

## **SPORT MATTERS IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (PLACES) MEETING**

The minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Places SMIG held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 1.30pm in the House of Sport.

### **PRESENT**

- Brian Henning, Chair (Acting) -Sport Northern Ireland
- Linda McAllister - Department of Education
- Patrick Nelson - Irish Football Association
- Ken Nixon - Northern Ireland Sports Forum
- Caro-Lynne Ferris - Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland
- Ivor McMullan - Chief Leisure Officers Association
- Bob Bleakley - Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Ciaran Mulholland - CAFRE/Department for Agriculture & Rural Development
- Chris Webster – Irish Rugby Football Union - Ulster Branch
- John Johnston - Department for Social Development

### **In attendance:**

Ali Campbell - Sport Northern Ireland  
Andrew Sloan - Sport Northern Ireland  
Stephen McIlveen - Sport Northern Ireland

### **1.0 APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Paul Cummings (Places SMIG Chair), Steven Law (Department of Education), Stephen McGeehan (Ulster Council Gaelic Athletic Association), and Kevin O'Neill (Disability Sport Northern Ireland).

### **2.0 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed members to the seventh meeting of the Places SMIG and thanked everyone for their attendance. After a short introduction from all members present, the Chair provided information on Sport NI's work over the last six months.
- 2.2 The Chair noted the 'Celebration of Sport Event' hosted by DCAL at the Antrim Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> March, and Sport NI's £5m investment through the Sport Matters Community Capital Programme. The Chair also noted Sport NI's work in developing a new capital investment programme and a Sports Facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Chair advised members that presentations on both projects will be delivered later in the meeting but invited Ali Campbell and Stephen McIlveen to provide introductory remarks.
- 2.3 Ali Campbell provided a short introduction to Sport NI's forthcoming capital investment programme, set within the context of revisiting Places Target PL23 and the future achievement of Places Target PL25.

2.4 Stephen McIlveen provided a short introduction to the Facilities Strategy project, set within the context of attempting to strategically prioritise investments from Sport NI's new capital programme.

### **3.0 REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> PLACES SMIG MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were considered and approved.

### **4.0 MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 The Chair reviewed the actions from the previous SMIG meeting and asked members to update on their respective actions:

**Action 1:** *NIEA to contact Sport NI and NI Sports Forum to progress potential opportunities at Redburn Country Park.*

4.2 Bob Bleakley advised members that NIEA has developed a plan for upgrading the trails at Redburn Country Park, including a dedicated running trail. Bob also advised members that the Warden at Redburn Country Park has established a stakeholder group to take forward this plan and has invited Sport NI to attend (Mike McClure – Sport NI's Outdoor Recreation Officer has arranged to visit the site). Finally, Bob updated on the concerns of the stakeholder group around the development of mountain bike trails at the Park. It is believed that due to other dedicated mountain bike sites developed in recent months, it may be more beneficial to focus on family walking/cycling trails.

4.3 Ken Nixon suggested that NIEA make contact with the Holywood Town Planning Group. Bob confirmed that the NIEA have already met with this group and that they are involved in the planning process.

**Action 2:** *Outdoor Recreation NI to contact DSD with regards to discussing opportunities for a BMX Track in urban Dungannon.*

4.4 John Johnston advised members that DSD were unable to make a contribution to the BMX project as the proposed site was not located in a Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

4.5 Caro-Lynne Ferris advised members that Outdoor Recreation NI had prepared designs and relevant costs following large demand from local young people in the area. However, the proposal was rejected by some Councillors from Dungannon, who favour the development of a 3G pitch at the proposed site. Carro-Lynne noted that it is a great shame that the site has been lost to BMX riders, particularly for the 500 young people who signed a letter of support for the development of the track.

**Action 3:** *The Chair requested that Sport NI continue to measure progress against the target and present a further update at the next meeting.*

4.6 Stephen McIlveen used Places target PL25 (and the update paper presented to the Places SMIG on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013) to set the context for Actions 3, 4 and 5. Stephen noted that 51 'multi-sport' facilities in Northern Ireland currently hold a quality accreditation. When a 20 minute travel time boundary is applied to each of these facilities, 73% of the Northern Ireland population could access an accredited site (17% short of the 90% target). This percentage remains the same from the time of the previous SMIG meeting (October 2013). Stephen noted that this is a long-term Places target, which may not be fully achieved until the end of the Strategy's life cycle in 2019, but sited possible opportunities to contribute to the target through Sport NI's forthcoming capital programme.

**Action 4:** *The Chair suggested that Sport NI should define Quality Accreditation and confirm with Members what schemes should be included.*

4.7 Stephen outlined that Sport NI defines quality accreditation as: A recognition awarded to an organisation or building by a regulatory body that indicates quality in the service/facilities provided by that organisation/building. Stephen also updated that as per Annex 2 of the PL25 Places Paper (dated 15.10.13), Sport NI can confirm the quality accreditation schemes that should be included in measuring progress against Places target PL25 are as follows: Quest, Customer Service Excellence, EFQM, Investors in People, ISO9001, Inclusive Sports Facility, Inclusive Fitness Initiative, Adventuremark. Stephen advised members that the accreditation list is not exhaustive and asked members to contact Sport NI if they believed that any other accreditation schemes should be included.

4.8 Chris Webster suggested that Club Mark (or sports specific equivalent) should be included on the accreditation list. Stephen agreed and advised that the reason why Club Mark is not on the list at present is because there are no accredited clubs that meet the definition of 'multi-sport'. Linda McAllister also noted that whilst accreditation marks such as EFQM and CSE are generic, the assessment method for these accreditations is also very rigorous in nature.

4.9 Ivor McMullan suggested that PL25 should be amended to focus less on quality accreditation, but more on quality facilities/experiences. Ivor advised members that the role of all local authorities in Northern Ireland is to provide quality sport and recreation facilities, including multi-sport environments. Ivor added that CLOA believe there are many additional quality multi-sport facilities, managed by District Councils, which are not currently included in the measurement of the target because they have not achieved an accreditation. Ivor concluded that the current assessment method for PL25 may prove prohibitive to the achievement of the target in the long term.

4.10 A number of members acknowledged Ivor's thoughts and agreed that 'quality accreditation' takes away from the true meaning of the target,

which is believed to be about accessibility to quality multi-sport spaces and places.

**Action 5:** *Sport NI to consider the potential for re-profiling the target, which could continue to encourage quality multi-sport environments accessible within 20 minutes, but not necessarily restrict the target to accreditation.*

- 4.11 Stephen acknowledged Ivor's suggestion regarding accreditation and referenced Action 5 from the previous SMIG meeting. Stephen advised members that the option to re-profile Places target PL25 does not exist at present. Stephen further advised that DCAL will shortly begin a review of Sport Matters (pending approval of a Terms of Reference by the Minister) and that members will have an opportunity to contribute to the review process, which may include the opportunity to visit the issues around PL25.
- 4.12 The Chair emphasised the Sport Matters review period and encouraged members to consider positive and negative aspects of the implementation process. The Chair also noted that the review may be too general to begin addressing suggested changes to specific targets but advised members that further information will be provided to members in due course.
- 4.13 Ivor suggested that some inadequacies with the existing facility stock in Northern Ireland were exposed during the preparations for Pre-Game Training Camps (PGTC) for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Ivor advised that many facilities presented significant barriers to generating activity around PGTC's. Ivor added that the emphasis for developing new facilities should be on high participation facilities that are capable of hosting performance sport when required.
- 4.14 Ken Nixon suggested that 100% of the £17.5m budget for Sport NI's forthcoming capital programme should be prioritised for performance sport. Ken also asked members for support in his campaign to have the £50m previously ring fenced for Elite Facilities restored.
- 4.15 Ivor McMullan noted that the role of local authorities is to provide participation facilities that improve the well-being of local communities, and not to deliver high performance facilities. However, Ivor also added that local authorities have a responsibility for improving the local economy, and suggested that sports facilities which can also accommodate the needs of high performance training/competition could be an asset. Ivor concluded that there is a need for the anticipated sports facilities strategy and a need for local authorities to drive the strategy and reports forward.
- 4.16 John Johnston outlined a fear that many of the Places targets are very specific. John encouraged members to consider 'what we want' from sport in the context of the forthcoming review period.

**Action 6:** Sport NI to include a presentation from the Ulster Council (re redevelopment of Casement Park) on the agenda of the next Places SMIG.

4.17 The Chair advised that Sport NI had contacted the GAA regarding an update presentation, but the organisation was unavailable due to a conflicting Casement Park Project Steering Group meeting. The Chair suggested to members that Sport NI would request that DCAL provides an update on the whole stadia programme for the next meeting.

4.18 The Chair thanked all members for their contributions to Matters Arising.

## **5.0 MEMBERS UPDATES**

5.1 The Chair asked members to provide a short update on how each of their organisations is contributing towards the implementation and delivery of Sport Matters. The Chair noted that Patrick Nelson could not stay for the entire meeting and asked if Patrick would like to update members on developments with Windsor Park.

5.2 Patrick Nelson informed members that the project is very close to the start line and as such would rather not comment at this stage in fear of potentially jeopardising the flow of progress. However, Patrick added that he looks forward to members seeing real progress with the national football stadium by this time next year.

5.3 The Chair thanked Patrick and wished the IFA every success in delivering the Windsor Park project. The Chair also took the opportunity to congratulate Ulster Rugby on the completion of Ravenhill and wished Ulster Rugby success with the official opening.

*Patrick Nelson left the meeting.*

5.4 Department of Education – Linda McAllister advised members of the successful joint Ministerial launch of Sport NI's and DE's respective guidance documents relating to community use of the school estate. Linda added that the launch had received positive media coverage and that DE are keen to encourage schools to open their facilities, in particular sports facilities to local communities.

5.5 Northern Ireland Sports Forum – Ken Nixon asked members for their support in his campaign of lobbying Government to reinstate the £50m investment previously ring-fenced for the Elite Facilities Programme.

5.6 Ken congratulated Sport NI and DE on the publication of their respective community use of schools guidance documents. However, Ken raised concerns over the legal standing of some guidance offered by DE, and suggested that some of the guidance could prove very challenging for some schools. Ken asked DE to clarify what is meant by the term 'full cost recovery' and to provide clarity around the issues of VAT. Ken added that schools should start telling communities what facilities they have and how those facilities can be made available. Ken concluded that the

guidance material from DE is a significant step forward in the right direction but much more work is needed in this area.

**Action 1:** Linda offered to take forward Ken's queries and provide a short response at the next meeting.

- 5.7 Outdoor Recreation NI – Caro-Lynne Ferris informed members of the launch of the Divis Ridge walking trails in Belfast and new walking and cycling trails in Crossgar. Caro-Lynne asked members to note the launch of four new mountain bike trail centres and informed members that over 120,000 riders have used the trails in the past 10 months. In addition, Caro-Lynne advised that phase 2 of the Blessingbourne mountain bike trail centre is complete. Caro-Lynne asked members to note the great value for money that investment in the trail centres represent.
- 5.8 Caro-Lynne also advised members that a new mountain bike strategy is being developed which aims to bring a Downhill World Cup event and XC World Cup event to Northern Ireland in the next 5 years. Finally, Caro-Lynne asked members to note the 2015-2021 Outdoor Recreation NI plan which is currently under development.
- 5.9 Chief Leisure Officers Association – Ivor McMullan informed members that responsibility for a large number of DCAL owned and inland waterways will be transferred to District Councils from 2015. Ivor added that many of these sites have significant recreation potential but the anticipated annual maintenance budget is expected to be minimal. Ivor further advised members that adequate funds will need to be found in order to make many of the sites fit for recreational purposes.
- 5.10 Members heard of CLOA's on-going discussions with the IFA around intermediate and amateur league ground criteria. Ivor informed members that current league rules which indicate the need for soccer pitches to be enclosed with fencing. Ivor suggested that these rules limit Council's ability to provide multi-use grass spaces that can be used for a number of field sports throughout the year.
- 5.11 Ivor informed members that many of the existing Councils are pushing forward with legacy projects, some of which will be leisure orientated. Ivor also advised members that the CEO's of the 11 new Councils have been appointed and that this presents an opportunity for Sport NI/DCAL to influence how the new Council structures are set-up. The Chair advised Ivor and members that Sport NI have discussed this opportunity at Board level and will seek to build positive relationships with the new local authorities quickly.
- 5.12 Finally, Ivor praised the 'great' relationship between Sport NI and District Councils in delivering the Active Communities programme. Ivor placed on record his concerns with regards to what will happen with Active Communities after 2015.
- 5.13 Northern Ireland Environment Agency – Bob Bleakley informed members of over two million visits to NIEA property in 2013. Bob advised the group

that the current CEO of NIEA has brought in a vision of improving well-being linked to visits to historic heritage sites. Bob further advised that recreational opportunities at NIEA owned country parks will continue to be developed.

- 5.14 Bob informed members that walking paths at some parks have been eroded or buried by landslides due to severe weather conditions during the 2013/14 winter season. Bob concluded that repairs to some paths will present challenges due to the topography and gradient of the land.
- 5.15 CAFRE/DARD - Ciaran Mulholland informed members of 70 students currently enrolled in training courses associated with sports turf maintenance. However, Ciaran asked members to note that only 10% of trainees come from clubs or organisations affiliated to the three 'big ball' sports, whilst the remainder of trainees are predominantly associated with golf. Ciaran asked members to note his concerns over who is training the people responsible for maintaining soccer, gaelic sport and rugby pitches.
- 5.16 Ciaran suggested to members that golf and Northern Ireland's success in the sport should be reflected in Sport Matters. Ciaran also suggested that members may wish to consider inviting the Golfing Union of Ireland (Ulster Branch) to a future meeting to present on its high performance centre at the Greenmount campus.

**Action 2:** Sport NI to contact the GUI with regards a potential presentation at a future SMIG meeting.

- 5.17 Ulster Rugby – Chris Webster advised members that the official opening of the completed Ravenhill will take place on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Chris further advised that the priority for Ulster Rugby now switches to exploring what capital opportunities exist for local rugby clubs. Chris noted that local clubs have not always excelled at attracting funding, but hopes to see more success for rugby in forthcoming capital programmes. Chris added that Ulster Rugby and many affiliated clubs are looking at opportunities around multi-use facilities.
- 5.18 Ken Nixon asked why the revenue generated from gate receipts at Ravenhill cannot be used to help clubs with capital projects. Chris advised members that a significant proportion of the revenue is already used to fund development posts and programme costs, which seek to engage local communities with the sport.
- 5.19 Department of Social Development – John Johnson advised members that DSD's funds will transfer to District Councils post 2015. John advised that DSD will shortly begin taking with Councils about the transition. John asked members to note that DSD would only enter into development discussions associated with new capital projects, if it has the full support from the appropriate District Council.
- 5.20 Caro-Lynne Ferris asked members to note her concerns over what might happen to DSD funded posts.

## **6.0 PROGRESS REPORTING**

**6.1** The Chair confirmed to members that the Sport Matters Monitoring Group (SMMG) approved the fourth progress report covering the period October 2012 – September 2013 and thanked all members for their contributions. The Chair noted that Sport NI received a return from Newtownabbey Borough Council in December 2013, but advised that this was received following the approval of the SMMG and therefore it was not included in the report. The Chair advised that Edel Cosgrove will circulate the progress reporting template covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 in early September. The Chair asked members to complete and return the report within the timeframe.

**6.2** Ivor McMullan advised members that the positions of Chief Executive Officer at each of the new 11 Councils have been filled. Ivor suggested that Sport NI should consider contacting the new CEO's and the existing CEO's with the progress reporting template. Ivor suggested that it may be an opportunity to outline the importance of progress reporting and the Sport Matters implementation process.

**Action 3:** Sport NI to consider contacting the new and existing CEO's of the new 11 Councils with regards to progress reporting.

## **7.0 UPDATE FROM ALI CAMPBELL (SPORT NI)**

**7.1** Ali Campbell (Sport NI) opened her presentation on Sport NI's new capital programme by providing some background. Ali advised members that the SMMG and SMIG had received papers containing extensive consultation and concluded that PL23 was met but that the need for performance facilities far exceeded the target. Ali further advised that Sport NI was tasked with developing a performance programme, utilising part of the £17.5M Lottery funding profiles.

**7.2** Ali informed members that Sport NI has developed and approved a Strategic Business Case to justify a £17.5M investment into a performance/participation programme but that may also act as a bidding document for additional exchequer, European funding to address the facilities gap. Ali noted that the new capital programme has been designed to facilitate additional investment.

**7.3** Ali further advised members that the programme is needs and development led and quality driven (in terms of design, operational management/SDP and social outcomes). Members heard that Sport NI will make early assessment decisions based on need and outcome to facilitate early engagement on capacity building (governance and financial health, operational management) and design, procurement and project management best practice.

**7.4** Ali noted that the new programme will deliver strategic and policy benefits such as increase in participation and performance KPIs (Sports Matters targets), reduction in facility and social need; mandatory benefits, such as



an increase in the value for money of investments; quality of service benefits, such as reduced unnecessary bureaucracy, increased applicant engagement time, capacity building and early expertise provided.

7.5 Finally, Ali advised members that performance and participation projects are symbiotic, subject to early governance, management and legal negotiations.

7.6 Ken Nixon suggested that the new programme should not exclude projects that could be described as 'shovel ready'. Ali advised that the programme will accommodate two types of projects; those which take time to develop and those which display a state of readiness and are strategically needed.

## **8.0 UPDATE FROM STEPHEN MCILVEEN (SPORT NI)**

8.1 Stephen McIlveen (Sport NI) opened his presentation on the Sports Facilities Strategy project by providing some background. Stephen advised members that in order to inform the allocation of funding to Sport NI's new capital programme, Sport NI is seeking to work in partnership with the new District Councils and other stakeholders to develop a Sports Facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland, and 11 associated District Council Area Reports.

8.2 Stephen advised members that through extensive consultation, it is hoped that the Strategy and Reports will help a range of funders to prioritise investment and ensure that future funding is targeted at evidenced facility need. Stephen also advised that Sport NI is committed to investing funds in this Strategy (and Reports) to build consensus for the prioritisation, provision and development of sports facilities throughout Northern Ireland

8.3 Members were informed that Sport NI has the support of representatives from the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA), NILGA and SOLACE, who have also nominated representatives to contribute to a 'Project Delivery Group'. Members also learnt that a Business Case for project has been developed and agreed. This financial approval and the final draft of the Terms of Reference have been forwarded to the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). Sport NI met with CPD on 29<sup>th</sup> April to initiate the procurement process.

8.4 Stephen asked members to note that during this contract, District Councils will have major priorities associated with RPA, including the transfer of decision making powers from statutory organisations. Stephen added that it should therefore be expected that the Strategy and Reports may be delivered in two phases. Phase 1: The Facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland, completed by September/October 2014 and Phase 2: The 11 associated District Council Area Reports, completed by February/March 2015.

## **9.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 No other business was recorded.

**10.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The Chair advised that dates for the next SMIG meetings will be confirmed following the Sport Matters Monitoring Group meeting in May 2014.

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

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