

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

PERFORMANCE SMIG MEETING

The minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Performance SMIG held on Thursday 22nd September 2011 at 10.30am in Sport Northern Ireland, House of Sport, 2a Upper Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5LA.

PRESENT

Chair: Danny O'Connor, SNI

**Members: Brian McCargo, SNI
Stephen Martin, OCI
Jerry Bingham, UK Sport
Tony Cunningham, Irish Sports Council
Michael McGeehin, Coaching Ireland
Stewart Tosh, NICGC
Eugene Young, Ulster Council GAA
Gary Longwell, Ulster Branch IRFU
Sara Booth, IFA
Paul Whitten, Disability Sports NI
Roy Millar, Northern Ireland Sports Forum**

**SNI Staff: Shaun Ogle
Robin Gregg
Jill Poots
Paul Donnelly
Jamie Uprichard**

1 CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the second Performance SMIG meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair advised that a number of SNI members would be standing down in December 2011 following completion of two terms. This would have an effect on some of the SMIG group membership but SNI were seeking advice from DCAL on the best way to deal with this issue.
- 1.3 The Chair advised that since the last meeting he had attended the Sports Matters Monitoring Group (SMMG) meeting and had given an overview of progress-to-date of the Performance SMIG. He stated that he had reinforced that many of the targets contained within Sport Matters would not be achievable without the buy-in from all stakeholders. The Chair also stated that he had outlined the complexities of sports' governing body structures in Northern Ireland (eg. NI stand alone, UK and All-Ireland bodies) and the Performance SMIG's willingness as a group, to work together to deliver on the Performance targets.

2 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Olive Brown (SNI), Finbarr Kirwin (ISC) who was represented by his deputy Tony Cunningham, Robert McVeigh (NICGC) who was represented by his deputy Stewart Tosh, Louisa O’Riordan, formerly Louisa Huddy (BOA), Desi Curry (IFA) who was represented by his deputy Sara booth and June Brown (DSNI) who was represented by her deputy Paul Whitten.

3 REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 20th January 2011 were approved as an accurate record and signed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Item 4.3 – The Chair advised that some organisations had yet to appoint a nominated deputy and requested that these be appointed as soon as possible.

ACTION: All members to ensure that a nominated deputy is forwarded to SNI.

- 4.2 Item 5.4-5.6 – Members were informed that these actions have been completed and R Gregg will present priorities for actions following the research later in the meeting.
- 4.3 Item 6.3 and 7.2 – The Chair stated that these actions relate to Action Planning and Progress Reporting which would be discussed later in the meeting.

5. REVIEW OF SMIG ACTION PLAN 2011-15 – MEMBER UPDATES AND APPROVAL FOR SUBMISSION TO SMMG

- 5.1 The Chair thanked all members for their effort and commitment in providing a submission to the draft Action Plan.
- 5.2 It was noted that SNI staff had met with a number of members regarding the actions contained within the draft Action Plan to ensure it fully reflected the work that members planned to undertake over the period 2011-15.
- 5.3 The Chair stated that the draft Action Plan was circulated to members in advance of the meeting and requested that members provide a verbal update on some of their listed actions, highlighting any potential issues affecting their delivery.

- 5.4 T Cunningham (ISC) commented on the performance planning of 5 all island sports and delivering and expanding services in conjunction with SNI, SINI and IIS. He advised of planned joint funding posts and highlighted the example of boxing where Irish boxers had supported NI athletes prior to the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.
- 5.5 S Martin commented the Olympic Council of Ireland (OCI) were interested that a high performance system existed to supported NI athletes at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. He also commented on the excellent example of collaborative work that existed between SINI and IIS working with triathletes.
- 5.6 M McGeehin (Coaching Ireland) commented that Sport Matters has strengthened the work of the organisation. The group were also informed that CI were investigating the potential to roll out the Adventuremark accreditation on an all-Island basis.
- 5.7 J Bingham (UK Sport) highlighted some examples of rowing and wheelchair basketball athletes being represented on UKS's World Class Programme, however stated that there were few NI athletes within GB squads. JB commented that UKS were re-doubling efforts to support the home countries in light of the upcoming "merger" with Sport England. JB stated that UKS's project board had already met to discuss funding and investment plans for the Rio cycle ahead of the 2016 Games.
- 5.8 S Ogle discussed past funding streams for NI athletes and highlighted improved athlete performances as a direct output of Sport Matters. He stated that the new planned investment programme for governing bodies would have greater engagement with other stakeholders. The North/South and East/West elements of the Northern Ireland performance systems were highlighted as unique but beneficial for networking opportunities for the development of NI athletes.
- 5.9 S Martin stated that investment should be focussed on those sports and athletes that have the potential to deliver a return.
- 5.10 R Millar (NI Sports Forum) informed the group that the NISF had held an information session with a range of governing bodies to increase awareness of Sport Matters and discuss individual organisations' contributions. P Donnelly confirmed that to date, only 2 governing bodies had responded to an online survey that SNI had developed in connection with the NISF in order to obtain the contribution of all governing bodies.
- 5.11 The Chair commented that Sport Matters highlights an opportunity for members to do things better and in a better way. He requested that members forward on any additional comments regarding the draft Action Plan to SNI staff by 26 September 2011.

6. PROGRESS REPORTING OCTOBER 2010 - SEPTEMBER 2011 - REPORTING TEMPLATE

- 6.1 P Donnelly informed the group that the Progress Report covering the period 2009-10 would be presented at the next Sport Matters Monitoring Group (SMMG) meeting on 5 October. The Chair requested that any updates to the document should be forwarded to SNI staff by Monday 26 September 2012.
- 6.2 P Donnelly introduced the new progress reporting template to members, highlighting that the data capture form and reporting process had been greatly simplified. The group were informed that the deadline for providing submissions was 11 November 2011. The Chair commented that this was a great opportunity to detail the work of all member organisations.
- 6.3 Members endorsed the Progress Report 2009-10.

**7. GROUP DISCUSSION: CHALLENGES FACING YOUR ORGANISATION/
SECTOR WHICH WILL AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE
TARGETS WITHIN SPORT MATTERS**

- 7.1 J Uprichard introduced the group discussion session and asked members what they believed to be the main challenges and opportunities facing the SMIG in achieving the Performance targets within Sport Matters.
- 7.2 S Ogle highlighted the contribution of the Irish Sports Council in their work with governing bodies in addition to the Boardroom stability of UK bodies. Target PE14, given its timeframe (2011) was particularly relevant and S Ogle highlighted the pace at which this will be achieved.
- 7.3 E Young stated that there were 5 Performance targets that were particularly relevant to the GAA and commented that it was challenging to achieve targets when staff is largely made up of volunteers and considerable motivation is required.
- 7.4 The Chair queried whether governing bodies understood the term "fit for purpose" and R Millar assured him that they were getting there.
- 7.5 J Poots informed the group that Sport NI work with 35 funded governing bodies, many of whom undergo a management audit while other undergo a recognition audit. J Poots stated that the next Progress Report will provide an update on the progress that has been made from the 24% baseline that is quoted within the Strategy.
- 7.6 R Millar highlighted the challenge of continued investment in elite sport versus other priorities including the Minister's favour of community sport. S Ogle stated that Northern Ireland has talented athletes and confirmed that we need more NI athletes on Irish and UK squads/teams. He commented that there needs to be more focus on the inherent link between community and high performance sport.
- 7.7 R Millar questioned the target of 5 medals at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games given the performance of the NI Team in Delhi. ST confirmed that the target was realistic and commented that the NICGC were receiving

feedback from coaches that NI athletes don't have top level competition on a local basis. There is a need to travel to the required competition events which presents resource issues.

- 7.8 S Tosh agreed that elite performers come from grassroots sports and participation at this level and talent identification are exceptionally important.
- 7.9 J Bingham observed that there needs to be more focus on how governing bodies recruit, confirm and then develop talent and asked how current bodies were doing it well. He confirmed that UK Sport were currently undertaking a talent ID health check on all UK governing bodies, looking at whether the supply systems balances the attrition rate of athletes leaving the system.
- 7.10 R Gregg confirmed a need for an update on current work with talent identification and development. He informed the group that there were currently 26 posts in the NI system focussing on talent, ranging from coaching to development. Furthermore talent ID was an integral part to the target PE20, although it is maybe not as transparent as the other targets.
- 7.11 S Ogle identified that it would be useful to hear from the front-line officers working in the area of talent ID to hear what problems and challenges they face on a daily basis. The attrition rate in NI is approximately 80% compared to a UK rate of approximately 30%.

Action: Provide an update on work surrounding talent ID and invite talent ID officer to present their challenges.

- 7.12 S Tosh highlighted that it was imperative for high performance sport to have integration with the education sector. He commented that it would be a useful exercise to ask current elite athletes what their motivation was and where their inspiration came from. R Gregg concurred and suggested that the importance of educational awareness be fed back to the Sport Matter Monitoring Group. R Millar informed the group that parents, teachers and coaches have the greatest influence on young athletes.
- 7.13 S Martin suggested that not all sports will contribute to each of the targets and therefore there is a need to focus on certain sports that will have the greatest impact.

Action: The Chair requested that a matrix be produced detailing the sports that will contribute to each of the targets.

- 7.14 J Poots suggested there will be a challenge in accurately measuring the targeted number of coaches in PE18 and PE19. P Donnelly confirmed that he believes population data surveys will provide this information. R Millar suggested that each funded governing body should be set an individual target to qualify a certain number of coaches. R Gregg confirmed that this was happening with respect to Governing Body Coaching Plans. Furthermore, E Young confirmed that all GAA coaches were registered on a database with Coaching Ireland.

- 7.15 S Ogle highlighted a need to use the knowledge and experience that existing within the SMIG to impact investment decisions and stated a desire to broaden the assessment panel to add additional expertise.

8. PRESENTATION: THE COACHING WORKFORCE SURVEY 2010 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- 8.1 Members received a presentation from Robin Gregg, Performance Systems Manager at Sport Northern Ireland highlighting the recommendations and priorities for action from the NI Coaching Workforce Survey 2010.
- 8.2 R Gregg stated that 17 of the high level targets identified within Sport Matters are dependent on coaching. M McGeehin informed the group that Coaching Ireland's database was contributing to the recommendation of a need for accurate and up-to-date information on coaching. The database has now been developed to offer an online interface and several smaller governing bodies who don't have their own management information system are using Coaching Ireland's system to record coaching data.
- 8.3 S Martin highlighted the importance of quality coaching in education and suggested some model of best practice and case studies would be useful.

9. SPLISS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPING A LEADING PERFORMANCE SYSTEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

- 9.1 S Ogle delivered a short presentation on plans for developing a World Leading Performance System in Northern Ireland. He introduced SNI's most recent research project, SPLISS (Sport Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success) and commented that it was embedded within Sport Matters. The group heard how the research project would enable Northern Ireland to benchmark itself internationally and show how we are competing in terms of the high performance system that is currently in place in Northern Ireland.
- 9.2 P Donnelly confirmed that 17 countries have signed up to the research study, which would provide a baseline position in relation to the Performance target PE20. He highlighted a need to repeat the study to measure progress throughout the life of the Strategy.

Action: SNI to provide an update on the progress of the SPLISS research project.

- 9.3 J Bingham informed the group that UK Sport, who were involved with the inaugural SPLISS research project found that talent identification and scientific research were in need of further development.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 A Moneypenny enquired as to whether the Performance SMIG is aware of the work of the other groups. The group were informed that the minutes of each SMIG meeting in addition to presentations would be published to the Sport Matters area of SNI's website, available at: www.sportni.net/about/SportMatters/

Action: Future meetings would include an agenda item providing an update of the work of the other SMIGs.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 Members noted the next meeting would be held in January 2012 and the exact date would be advised in due course.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

