

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES

CONFIDENTIAL

First Meeting 2011

Held on Tuesday 1 February in the House of Sport, Malone Road,
Belfast BT9 5LA.

PRESENT

In the Chair:	D Walsh
Members:	O Brown J D'Arcy U Duncan B Macaulay A Money Penny B McCargo D O'Connor J Rodgers A Strong
Chief Executive:	E McCartan
Staff in Attendance:	N Harkness S Ogle A Sloan R McCormick N Bowman (for part) M Smith (for part) E Bailey

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr M Cowan and Mr P Turnbull.

2 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

2.1 **Update on CAL Committee**

EMcC attended the CAL Committee in Newtownabbey at the request and direction of the Minister who sought to address a number of inaccuracies that he believed the Committee had adopted following a previous visit by Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

2.2 Members agreed to bring item 6 (Declaration of Interest) to an earlier position on the agenda. No Member declared an interest.

2.3 **2012 Leadership Committee**

The Chairman gave the background to the number of meetings he had attended some time ago. Members agreed that a letter be sent from the

Chairman to the Minister expressing concern at the failure to hold meetings for some months and requesting an update. The Chief Executive undertook to draft a letter reflecting Members' sentiments.

- 2.4 The Chairman referred to the death of Mrs Michaela McAreavey (nee Harte) on honeymoon in Mauritius. He and the Chief Executive had attended the funeral; and he extended his praise for the way the GAA organised, supported, and provided comfort at such a sad time of need for Michaela's husband John McAreavey, her father and mother, Mickey and Marian Harte, and her family.

He then referred to the death of the paralympic rower Karen Cromie on Friday 28 January. This untimely death of the athlete was very sad particularly given the circumstances of the incident.

He also referred to the death of the young 14 year old boy from Carrickfergus Grammar School who died following a tragic accident while playing rugby.

Members observed a one-minute silence in memory of these young people.

- 2.5 The Chairman referred to the recent media coverage regarding elite facilities and interviews given by the Minister and asked for Members' views of the coverage. Members felt strongly that the reputation of SNI had been unfairly put at risk. Members tasked the Chairman to contact the Permanent Secretary as a matter of urgency and to raise these issues with her. The Chairman undertook to do so immediately after the meeting.

2.6 Ulster Camogie Council

The Director of Corporate Services read out a letter in relation to the Ulster Camogie Council (UCC) dated 14 January 2011 from the Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary states that:

- A number of irregular payments were made to UCC.
- That Sport Northern Ireland did not in the past have in place sufficiently robust processes to ensure regularity in the disbursement of granting funding to UCC.
- That Sport Northern Ireland did not recognise and appropriately respond to a number of warning signs.
- That vouching systems while assumed adequate in the context of processing individual payments, did not constitute an alternative to proper governance and accountability arrangements.
- That Sport Northern Ireland failed to act on offers of information.
- That Sport Northern Ireland wrongfully treated offers of information as either press enquiries or Freedom of Information requests rather than in accordance with established fraud procedures.
- That the issue should have been a standing agenda item at Audit Committee meetings.

The Director advised that the Permanent Secretary welcomed the fact that Sport Northern Ireland has now indicated to the Department that it accepts that the offer of information should have been dealt with in accordance with

fraud procedures. The Director assured Members that future offers of information or allegations, irrespective of their source, will be treated in accordance with the Fraud Response Plan.

3 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of 2010 held on 7 December 2010, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed subject to a change as noted in paragraph 4.1 below (reference 2.4).

4 **MATTERS ARISING**

- 4.1 Reference 2.4 – Members referred to the issue of dual use and school estate and noted that it had not been included in the Minute.
- 4.2 Reference 2.5 – Members noted that the Chairman was involved in the selection and recruitment process for new Council Members.
- 4.3 Reference 7.2 - Coleraine Borough Council. Members received an update on the level of award.
- 4.4 Reference 10.8 – Marketing – Members asked that Northern Ireland Assembly and CAL Committee questions be included in the Marketing Report.

5 **CORRESPONDENCE**

5.1 St Colman's College Sports Facilities

Members noted a letter dated 14 January from the Principal in which he expressed his gratitude to SNI for its financial contribution to the project and thanked the following staff: Mr N Harkness, Mr C McGurk, Ms H-B Hudson and Mr S Trainor for their hard work and dedication.

6 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

This item was dealt with earlier in items 2.2.

7 **PARTICIPATION**

7.1 Training and Holding Camps

Members received an update from the Director of Corporate Services Unit on progress to date. Members noted that a number of projects are ongoing at this time but that for a lot of sports final qualification for the London 2012 Olympics will not take place until Spring 2012.

7.2 World Police and Fire Games Belfast 2013

Members received an update (Paper SNI/11/18) and noted the current list of likely sports; the Department of Finance and Personnel approval of the business case; the progress made with identifying venues; the progress made with recruiting Sports Managers and Co-ordinators; and the development of sports specific business plans and budgets.

Members heard that SNI's representative on the World Police and Fire Games Committee is Mr B McCargo. Members expressed some concern that progress was slow bearing in mind the proximity of the event and in comparison with the progress made by Melbourne at a similar stage; however they noted that much hard work is being carried out behind the scenes.

7.3 Capital Programme and Overseeing Function

Members received an update on the progress of the various Capital Programmes run by SNI (Paper SNI/11/19) and noted risks relating to external dependencies relating to St Colman's, the 50m pool, the mountain bike trail at Tollymore National Outdoor Centre and proper procurement by applicants to the Sport Matters Capital Equipment Programme.

7.4 Implementation of the Safety at sports Ground (NI) Order

Members received an update on work undertaken by SNI regarding the implementation of the Articles of the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 relating to certification (Paper SNI/11/20).

7.5 Delegated Decisions – Places

Members received Paper SNI/11/21 and noted action taken in accordance with Council policy.

7.6 Steward Training Programme

Members considered Paper SNI/11/22 which sought approval for an increase in award for the training of stewards at sports grounds under the provisions of the Safety at Sports Grounds (NI) Order 2006.

Members approved the recommendation for additional funding of up to a maximum of £17,095, required to train stewards at designated sports grounds in line with a DCAL recognised qualification.

8 **PERFORMANCE UNIT**

8.1 2011/2012 Athlete Investment Programme

Members considered Paper SNI/11/12 which outlined the assessment process that had been undertaken to date with regards to the Athlete Investment Programme (AIP). Approval was sought for the recommended 2011 AIP awards contained in the Project Assessment Reports prepared by Performance Consultants.

Members noted that this had been discussed thoroughly at the Performance Committee and approved the recommendation.

8.2 Recognition of Governing Bodies Operating in Northern Ireland

Members considered Paper SNI/11/13 and approved the recommendation to recognise Softball Ulster as the recognised governing body of Softball Ulster; subject to confirmation that the Irish Sports Council has recognised Softball Ireland as the governing body for softball in the island of Ireland.

8.3 Delegated Decisions – Performance

Members received Paper SNI/11/14 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy.

8.4 Performance Sport Team Update

Members received Paper SNI/11/15 and noted ongoing work in the Performance Sport Team.

8.5 Request for Award Adjustment/Increase

Members considered Paper SNI/11/16 which sought approval for increases in the Athlete Support Programme living costs and sports costs awards in respect of five athletes due to extensions of the initial award period from 12months to 15 months.

Members approved the recommendations.

9 **CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT**

9.1 Management Accounts

Members considered the Management Accounts for the nine-month period to 31 December 2010 and approved their submission to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

Mr A Strong left the meeting

9.2

Fraud Policy

Members received the revised Policy which provided guidance to staff and Members on the current anti-fraud and corruption procedures (Paper SNI/11/10). Members noted that the Policy had been considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

9.3

Risk Register

Members received the Risk Register for information (Paper SNI/11/11).

9.4

Marketing

Members received the Press and Media Report which provided an update of recent and upcoming activities in the Communications and Advocacy Department (Paper SNI/11/9). Members agreed that it was important to have SINI athlete successes featured on the website.

9.5

Delegated Decisions – Corporate Services

Members received Paper SNI/11/23 and noted actions taken in accordance with Council policy.

9.6

National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF)

Members considered Paper SNI/11/24 which sought approval for the policy on the Management of the NLDF balance and the delegation of authority to officers to make amendments to the policy as a result of Section 75 Screening.

Members approved the recommendations.

9.7

Savings Delivery Plan and Strategic Prioritisation of Budgets 2011-2015

Members considered Paper SNI/11/25 and approved the SNI Savings Delivery Plan and also the Strategic Prioritisation of Budgets for the period 2011-15.

10

COMMITTEE REPORTS - FOR ADOPTION

10.1

Places Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 November 2010.

10.2

Participation Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2010. Members enquired after Mrs A Mewha who had been ill and asked that their best wishes be extended to her.

11

COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR INFORMATION

There were no reports.

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12.1 Members heard that a nominee was sought from each of the Home Country Sports Councils for membership of a CCPR Selection Panel to appoint members to the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee. DCAL asked SNI to nominate and it was agreed that Mr B McCargo would be SNI's nominee.

12.2 The Chief Executive referred to his policy decision not to give press interviews in respect of Elite Facilities. It was his intention to maintain that view unless otherwise directed by Council.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting closed at 3.45 pm.

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 5 April 2011

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

House of Sport
Upper Malone Road
Belfast
BT9 5LT