building Sport revenue tail to Magherafelt District Council; the re-classification of the approved revenue tail post as a sports development/business administration; and the re-profiling of the balance of the revenue tail award over three years.

11 **BUSINESS PLAN 2012/13 QUARTER 2 REVIEW**

Members noted SNI's Business Plan Quarterly Review which highlighted SNI's progress against 57 key performance indicators for the second quarter (July-September) of 2012/13 (Paper SNI/12/140).

12 **QUALITY ASSURANCE STATEMENT JULY- SEPTEMBER 2012 AND RISK REGISTER**

Members considered paper SNI/12/125. Members noted that the Risk Register provided them with a summary of the key corporate risks, their rating, agreed mitigation activities and progress against those activities.

The Quarterly Assurance Statement for quarter 2 of 2012/13 outlined the current governance structures within Sport Northern Ireland and any realised or emerging issues.

Members noted that these were discussed at a recent DCAL Monitoring Meeting; they approved both documents; and authorised the Chair to sign the Quarterly assurance Statement.

13 **DELGATED DECISIONS**

Members received Paper SNI/12/141 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Sport NI's Delegated Decisions Policy.

14 **RECENT MEDIA QUERIES**

Members received Paper SNI/12/143 and noted recent media queries and SNI's responses. It was agreed that the Interim Chair would respond as soon as possible.

15 **PUBLICATIONS**

Members received "Awards for Sport".

16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 12 December 2012 at 5pm at the House of Sport. This would follow the meeting with the Minister which was to take place at 4pm.

Members noted and agreed suggested dates for Council Meetings and Audit and Risk Management Committee Meetings in 2013. It was agreed that Mr P Cummings would, as Vice-Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee, convene a meeting and include two volunteers from Members while Mr Turnbull and Mr J D'Arcy were acting in their Interim capacities. Mr G Campbell and Mr S McCullough volunteered to sit on the Committee at its next meeting.

17 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

17.1 The Acting Chief Executive reported that DCAL Minister had requested SNI to investigate how an additional investment of half a million pounds in each of the three big sports in this financial year could be spent; and also sought proposals

for a further two years. DCAL had stipulated what this money should be spend on; Football, Rugby, GAA, to address poverty and social exclusion, with particular focus on child poverty and neighbourhood renewal rural areas.

In discussion Members expressed the view that governing bodies and coaches do may not have the training and capacity to deal with those issues.

The Interim Chairman suggested the principle of managing ad hoc requests like this is a topic which would be an important part of the discussion with the Minister at the meeting on 12 December. One of the main objectives would be to understand the Minister's priorities for the future.

It was agreed that the Acting Chief Executive would respond to the request for information.

Action 3: Acting Chief Executive to respond to DCAL.

Mr P Cummings left the meeting.

- 17.2 Members heard that the approval to go ahead with the SINI business case has still not been received. The Value For Money work is also still awaiting approval.
- 17.3 Members heard that the 50m pool is still scheduled to be finished in late February or early March 2013.
- 17.4 Members heard that the World Police and Fire Games have now selected a postholder and through secondment that will mean that SNI reverts to the original situation of three seconded staff.

There being no further business the meeting finished at 7.40 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

House of Sport
Upper Malone Road
Belfast
BT9 5LT