

## **SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **MINUTES**

### **CONFIDENTIAL**

#### **Fourth Meeting 2010**

Held on 3 August 2010 in the House of Sport, Malone Road,  
Belfast BT9 5LA.

### **PRESENT**

In the Chair:	D Walsh
Members:	O Brown M Cowan J D'Arcy U Duncan B Macaulay A Money Penny B McCargo D O'Connor J Rodgers
Observer: Department of Culture Arts and Leisure	E Jardine
Chief Executive:	E McCartan
Staff in Attendance:	N Harkness S Ogle A Sloan T Gorman A Campbell C McGurk J Poots E Bailey

### 1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr A Strong and Mr P Turnbull.

### 2 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

- 2.1 The Chairman welcomed Members and Mr Edgar Jardine of the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL).
- 2.2 The Chairman congratulated Mr John D'Arcy on his new appointment as Director of The Open University in Ireland.
- 2.3 **Update on Irish Football Association (IFA)**

The HR Manager briefed Members on the Report into the IFA copies of which were now available from the Director of Corporate Services. Members noted

that SNI had been asked by the Minister to carry out an investigation into the dismissal of the IFA ex-Chief Executive, Mr Howard Wells.

Members recalled the various economic appraisals of the IFA. one of which was for governance and administration, the idea of which was to evaluate if the IFA was fit for purpose. Subsequently actions were taken which did not take into account the rules of good governance which has led to questions being asked as to whether or not the IFA should receive any further public finances.

Members referred to the current situation regarding resignations within the IFA and the risk to SNI in administering funding to the IFA. Dr O Brown raised the issue of accountability risks to SNI and advised extreme caution by management.

Members agreed that they have a role jointly and severally to oversee public funds and that they are required to take action if there is evidence that a governing body is not fit for purpose.

The HR Manager presented the key findings of the FPM Consultants Report and Members noted the seriousness of the findings. Members were offered the opportunity to take the Report with them. After discussion the Chief Executive advised Members that they should take note of the contents of the Report. Furthermore Members were asked to note that, as a Company Limited by Guarantee, the Directors of IFA have a duty of care to the company as outlined within the fiduciary duties of a Director.

Members also noted that the Chief Executive of the IFA had committed the organisation to undergoing an independent governance review in the very near future.

Mr E Jardine endorsed the SNI Chief Executive's comments. He referred to the Minister's role in the issue and his desire to ensure that the best practice be followed regarding governance and structure and expenditure of public money.

After lengthy discussion Members noted and accepted the findings of the Report by FPM Consultants and tasked officers to continue working with DCAL and the IFA to move towards creating a body fit for purpose.

### 3 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Third Meeting held on 1 June 2010 having been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

### 4 **MATTERS ARISING**

- 4.1 Ref 2.5 – Meeting with the Minister. The Chief Executive reported that a draft minute had been received from DCAL and it was hoped this would be finalised soon.
- 4.2 Ref 4.1 – Selection and Recruitment of extra Council Members. The Chief Executive reported on the recent meeting and communication with the Permanent Secretary.

On the issue of the vacancies on Council she had advised that we could maintain the status quo and fill the vacancies next year. Co-option of

individuals was not possible because they have to be Ministerial appointments; and it would not be possible to appoint people from the last competition as it had run its course. Consequently the Permanent Secretary asked that SNI look at the shortfall and how it might impact on governance issues. In early 2011 consideration would be given to recruitment for the new Council. SNI agreed to prepare a paper on the impact and implications of the reduced Board and to forward it in due course to the Permanent Secretary.

- 4.3 Ref 4.2 – Members asked if there had been any development from the meeting with the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) about The Cliff project in Larne. Members were advised that a further communication had been received from the Protestant Community Lobby Group (PCLG) in the same style and tone as previously. Legal advice had been sought and it was brought to the attention of the PSNI who advised that it be referred to legal advisors for a draft response. Members confirmed that this had been included in the Risk Assessment document.

## 5 **CORRESPONDENCE**

### 5.1 Permanent Secretary, DCAL

The Chief Executive referred to letters from the Permanent Secretary dated 21 July relating to Council Membership; Major Sporting Infrastructure Programme; and 23 July 2010 relating to the Minister's annual meeting with the Chair of SNI.

Members noted the equal pay issue which related to all arms-length bodies.

Members heard that current indications would suggest there is likely to be a minimum of 17% reduction in funding.

The Chief Executive put on record his thanks to the Chairman for his work on the various priority issues and in particular the Pre-Games Training Camps. Members agreed that if SNI did not have sufficient funding for Northern Ireland athletes it would be unlikely to have sufficient funding for the development of those foreign athletes who would be competing against them.

### 5.2 Volunteer Now

Members noted letter dated 21 May 2010 which congratulated SNI on the launch of sport matters and offered to take part in any implementation group relating to volunteering.

### 5.3 Irish Hockey Association

Members noted letter dated 1 June 2010 expressing thanks and appreciation for Council Members taking time to attend the Irish Hockey Awards.

### 5.4 Belfast Boxing Ring

Members noted e-mail dated 3 June 2010 about the establishment of an organisation called "Belfast Boxing Ring".

5.5 Department of the Environment

Members noted e-mail of 8 June 2010 complimenting Tollymore National Outdoor Centre on the new building and the professionalism shown by everyone involved in a recent course.

5.6 Special Olympics Ireland

Members noted letter dated 19 July 2010 from the Chief Executive of Special Olympics Ireland expressing their gratitude to SNI for its support to Special Olympics Ireland.

5.7 RYA NI

Members noted letter dated 21 July and e-mail dated 27 July 2010 which thanked SNI, the HR team and Mr J McKearney for all the help they received on recent recruitment and office move.

5.8 Radio Ulster

Members noted transcription of an interview with the Minister on 27 July in connection with the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

6 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman asked every one individually if they had any interest to declare. The following declared an interest.

Mr A Moneypenny - North Down Borough Council  
Cllr J Rodgers - Belfast City Council and Glentoran Football Club  
Mr J D'Arcy - Commonwealth Games  
Dr O Brown – Countryside Recreation NI and Commonwealth Games

7 **PARTICIPATION UNIT**

7.1 Derry City Council – North West Regional Sports Campus

Members considered Paper SNI/10/136. The Paper presented a re-assessment and an update on the Building Sport project – North West Regional Sport Campus project, developed by Derry City Council, which is now at Stage Two – Outline Business Case Stage.

Members noted changes with this project during its Stage Two development pertaining to the actual applicant, the scope of the project and the site. However the quality of the bid was not reduced in terms of scoring. Officers proposed that this be brought to the next stage but that any funding decision be subject to any monies being made available within CSR.

Members asked a number of questions for clarification and approved the recommendation that the project should progress to stage three ie Full Business Case and Procurement Strategy, subject to confirmation of available budget from the Comprehensive Spending Review or at the applicant organisation's own risk with no payment of development costs until the capital budget is secured. The project would progress only subject to addressing the stipulated

requirements in the Paper.

## 7.2 Building Sport Programme Stage II

Members considered Paper SNI/10/137 which sought approval for an indicative award to Portadown Boat Club of £428,145 towards the capital costs of the preferred option.

Members considered the assessment report and gave approval for an indicative award of £428,145 towards the capital costs of the preferred option to Stage II.

## 7.3 Adventure Activities Accreditation Scheme

Members received an update on the current situation (Paper SNI/10/138) and approved the recommendation to endorse Adventuremark as a suitable adventure activity accreditation scheme for Northern Ireland; and agreed that SNI staff should continue to progress options for its implementation within delegated limits and only to the extent that funds are available.

## 7.4 Mountain Leader Training Northern Ireland

Members considered and approved Paper SNI/10/139 which recommended changes to the Mountain Leader Training NI (MLTNI) Terms of Reference.

## 7.5 World Police and Fire Games Belfast 2013

Members received Paper SNI/10/140 which provided an update on developments regarding the proposed delivery vehicle for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

Members noted the work stream and it was agreed that best practice should be followed regarding advertising for staff and any secondments which would take place.

## 7.6 Capital Programmes and Overseeing Body

Members received an update on progress of the various Capital Programmes run by SNI Capital Teams (Paper SNI/10/141).

## 7.7 Participation Team Update

Members received an overview of the work of the Participation Team in the period May-July 2010 and noted areas of work over the next six months (Paper SNI/10/142).

## 7.8 Report of Delegated Decisions – Capital Team

Members received Paper SNI/10/143 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy.

## 7.9 Report of Delegated Decisions – Participation Unit

Members received Paper SNI/10/144 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy.

***Dr O Brown declared an interest and left the room.***

7.10 Mourne Mountain Biking Facility

Members considered Paper SNI/10/145 NH has not had an update

Members noted the proposed development of the significant investment for Sport and Physical Recreation in the Forests of Castlewellan and Rostrevor and approved an investment of up to £150,000. They also agreed the investment of up to £100,000 on a skill development course on the current TNOC leased area subject to an appropriate business case and Forest Service approval.

***Dr O Brown returned to the room.***

7.11 New Participation Capital Investments 2010-2014

Members considered Paper SNI/10/146 which informed of the programme regarding developing a suite of capital investment programmes advising of DCAL priorities for this investment; and requested approval to launch the programmes subject to DCAL approval.

Members noted the Ministerial priorities in the Paper and complimented officers on the work being carried out to increase participation. They also noted that the provision of facilities does not automatically lead to increased participation or development of sport. Members noted the importance of revenue support to capital facilities and noted that current budget prevented this.

After discussion Members approved officers to develop and launch the medium and large phases of the "Sport Matters" participation capital programme, subject to approval from DCAL and availability of budget.

8 **PERFORMANCE UNIT**

8.1 Performance Unit Update

Members received an update on the work of the Performance Unit (Paper SNI/10/147).

Members discussed paragraph 9 of the paper – Delhi Preparation Committee and the need for a realistic number of achievable medals from the Commonwealth Games. They agreed that if SINI were offered the opportunity to come on board earlier in the process there might be a greater potential of more medals. The Chief Executive referred to the partnership formed with Commonwealth Games Committees by Sports Scotland and Sports Council Wales; whereas despite SINI's best efforts that has not been the case in Northern Ireland.

8.2 Request for an Award Adjustment

Members considered Paper/10/148 and approved the recommendation to increase two awards for Athlete Support Programme Living Costs.

### 8.3 Delegated Decisions – Performance Unit

Members received Paper SNI/10/149 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy.

### 8.4 Commonwealth Games

Members received Paper SNI/10/153 advising them of the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Team Selection for the Delhi Games. SNI had not been informed of the team before it went to the press.

The Paper highlighted the level of variance in final team selection against potential Games athletes put forward by governing bodies in 2007; predicted athlete performance; athletes who are currently receiving support through NI funding and services provided through Performer Development Centres and SINI.

Members noted that not all of the athletes had the Commonwealth Games as their target. SNI was looking at who was going to Delhi and the results they expected. It was incumbent on SNI to ask for an explanation as to why the team members were picked.

Members noted the contents.

## 9 **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### 9.1 Management Accounts

Members considered the Management Accounts for the three-month period ended 30 June 2010 (Paper SNI/10/150) and approved their submission to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

Mr E Jardine reported that whilst SNI was not successful in its bids to the June monitoring round, DCAL will not be reducing SNI's budget for a reduction imposed by the Executive in year of £800,000.

### 9.2 Risk Register

Members received Paper SNI/10/151 and noted the summary of the key corporate risks, their rating, agreed mitigation activities and progress against these activities.

Members heard that this was discussed at the Audit Committee and at the DCAL monitoring meeting.

### 9.3 Delegated Decisions - Corporate Services Unit

Members received Paper SNI/10/152 and noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy.

#### 9.4 Marketing

Members received the Press and Media Report (Paper SNI/10/155). Members noted that in the past the Minister had hosted a reception for the athletes going to the Commonwealth Games.

#### 9.5 Visit to the 2010 Commonwealth Games – Delhi, India

Members considered Paper SNI/10/156 which sought approval for the Chairman, Vice-Chairman Chair of the Delhi 2010 Preparation Group, Chief Executive and one SNI officer attending the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India on 3-14 October 2010.

Members noted the range of benefits of attendance at the Games and the estimated cost of sending Members and officers of up to £35,000. They agreed the importance of suitable representation at the Games but realised the importance of economical prudence.

It is not certain if the Minister will attend the Games and the Ministerial Conference and, if he were to attend, there would be a requirement for SNI to support him; and to ensure that Northern Ireland was showcased. It was agreed to ascertain what the other Sports Councils are planning.

After discussion Members gave approval for up to five SNI representatives to attend the Games.

#### 9.6 Commonwealth Games Reception 2010 – Delhi, India

Members considered Paper SNI/10/157 which sought approval to host a SNI Commonwealth Games Reception 2010 in Delhi.

Members noted the benefits which included considerable networking around the Olympic Games Pre-Games Training Camps.

After discussion Members approved the recommendation to host a Commonwealth Games Reception with a budget of up to £10,000.

#### 9.7 Updated Appeals Policy and Procedure

Members considered SNI's revised Appeals Policy and Procedure (Paper SNI/10/158). This revised Policy would streamline the appeal process for both the applicant and SNI.

Members noted the main features of the revised Appeals Policy and Procedures and discussed them at length. The revision had been carried out having taken advice for SNI's legal advisors, Arthur Cox Solicitors.

Members discussed the legal indemnity aspect of an Independent Reviewer and agreed to seek advice on best practice. The number of days for receipt of queries was also discussed and clarified.

After discussion, and subject to the above query, Members approved delegated authority to Officers to pursue the queries raised and to finalise the revised



Appeals Policy and Procedure.

10 **COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR ADOPTION**

10.1 Participation Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Participation Committee held on 20 May 2010.

11 **COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR INFORMATION**

There were no Reports.

12 **PUBLICATIONS**

12.1 Members received "Active", the official magazine of Disability Sports Northern Ireland.

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 5 October 2010.

14 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

14.1 Mr E Jardine thanked the Chairman for the chance to sit through the Council meeting. He said that it reinforced the important role that Members play. He had been quite amazed at the number of representational roles which members have. He referred to the complex and fraught political, financial and policy environment in which SNI and DCAL work; and to the significant challenges that lay ahead particularly the Comprehensive Spending Review. On behalf of the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure he expressed gratitude to Members for the work that they do.

14.2 The Director of Corporate Services Unit referred to an e-mail dated 23 June 2010 from Mr Paul Welsh, Deputy Editor of the Newry Reporter, regarding Item 2.7 of the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13 April 2010 relating to Camogie. He read out the e-mail as follows:

*"I refer to the Sport NI Board meeting dated below, please be advised that I contacted the Board member directly, Paddy Turnbull in my capacity as a journalist and not as a whistleblower as stated in the minutes. I trust Sport NI will adjust the minutes to reflect that fact accordingly.  
Kind regards,*

*Paul Welsh."*

Council noted that there was some confusion in the contact process by Mr Welsh and accepted his point of clarification, ie that he had approached the Member as a journalist and not as a whistleblower; and agreed to have this clarification recorded in the Minutes of this meeting.

14.3 The Director of Corporate Services Unit informed Members that information about an allegation of fraud had been received via the Community Relations Council regarding a Victims' Group: Saver Naver.

SNI had provided a grant of £7,500 for gym equipment to the Group. DCAL had been informed of this matter and SNI's internal auditor had recently visited the premises of the Group and confirmed that the gym equipment is still on the premises. The PSNI had become involved and are currently carrying out an investigation.

The Chief Executive stated that unless a full briefing is obtained from the Community Relations Council then SNI will conduct its own investigation.

Members agreed that this matter be entered as a standing item on the Audit Committee Agenda and also be entered into the Risk Register.

- 14.4 The Director of Corporate Services Unit informed Members that communication had been received from a Mr H McCusker reference the Meadows Equestrian Centre. This referred to their unsuccessful appeal and their consideration of a Judicial Review. Mr McCusker had intimated that he would not pursue that route if SNI paid him professional fees incurred by him.

Members heard that it was made clear to all applicants that they incur such costs at their own risk.

- 14.5 The Director of Corporate Services Unit asked Members to ensure that their travel and subsistence claims were submitted within the time limit of three months.

- 14.6 The Director of Corporate Services Unit referred to an outstanding Declaration of Interest form and asked that it be returned as soon as possible.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and Mr Jardine for his kind comments. He said that this Council was robust, active and enthusiastic and he was proud to be its Chairman.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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